Mixing Mathematics, Activism, and Community: (YES, YOU CAN!)

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IMA SPECIAL WORKSHOP: Career Options for Women in the Mathematical Sciences
Broad Definitions:

✴ MATHEMATICS: Applied, Theory, Industry, Education, Institutes

✴ ACTIVISM: Working for a cause, for improvement, for yourself

✴ COMMUNITY: Immediate interactions, people in your environment, people who you want to know
Supporting Themes

✴ WHO AM I? Enthusiasm breeds success
   Do I need help? Where can I contribute?

✴ WHAT MAKES OTHERS TICK?
   Relating to others is usually a good thing

✴ WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES?
   Realism vs. dreams
Game: Visualize extremes

Approach A

✴ Better fit? A or Z (or in between)
✴ Interactions needed for A or Z?
✴ Are A and Z possibilities, or something in between?
✴ Math/Activism/Community intertwined

Approach Z
Learn about a new topic

- Read and do problems myself
- Get someone to teach you

- Processing the information
- People like to give advice, expertise
- Others interested? Experts available?
- Efficiency: how best to place efforts?
Finding out about careers

Do all the research myself

Processing the information

People like to give advice, do I have the right community?

Efficiency: how best to place efforts?

Ask everyone for advice
Developing my community

Join an existing community

Build your own community

☆ Whom should I include? Do I have a choice?

☆ Conferences, organizing sessions, invitations to your institution

☆ Seeking advice, information, seminars
Networking

Classical networking

Unconventional networking

- The “cocktail party”
- Surrogate networking
- Involvement with a group you admire: volunteerism/activism
Types of community

- Professional community
- Personal community

- Separate communities? Intertwined?
- Professional: Inside and outside of Math
- Influence of the community
- Balance of the communities: location, support, activities
Applying for jobs

Apply everywhere

Apply strategically

★ What are your job priorities?

★ Access to advice + support, filtering advice, filtering ads

★ Job market vs. your interests + experience
At the interview

Where is your comfort zone? Should it be shifted and how?

Engaging the interviewers (mathematicians)

Preparing for all possibilities:

I do most of the talking

Others do most of the talking
Listening

Retaining what others say

Make sure my message gets through

★ Benefits to the cause
★ Improving communication with the community
★ Influence on the next interaction
Interacting with Human Beings

Put others’ views first

- Benefits to the cause
- Improving communication with the community
- Influence on the next interaction

Put my view first
Negotiations

Hope for the best

Ask for the moon

✴ Your priorities
✴ Community of different perspectives
✴ Mutual benefit
✴ What are the costs?
Job expectations

Infer from observations

✴ Processing feedback, performance review

✴ Which parts of the community know?

   Access to the “right” community

✴ Matching expectations with interests, balance of activities

✴ Are they clear for everyone?

Ask, ask, ask
Expectations

Infer from observations

Ask, ask, ask

Talk, interview, workshop, grant proposal

Core vs. supporting activities

Influences on your career
Getting things done

In series

✴ Priorities: what HAS to be done, what's your interest

✴ The grass is always greener....

✴ Maximizing help from the community

✴ Investment for the future

In parallel
“Extra” Activities

- What’s my load?
- Interest vs. guilt
- Community building?
- Designer activism: Replacing “yes” with “yes, if...” and “no” with “no, but ...”
Reaching Goals

Clearly stated goals

🌟 Focus or Flexibility?

🌟 Others with the same goals: cooperation or competition?

🌟 Options for the unexpected

🌟 Watch for a good ally

Taking opportunities as they come
Bring your community and activism to mathematics

A diverse workforce signals that the organization draws from the best talent available, that well-rounded education and training is provided, and that our research programs are informed by diverse perspectives. Diversity is not only synergistic with excellence, but also promotes equitable access to career rewards.