Locating networks of support

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Topics covered

• Defining networks
• Locating networks of support at the institution
• Locating networks of support outside of the institution
• Mentors vs. sponsors
• A few practical examples
Defining networks

- an association of individuals having a common interest, formed to provide mutual assistance, helpful information, or the like: a network of recent college graduates.

- A system of interrelated buildings, offices, stations, etc., especially over a large area or throughout a country, territory, region, etc.: a network of supply depots.
  - Source: dictionary dot com
Identifying Institutional networks

Associations of individuals
• Colleges
• Departments
• Research foci
• Similar teaching interests
• Similar subject positions
• Common causes/civic engagement

systems of interrelated buildings, offices, stations, etc.
• Administration buildings
• Student activity centers
• Waldo Library
• Resource centers
Networks by individual association

- Often start informally/via casual conversation
- Often start organically
- Often start by word of mouth (i.e., I know someone who does X)
- The goal is to find opportunities to meet and get to know people across campus
  - Department/Staff/ GA meetings
  - Service Committees and organizations (AAUP, TAU, PIO)
  - Seminars and orientations
  - Workshops based on common interests
  - Workshops that provide information
Additional campus locations to foster individual networks

- Office of Faculty Development
- Faculty Senate
- Graduate College
- Office of the Vice President for Research
- WMU AAUP/TAU/PIO
- College-wide service committees
  - Curriculum committee, assessment committee, diversity and inclusion committee
- University wide service committees
  - Often appointed by president or provost (e.g. athletic board)
Systems, buildings, offices, etc.

- **Teaching and Learning**
  - Office of assessment and undergraduate studies
  - Office of faculty development
  - Faculty technology resource center
  - Instructional decision support tree
- **Research, scholarship and creative activity**
  - Office of the Vice President for Research
  - College-wide funding
  - Department funding
  - Graduate College
- **Career, personnel resources, workload and equity concerns**
  - Faculty and staff career resources ([https://wmich.edu/career/faculty](https://wmich.edu/career/faculty))
  - Office of institutional equity
  - WMU Office of Academic Labor Relations ([https://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations](https://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations))
  - WMU AAUP/TAU/PIO (note: These are third party entities)
Systems, buildings, offices, etc.: a guide

• Become familiar with WMU Policies
  • Academic affairs manual (https://wmich.edu/provost/manual)
  • Academic policies and statements (see https://wmich.edu/provost/policies)
• Know your appointment letter and the job duties described in it
  • Have hard and electronic copies of your appointment letter on file and handy
• Become familiar with your department policy statement (DPS) for board appointed faculty
  • https://wmich.edu/academic-labor-relations/policies
• Become familiar with tenure/promotion and reappointment expectations (board appointed faculty)
  • WMU/AAUP agreement (see http://www.wmuaaup.org/aaup_028.htm)
  • Department policy statements
• Become familiar with your reappointment requirements

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Networks beyond the institution

- Similar to institutional networks, external networks often emerge based on individual interests and office resources/buildings.

- Networks external to the university are also essential to personal and professional growth. These might include:
  - Local organizations and causes (i.e.: Churches, synagogues, mosques, Social groups/clubs of professional women, Fraternities/sororities Exercise/fitness groups or sports teams, Parental social groups)
  - Regional/national/international professional organizations: These are often flagship organizations associated with your profession.
  - Listservs and virtual communities based on professional and/or personal common interests

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Networks: mentors vs. sponsors

• Find a network of people to support you, not just a person or one mentor!

• Find sponsors, not just mentors!
  • Mentors provide advice and share resources, but sponsors have the power and authority to “influence and use it on your behalf ... behind closed doors when people are talking about you and you’re not there” (Rockquemore, 2015).
  • This advice applies to both institutional and non institutional networks
Considering your networks of mentors and sponsors: a few steps

1. Identify who’s in your current network (see handout)
2. Identify current needs. These should be gaps in your current network
3. Determine how you can get those met
4. Determine how you can maximize opportunities (Rockquemore, 2017)
5. Identify your limiting beliefs (i.e., fear of rejection)
6. Commit to action

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Practical example of my networks

Faculty Development
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Center of Hope Community Baptist Church
"Restoring Hope to the Community"

CCCC 2018 Kansas City
Western Michigan University
College of Arts and Sciences
References
