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The Benefits and Challenges of Networking for Online College Faculty for Long-Term Career Efficacy

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Agenda

- Definition of networking

- Poll - networking habits

- Importance of networking for online faculty

- Online networking methods

- Social outlets and emotional health

- Final thoughts

- Q&A

- References

Definition of networking

Networking:

"the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; *specifically* : the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business" ("Networking", n.d.).

Networking
is not
collecting
contacts!

Networking
is about
planting
relations.

- MiSha.at

Poll

Tell us about your current online networking habits!

Poll: Do you network professionally online with others:

a. Every day

b. Once a week

c. Once a month

d. Rarely

Online Networking

No matter how often you network, online networking can be challenging:

- Time constraints

- Lack of resources

- Emotions
  - Competition
  - Fear of putting yourself out there
  - Less extroverted
  - Lack of trust

The benefits outweigh the challenges!

Importance of networking for online faculty

Question: Why is networking important for online faculty?

Let's break this down:

- What are the benefits of networking for online faculty?

- How can networking aid in potential career advancements for online faculty?

What are the benefits of networking for online faculty?

- Establishing personal relationships.

- To be part of one's professional community (local, national, and international).

- Opportunities for collaborative partnerships (Borthwick, Pierson, Anderson, Morris, Lathem, & Parker, 2004).

- Increased career satisfaction (Smith, 2011, p. 131).

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How can networking aid in potential career advancement for online faculty?

- Increased access to information and professional opportunities (Gibson, Hardy, & Buckley, 2014).

- Access to more experienced faculty (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2012).

- Allows faculty to learn from each other (Ehrmann, 2012).

- Exposure to diverse scholarship and research in and out of one's field (Pierce, 2016).

- Find out about jobs at ones' institution or other institutions and be exposed to the institutional culture.

Online Networking Methods

What methods can be used to foster networking in a virtual environment?

- Approaching networking with a positive mindset (Addams, Woodbury, & Addams, 2010).

- Casual networking such as an online book club (Medina, Garrison, & Brazeau, 2010).

- More high-stakes networking to forge long-lasting connections (Medina, Garrison, & Brazeau, 2010).

- Avoid having highly clustered networks (Medina, Garrison, & Brazeau, 2010) and try to network outside one's institution (Davis, Chaney, Edwards, Thompson-Rogers, & Gines, 2012).
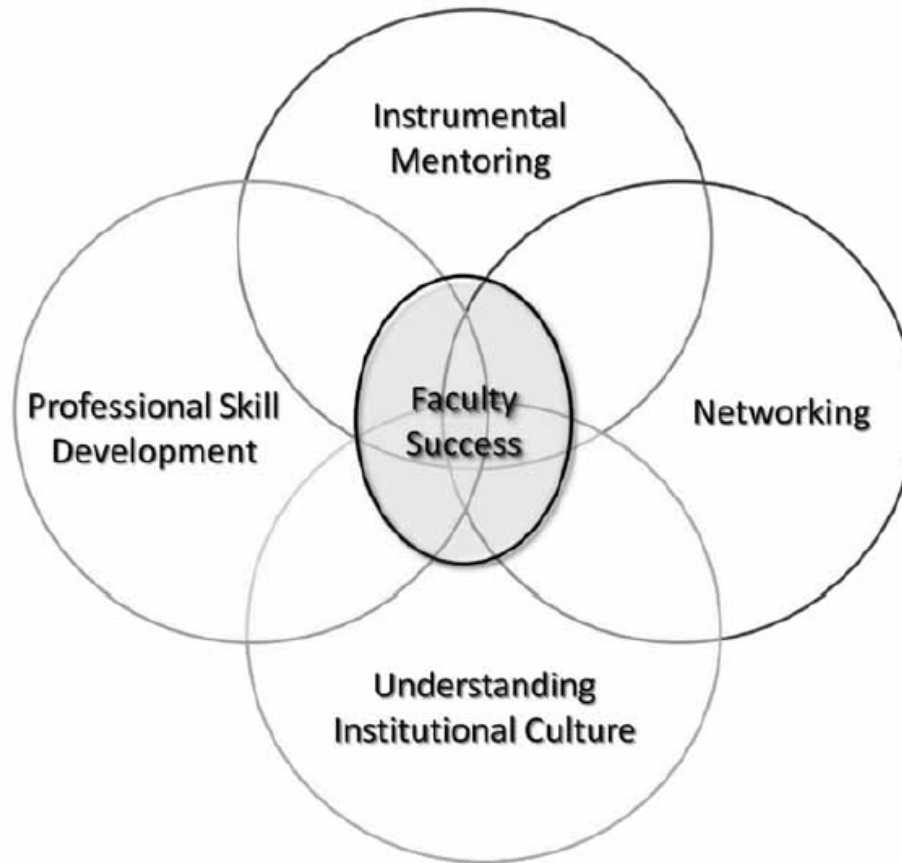
Online Networking Methods, *cont'd.*

There are many ways to describe the process of networking. Goel and Grimpe (2013) divide networking into active and passive networking:

Active Networking	Passive Networking
Active participation in conferences, workshops, meetings, and other events.	University employment, academic discipline, research group leadership, and size of peer group.

Active and passive networking are complementary to each other.

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Figure. National Center of Leadership in Academic Medicine Faculty Development Model

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An important component of fostering online networking for faculty is institutional support.

- Institutions need to encourage and provide opportunities for faculty to network, "by creating a supportive environment among colleagues, providing formal and informal opportunities to meet, and encouraging collegial, collaborative relationships (Daley, Broyles, Rivera, Brennan, Lu, & Reznik, 2011, p. 817).

- Examples from our Institution:

    - Mentoring programs for faculty.

    - Areas for virtual discussion and socializing (Phoenix Connect, WordPress site).

    - Brown Bags.

Social Outlets & Emotional Health

What social outlets are available for online faculty, and what is the impact of these on the emotional health of an online faculty member?

Social outlets:

- Websites for developing networks virtually.

- Professional virtual conference chatrooms.

- Professional association websites.

- Academic blog sites.

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Impact on emotional Health

- Allows you to be more open to building relationships with colleagues (Addams, Woodbury, & Addams, 2010).

- Helps you build trust with individuals in your network (Ehrmann, 2012).

- Reduces feelings of isolation (Peter, 2016).

- Enhances feelings of community and belonging.

- Personal support and inspiration from colleagues.

Final Thoughts

Networking takes time.

- Individual development takes time and deliberate attention (Medina, Garrison, & Brazeau, 2010).

- Networks are ever changing; established networks change over time and adjustments to the relationships need to constantly be updated (Smith, 2011, p. 14).

**Our challenge to you:
Challenge yourself to do one networking action each week or each month (Message a colleague, join a professional group, etc.).**

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

Finé

Thank you for listening and collaborating!

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