**Career enhancing skills only taught through experience – learn from the veterans**

**Student workshop from the 28th ECS Conference, Liege 2014**

**Please fill in the short feedback form:** [**https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZDMV7C7**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZDMV7C7)

Date: 05/04/2012 at the Aquarium-Museum of the University of Liege

Time: 10:00 until 15:30 - please arrive 10 minutes before the starting time to register.

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“I have a very particular set of skills; skills I have acquired over a very long career…” – *Taken*

That's all well and good if you're an assassin, Liam Neeson. As a scientist however, your skills need to be a lot broader. These include the ability to communicate well, to look at the bigger picture, and handy statistical tips. They are, however, not easy to acquire and are not readily taught at schools and universities. They need to be more interactive than just reading information out of a book or through a lecture. They are only gained from experience.

The aim of this year’s student workshop is to give students advice on enhancing these skills throughout their scientific careers – advice that can only be given by the experienced. A collection of experienced scientists will give talks on various topics (see below) and try and answer any questions the students may have.

Programme

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Title** | **Presenter** |
| 10:00 | Introduction | Toby Rosas da Costa Oliver |
| 10:05 | Networking at Conferences | Hanna Nuuttila |
| 10:20 | Do’s and Don’ts of Professional/Social Networking | Mel Cosentino |
| 10:40 | **BREAK** | |
| 11:15 | Tips and Tricks on Excel | Andrew Wright |
| 12:15 | Scientific Writing and Publishing | Peter Evans |
| 12:45 | Advice on Oral Presentations | Mark Simmonds |
| 13:00 | **LUNCH** | |
| 14:00 | Applying for project funding | Paddy Pomeroy |
| 15:00 | Career advice | Peter Ross |

**NOTES**

**Hanna Nuuttila (hannanuuttila@gmail.com) – Networking at conferences**

* Networking at conference is all about meeting people

My best conferences were when I put myself in situations where you can meet lots of people. Staying on hostels or sharing apartments are great for this!

ECS is great – listen to a lot of talks from various disciplines.

Have a poster or presentation! Ask old supervisor for data to present. They will LOVE you for this. Shows you’re motivated and initiative.

Business cards a great way for people to remember you by. Older generation prefer them. Have them at hand and by your poster if you have one.

**How do you approach someone?** Ask questions. Easier to ask in a question. E.g., “Hi, I’m BLAH, I’m from BLAH, I really liked your talk in BLAH because BLAH. I’m really here to ask you about any internship you may have?”

**End conversation with:** “Well thank you for your time – and here is my business card.

**Tips:** Do not request something off them.. Just talk and ask a question about their work. Once you have established this, you can ask something from them later.. Know what they’re doing. Know current news. Ask them for their opinion.

**Another good question:** what did you do to get where you are? What courses would you recommend?

**REMEMBER:** Everyone is a person

**To summarise:**

- People are friendly and approachable.

- When approaching people, ask about their work, ask things from them later

- Business cards!

- Socialise

- Be prepared – read conference schedule

- Have a presentation or poster

**Mel Cosentino (orcinus.orca.1758@gmail.com)** **– Do’s and don’ts of social and professional networking.**

Please refer to PowerPoint presentation for notes.

Interesting paper on the subject:

Parsons, E. C. M., Shiffman, D. S., Darling, E. S., Spillman, N., & Wright, A. J. (2013). How Twitter Literacy Can Benefit Conservation Scientists. *Conservation Biology*, *28*(2), 299–301.

**Andrew Wright (marinebrit@gmail.com) – Tips and tricks for Excel**

Andrew’s notes are to be sent out soon. Here’s a brief summary of what he covered:

* Inserting columns in to every sheet
* Changing from American in to British dates
* Pivot table – change from csv text to numbers
* Explained:
  + inserting error bars
  + count.if
  + giving an ID
  + Julianne dates
  + Jumping around your dataset using only the keyboard.

If you have any questions regarding Excel, Andrew has kindly said he will try and help you out.

**Peter Evans (peter.evans@bangor.ac.uk) – Scientific writing and publishing**

Please refer to PowerPoint presentation for notes.

**Mark Simmonds (mark.simmonds@sciencegyre.co.uk)** **- Top Tips for Giving a Presentation**

Ask yourself some questions when you start work on the presentation and especially about your audience; for example, are they technically-adept or will you have to explain statistics and other matters to them? (Avoid jargon and acronyms anyway because you will lose some of your audience.)

What is your purpose in this presentation? For example are you show-casing your skills, showing some interesting new aspect of science, trying to gain the support of the audience for a pressing conservation concern, or all of these things? Keep your aim(s) in mind as you design your presentation and when you have made a draft presentation test it against these aims.

Here are some top tips:

Aim to make it memorable and link the memorable part to the key point(s) you want the audience to remember. (You don’t always need to use a power-point. You might make more impact without!)

Be enthusiastic and make it fun. (Some topics are, of course, difficult to make amusing but if you can convey your interest and at least raise one smile somewhere in the discourse, the audience will like you better for it.)

Practice your presentation (preferably with a friendly but critical audience) and test it to make sure you are able to keep to time.

Tell a story: this is more difficult with a short presentation but consider providing the background on how the matter developed over time. Part of this story may be to acknowledge those whose work helped to put the issues where it is now and/or inspired you: we all ‘stand on the shoulders of giants’.

‘The rule of three’: tell them three times (or thrice)! It is good practice to outline in your first few sentences what you are going to cover; then you give the main presentation, and finally you summarise.

Think about memorable presentations that you have witnessed and consider emulating them!

There is no one good way to give a presentation. It is a performance and sometimes it won’t work. Don’t worry about this; just learn from it!

For public lectures assume that you may be recorded. In most instances, this is just people using such an approach instead of taking notes but bear this in mind when presenting new data or images that you may not have full copyright for. You can ask people not to do this, perhaps hand them a pencil and a piece of paper to use instead!

In summary, my LAST point is that the key matters are (i) build memorable LINKS, (ii) carefully consider your AUDIENCE, (iii) tell a STORY and (iv) tell them THRICE!

**Paddy Pomeroy (pp6@st-andrews.ac.uk)** – **Successful Grant Writing**

Please see attached PowerPoint for notes on this presentation.

**Peter Ross (peter.ross@vanaqua.org) – Career advice**

Please see attached PowerPoint for notes on this presentation

Develop your toolbox

* Technical capability
* Scientifically relevant
* Contribute to something new
* Not restricted to marine mammals
* Build on the basics
* Set apart from competition
* Satisfies your need for a great career with a job
* Do NOT forget the basics like statistics, chemistry, physics etc.