

agendas, legal practices, and moral assumptions about commercialization in the [San Francisco] Bay Area academic community intends to tell a much broader story of the re-configuration of both academic institutions and commercial enterprise in biomedical research.” He adeptly shows how changes in American society from the 1960s on—notably, the demand for medical relevance in biomedical research; the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, which gave academic institutions incentives to patent government-supported research results; and the Supreme Court’s Chakrabarty decision, which enabled the patenting of human-made living organisms—facilitated the arrival of “the Recombinant University” with its enhanced interest in patenting and licensing and myriad ties with industry.

Yi’s analysis shows how Stanford Biochemistry, an original citadel of basic science, adapted to accommodate the practical, financial, and legal vistas stemming from recombinant DNA technology. Even the department’s two Nobel laureates, Arthur Kornberg and Paul Berg, despite their wariness about the commercialization of American biomedicine, fostered the department’s industrial affiliates program and the biotechnology company DNAX, both founded in 1980.

But Yi’s preoccupation with Stanford Biochemistry leaves this reviewer wondering: In the Bay Area’s highly mobile and interactive scientific community, was recombinant DNA technology really overwhelmingly Stanford’s creation? Only in passing does Yi address the significant research of Herbert Boyer’s UCSF laboratory: its contribution and worldwide distribution of EcoRI, the restriction enzyme critical to the early performance of recombinant DNA technology, and its pioneering use of synthetic DNA in constructing genetic material. Where, also, is any mention of the role of chemically synthesized DNA as developed initially by Gobind Khorana of MIT and later used in Genentech’s synthesis of the human insulin gene in 1978? Omissions such as these point to the need for further comparative historical work on the contributions of other institutions and departments at the forefront of genetic engineering in the 1970s.

Yet, Yi’s broadly conceived and deeply interpreted analysis of a significant department at a major juncture in biomedical research contributes to a fuller understanding of the institutional, legal, and cultural transformations in American bioscience and society occurring at the time.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. For Cohen’s adamant disagreement, see http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/cohen_stanley.pdf.
2. For Berg’s viewpoint, see <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt1c6001df>.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Making contacts count

A scientist’s guide to building professional networks

By **Monika S. Magon**

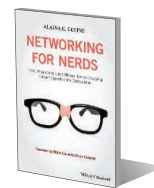
The success of any scientist or engineer is the result not only of hard work and technical excellence, but also of a combination of creativity, problem-solving abilities, and, perhaps most important, interactions with other people. In *Networking for Nerds*, Alaina G. Levine offers advice on how to define, maintain, advance, and communicate your “brand”—what makes you unique and valuable as a scientist—to potential employers and collaborators.

Levine begins by dispelling common myths about networking, including the ideas that it’s a waste of time, a sleazy salesman’s tactic, and that only job seekers need to network. She highlights how networking can open otherwise hidden opportunities, including ones that might not yet exist, and argues that it also benefits the entire science and engineering community (“you cannot have innovation without regular influx of a diversity of ideas”). Levine goes on to show readers how to think about and communicate the value of their particular skills and experience, what she calls a “brand statement.” Keep it simple and short, she advises: “a brand statement is not a thesis. It is not meant to take three hours to deliver.”

In Chapter 4, Levine walks the reader through the steps needed to establish, maintain, and grow a professional network, emphasizing things like the importance of asking questions (“successful people remain successful by being inquisitive”) and the

Networking for Nerds

Find, Access and Land Hidden Game-Changing Career Opportunities Everywhere
Alaina G. Levine
Wiley Blackwell, 2015. 225 pp..



value of a good mentor (“a mentor has access to networks you don’t have access to”). In later chapters, the reader learns how to make any situation a networking opportunity, as well as how to employ social media to increase one’s professional visibility.

The best advice comes from the practical pointers and real-life examples sprinkled throughout the book. These tips and vignettes help the reader think about how to incorporate similar strategies into one’s own networking activities and to visualize the potential benefits that will be derived from these efforts.

Networking for Nerds serves as a guide for developing skills that are almost never taught in a formal way to scientists and engineers. This excellent resource should be on the reading list of those in the early stages of their careers, as well as those who may be contemplating a career change or hoping to secure a promotion.

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“When networking...you should be listening most of the time and talking very little,” advises Alaina Levine. “But when you do talk, ask questions and insert information about your own experience that’s relevant.”