

Panel: How to Become Successful with People at Career Start

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Outline

- “People issues” in a department
- Students
- Collaborations

Getting to Know People Issues in a Department Before You Join

- The usual stuff: Exploit your social network
- If possible, visit earlier for a talk
- Two things I was skeptical of in 2005:
 1. Predicting (before I join) how things will play out
 2. Judging faculty candidates from 30-45 minute interviews
- What I think now (having been on the other side):
 1. Things can change rapidly in a vibrant Univ. setting
 2. You do get very useful signals

Mentoring

- Goal: Making sure that your students grow into successful independent researchers
- Scenario 1: You are untenured Prof in 2nd year. 2 weeks left to VLDB deadline. Your junior PhD student brings in draft of paper. Her writing leaves much to be desired. What do you do?
 - Option A: Give feedback on improving her writing
 - Option B: Start rewriting paper yourself
- Scenario 2: Everything is same as Scenario 1 except you are now in 5th year, sending 2 other papers to VLDB, on a PC, co-chairing a workshop, and in the faculty hiring committee. Now what?
- Scenario 3: Same as before, but now with tenure

Students

- Folklore: A good PhD student is worth 5 SIGMOD/VLDB papers
 - Your mileage may vary
- Two insights:
 - Class projects that give students a window into interesting DB research (not necessarily in your own subtopic) helps attract good students (consumes time)
 - Undergraduate students and NSF REUs (a smart undergraduate student can do SIGMOD-quality work with proper guidance)

Collaboration

Industry/Academia



- Starting new collaboration takes time to pay off
- Some rules of thumb:
 - Having a student dedicated to this work helps
 - "It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit."
-- Harry S. Truman
 - A FAST Vs. SIGMOD experience