

Maximizing your graduate experience

Dr. Niki Whitley

Presented by Dr. Olga Bolden-Tiller



North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

Explore. Discover. Become.



University/Program/Topic Area

- University– not just a “place” (but matters)
 - » Know yourself and support system you need
 - » Expand outside of comfort zone

- University, program and topic area – choose based on
 - » Your interests and future job opportunities
 - » Mentors available and quality of their work and how they train their students; do their graduates get quality jobs?
 - » Assistantship? Look at more than one University.





Opportunities

- Learning/networking opportunities
 - » Within your program: expand your project, conduct more than one; present papers, publish, help find/write grants, develop a budget for your project
 - » Outside of your program: work with other students, researchers to learn new/alternative techniques

- Other opportunities
 - » Attend professional meetings (and actually attend), professional development programs/seminars/workshops (including leadership, communication, teaching, etc.)





Networks/contacts

- Networking/professional socializing
 - » Collaborate outside of the University or program (advisor/mentor needs good contacts) – they can help you find your next graduate/professional program or job
 - » Keep personal social networking and professional strictly separate

- Other contact/networks
 - » Technicians/support staff/clientele critical to success; other students become your colleagues; world is not as big as you think





Personal interactions

- Conduct and communication
 - » Be polite and respectful to others; have confidence but beware of being overly so; become comfortable with working independently, but make sure ask questions and be honest if problems come up; listen to your advisor
 - » Use only professional email, blogs, websites if they are “open” for all to see; act professional at work and in class (no texting, or staying on phone all the time)

- Mentor others
 - » Help high school/undergraduate intern students; come up with ideas for their projects, help them create presentations





Other

- Work quality
 - » Give every job your best; do not rush through jobs; understand your limitations and put extra effort into those for which you have problems/issues (and get help from others); keep your CV updated and detailed

- Honesty
 - » Do not plagiarize, do not claim others' work as your own, make sure everything you put in your CV is true (if you put a technique in, make sure you can do it and do it well); if you make an error on your research, do not cover it up; complete procedures following correct guidelines (no short cuts)





Other

- Work quality
 - » Give every job your best; do not rush through jobs; understand your limitations and put extra effort into those for which you have problems/issues (and get help from others); do not say “that’s not my job”

- Honesty
 - » Do not plagiarize, do not claim others’ work as your own, make sure everything you put in your CV is true (if you put a technique in, make sure you can do it and do it well); if you make an error on your research, do not cover it up; complete procedures following correct guidelines (no short cuts); do what you are supposed (and when)





Preparing for the next step

- Be the person you would want to hire/mentor
- Keep your CV updated and detailed
- Use your contacts to find jobs (or graduate programs) and also work to find them on your own
- Research the jobs (or graduate programs); do not just look for salary, look for cost of housing, cost of health care (and coverage), how much they take out for retirement, leave and what other benefits packages are included





Have fun, work hard, play hard



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