

**2009 ASHE CONFERENCE**  
**GRADUATE STUDENT SESSIONS RECAP**

Updated February 15, 2010

Sitting down with scholars:

The development of research ideas, networks, and mentoring.....(p. 2)

What it means to be “on the market”:

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Establishing yourself as a professional

within the field of higher education.....(p. 10)

**We hope you find this information useful! Please do not hesitate to send feedback and ideas to us.**

*ASHE Graduate Representations to the Board of Directors*

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**Graduate Session 1: Roundtable**

**Thursday, November 5, 2009**

**1:00-2:30pm**

**Title: Sitting down with scholars: The development of research ideas, networks, and mentoring**

**Abstract**

How do students connect with faculty and other students who are conducting research in their area? Networking at ASHE may be a huge part of the answer. The purpose of this graduate student roundtable is to provide students with an opportunity to discuss their research interests and the role of mentoring with established scholars. Students will be welcomed by the ASHE president and program chair who will discuss the value of networking and mentoring. During the first part of the session, students will join the roundtable that most closely matches their interests. The leader of each roundtable will be a faculty member with expertise in that area of research. Each group will discuss the status of the research, their reasons for pursuing it, future directions of inquiry, and how graduate students might pursue their interest. During the second part of the session, students will dialogue with a different faculty member(s) about the importance of mentoring relationships.

**Moderators**

Amanda Suniti Niskode-Dossett, Doctoral Candidate, Indiana University  
Judy Marquez Kiyama, Assistant Professor, University of Rochester

**Presenters (all confirmed)**

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**Sorry, given the format of this session, the graduate student representatives were unable to take notes in the multiple small group discussions.**

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## **Graduate Session 2: Symposium**

**Friday, November 6, 2009**

**8:00am – 9:30am**

### **Title**

**What it means to be “on the market”: Job search and selection process**

### **Abstract**

As we approach the end of our graduate programs we often are asked, “Are you on the market?” Yet, confusion exists over what this really means. The purpose of this graduate student symposium is to provide insight and advice into the job search and selection process. The session will consider both faculty and non-faculty job search processes and applying to different institutional types. Panel members will discuss the process from the perspective of the job candidate as well as the institutional hiring perspective. The session will focus on many of the following topics: stages of the job search, developing yourself throughout doctoral experiences, presenting yourself through letters of intent, publications, letters of recommendation, job talks, job fit, and professional involvement. Graduate students at the early and latter stages of their doctoral careers will find this session informative.

### **Moderators**

Judy Marquez Kiyama, Assistant Professor, University of Rochester

Amanda Suniti Niskode-Dossett, Doctoral Candidate, Indiana University

### **Presenters**

Casandra Harper, Assistant Professor, University of Missouri

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Ted Ingram, Assistant Professor, CUNY Bronx Community College

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Josh Powers, Associate Professor, Indiana State University

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Linda Sax, Associate Professor, UCLA

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### **Tips from panelists regarding job search process**

**Casandra Harper**

- Think about your research agenda early on during your doctoral experience. Involve yourself in experiences that align with your research agenda. Doing so will help you prepare for the job search process.
- Have multiple versions of your CV and cover letter prepared.
- Things to ask for when negotiating – start up (research) funds, graduate assistant support. And, think about what you might need and ask for it. Casandra shared the example of asking for 10 hours a week dedicated to her own research when she first applied for a research position. She was granted this time to work on her own projects.
- Be whoever you are.
- Find a good fit!

### **Ted Ingram**

- Exposure is key – take advantage of research assistantship positions. Socialize yourself as doctoral student.
- Have a support group – Ted shared an example of a group of doctoral students that got together to work on independent research. They used this experience to present at conferences.
- Engage in a mentoring relationship.
- Step outside of the box when job searching – look at community colleges as an option.

### **Linda Sax (provided an overview of the “nuts & bolts” at research I institutions)**

- The process begins with getting a position approved. The faculty and department need to make the case for a new faculty position.
- Job description: don't be deterred by a job description that seems too narrow or too broad.
- Targeted recruitment: You will often see conversations happening at ASHE regarding job opportunities. This is usually representative of faculty reaching out to potential candidates and setting up meetings at ASHE.
- The top list of applicants is presented to divisional colleagues and then 3 or 4 are selected for an on campus interview.
- The interview: usually consists of meals, individual meetings with faculty, group meetings with students, faculty, sometimes a teaching demonstration, and a research presentation (job talk).
- Know who they are: know the needs of the department, the curriculum, the history.
- Show evidence that you can teach and make connections with students. Demonstrate collegiality, likeability and a likelihood of coming to the institution.

### **Joshua Powers (discussed the following information and provided a handout)**

#### **10 Guiding Principles Candidates Should Know About the Selection and Hiring Process**

Prepared by Joshua Powers. Associate Professor  
Higher Education Leadership, Indiana State University

1. Impressions solidify in the first 10 minutes. Thus, be sure you plant a positive one with what you say verbally (your small talk before the session starts, your first answer) and non-verbally (eye and hand contact during introductions, your choice of interview attire, a pin/brooch that you wear that says something about you).
2. Be ready with similar, but slightly adapted versions of why you are interested in the job.
3. Be ready with 1-2 honest and believable weaknesses, linked with what you are doing to address them.
4. Re-review the job description shortly before the interview, underlying the responsibilities, and weaving your remarks to these with specificity. If any elements are unclear, be sure you ask the search chair before the interview (hopefully something you've already had the chance to do in a phone interview as a semi-finalist).
5. If an academic position, Google the names of each department and search committee member as well as the chief hiring officer (usually the Dean), and can recognize them on sight (based on pictures you find). Occasionally weave in reference to them in your answers to questions (i.e., to the courses they teach, their scholarship, their leadership roles in associations, etc.). Do the same if for an administrative position. People like to see a little of themselves in the candidate and this is one way to achieve this.
6. Do a Google audit of yourself as they will likely be Googling you.
7. If you are asked to do a teaching demonstration, DO NOT lecture to them the whole time. Evidence your command of active learning techniques and just enough oral presentation or via handouts that you have a command of the content. Everyone can lecture but many fewer can engage students to maximize learning. Your handout should also include a teaching philosophy and repertoire of teaching techniques. Your handout should also evidence command of student learning outcomes and assessment and referenced orally at some point in your interview (faculty feel a lot of pressure on this front to varying degrees of comfort and ability; hiring someone who is skilled in this arena is attractive).
8. MONITOR the length of your responses to questions. It will not seem like you are talking long, but it often feels that way to the committee. Practice your pacing. If you think you are starting to get long winded, you quite likely are. YOU monitor the time to be sure you safe questions for them during at least the last 10 minutes. When it starting getting to that time window, graciously inquire if there might be a chance for you to ask questions.
9. Weave in comments that evidence a command of higher education current issues (i.e., something published that week in the *CHE* or *Change*), the scholarly literature (if possible, something that someone in the department has published), and a campus issue.

10. Handling the offer: Don't accept right away; the first offer is unlikely to be their best offer; inquire about other benefits - summer teaching for additional pay, moving expenses, start-up research/travel fund. Have a job coach you trust to advise you.

## **Questions & Answers**

### **Spouse-Dual Career Assistance**

*If you are searching for a job and have a "trailing" partner, what resources/options are available? How do you approach asking for assistance?*

- Go to the HR Web site and see if they have anything in place formally
- For campus interviews,
  - As if your partner can come along
    - See if you or the program can set up a campus tour
    - Try to help them connect with institution
  - OR partner independently seeks a relationship;
- If the institution is committed to you, then they will want to help your partner if possible, but don't toe a hardline (i.e. "either its both of us or neither")

*If you are a traveling partner:*

- It's ok to tell people that you are bound to the area to the city, but don't show desperation; it may be to your advantage in the spirit of disclosure
- Focus on wanting the position not the location
- Look into post-docs, visiting instructor/lecturer positions

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### **Community College (question for Ted)**

*Can you/do you have a research agenda if you are a faculty member at a Community College?*

- He publishes off his dissertation, experiences of African American male doctoral students, but now that he is at a community college, he has expanded his research to include students of colors at these types of institutions.

*What does he teach about since CSP/HAS programs are not at community colleges?*

- He teaches the first-year experience course. He assists incoming students with their adjustment to higher education

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### **Timeline for Positions being Posted/Review Process**

*If the review of applications has already begun, is it ok to still send in your own application?*

Yes

*If the application due date has passed, is it ok to still send in your own application?*  
Do not send in without contacting HR or the search committee chair.

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## **Negotiating**

*How Much To Push?...especially if you are going to have to work with them?*

- Negotiation doesn't have to be tense
  - If push for higher salary, don't make it the only thing you ask for
    - Address aspects of job that will also benefit them (asking for research hours, lab space, etc.)
  - Usually only department chair knows about the details of the negotiations
  - Pick up cues on when to stop pushing
  - Try to reach a place where is the win/win for you and the department
  - Recommended reading: "Arming Athena" (book)
  - Remember: some things the dean can control, some she/he not
    - different pots of money/resources
  - Using 1 Offer To Negotiate another
    - Do some checking to see if the 1<sup>st</sup> offer is comparable to recent hires
    - Take into consideration gender equity, cost-of-living/region, AAUP data
  - Make sure you feel comfortable with the job (people, description, expectations of content knowledge)
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## **Curriculum Vitas**

*What criteria are committees looking for in CVs during a application review?*

- Scholarship productive/potential
  - Demonstrated productive: do you have your own independent research agenda?
    - Make sure you can carve this out in your cover letter
    - Outline your unique agenda
  - Potential: quality of dissertation
- Letters of recommendation
- Unique research interests
- That you bring something to the program
- That you fill a gap and compliments the mission & faculty of the program.
- Teaching and services is important but not as much as research (depending on the institution type)

*How do you go from the stack of CVs to getting a phone interview?*

- 2 page cover letter max
- Highlight elements of the specific job
- They are generally more attracted PhD than ABD

- Have someone go through your CV and tear it up
  - It's ok to include a few supplemental materials
  - Highlight any teaching you've done, esp. depending on the constitutional context
  - Make CV easily scannable for search committee
  - Have multiple versions of CV
  - Recommended Reading: The Head Sub Search Handbook
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## **Timeline**

*What if you receive an offer and the deadline to accept/decline is before your next interview?*

- Ask for more time. The worse thing they can say is "no"
  - Consider what can you live with. Could you manage if turn down one opportunity and are not offered another? Could you accept a job offer that you do not necessarily love?
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## **Other**

*Is it ok to apply to some jobs to "practice"?*

- Don't apply to a job that you wouldn't take, but if you would even consider it, then it is ok to apply and go through the process
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## **Other Recommendations**

- Go sit on full interview at your own institution
- Have someone do a mock interview with you
- Ask for applications for last search in your department

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## **Graduate Session 3: Graduate Student Luncheon and Panel Discussion**

**Saturday, November 7, 2009**

**11:30am – 1:00pm**

**Title: Establishing yourself as a professional within the field of higher education**

### **Abstract**

The graduate student luncheon is a time-honored tradition at the ASHE conference. This session will provide graduate students with the opportunity to network and discuss current graduate student issues in higher education. The graduate student luncheon has been paired with a panel discussion by led by experts in the field. The panel will discuss and entertain questions related to the politics of higher education, ethics, strategies for establishing a strong professional reputation, and common (but avoidable) graduate student mistakes.

### **Moderators**

Judy Marquez Kiyama, Assistant Professor, University of Rochester  
Amanda Suniti Niskodé-Dossett, Doctoral Candidate, Indiana University

### **Presenters**

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### **Advice, Professionalism, and Q&A**

*Special Thanks to **Sable Manson**, Residential Program Coordinator at the University of Southern California. She attended this program offered to share her notes for the ASHE Graduate Student Manual. Thanks Sable!*

Advice

- Reach out to other graduate students (both at your institutions and other institutions), they will become your colleagues and collaborators
- Come to academic conferences for professional development and network building opportunities
- Take advantage of opportunities to present at conferences, write for journals, and co-author articles
  - Get your “light” out there
  - Circulate your work
- Learn how to take criticism and use it to move forward
- Watch how you spread yourself in the first year of your Ph.D. Program among courses and other activities
  - Don’t over commit yourself
  - Take time to develop yourself and your expertise
  - Demonstrate what you bring to each subject
- Get involved in professional organizations, volunteer at conferences, and participate in program reviews
- When you are feeling isolated at conferences or in your program, try to reach out to other graduate students and cohort mates. ASHE offers many opportunities for this.
- Try to create a body of work that demonstrates some breadth of work but still offers an area of focus
  - Establish an area of expertise
- Develop strong skills in mixed methodologies
  - Both qualitative or quantitative at least at an intermediate level
  - Know what methods you need to move along/advance knowledge in your particular area of interest and learn them well
- Try to cultivate interdisciplinary perspectives (although this does not apply to everyone)
  - What other fields can you bring to bear on your area of expertise or research interests?
  - What kind of research topics bring fields together?
- Create a tolerance and appreciation for the ambiguity that you find in the course of research
  - Accept that the topics we try to tackle will be complex and not easy to solve
- Always have multiple balls (i.e. projects) in the air (but not too many) and be able to speak to different audiences
- Seek out opportunities to learn about and see the tenure process
  - Ask mentors about their tenure process
  - Respectfully ask to see their tenure dossier, and even manuscript or grant rejection letters (talk with mentors about how they managed the process of becoming a scholar, a tenured faculty member, and getting published)
- Use manuscript rejection letters to help you become better
- Be intentional about your time in your grad program
  - Seek out mentors

- Cultivate relationships with other grad students, faculty members, and people from other programs
- Explore different types of subjects as you develop an expertise but without spreading yourself too thin
- Volunteer for committees to gain insight on faculty life
- Take advantage of any opportunity to write, publish, or present

Should I take time off to work or continue my education straight through?

- You have to do what works for you
- It's essential to have mentors at your institutions and ideally at other institutions to guide what would be best for your professional career
- Be deliberate in your choices. Reflect to know what is best for you:
  - Faculty
  - Research Center
  - Administrator
  - Educational think tank
  - Educational policy

Professionalism

- Don't submit a proposal, get accepted, and then withdraw
- Don't volunteer then withdraw
- When you submit a proposal
  - Submit your best work
  - Make sure everyone who is on the proposal has contributed and is committed
  - Be mindful of deadlines and respectful of other people's time
  - Submit papers to discussants on time and follow up with them afterward to get comments
  - Practice presentations and know time limits