

Hey Jane!

Free & Low-Cost Professional Development Resources

Welcome to Column 35 of *Hey Jane!* This is a project of the SWS Career Development Committee. Questions are generated by the committee and SWS members.

This response for this issue was written by Kristine Kilanski. Thanks to Caitlyn Collins for additional resource suggestions.

The *Hey Jane!* series editor is Christin Munsch.

Hey Jane! I have received great methodological and substantive training in my field, but I feel like I am lacking in terms of professional development. As a graduate student, I am on a very tight budget. Can you recommend some free and/or low-cost professional development resources?

This is a wonderful question! Many academic departments lack the resources—people, time, and/or money—to provide comprehensive professional development in addition to meeting their substantial teaching and research obligations, so I am sure you are not the only SWS member (student or otherwise) to be on the lookout for free or low cost professional development resources.

The first thing you should do is to check what opportunities for professional development your college or university offers. Many colleges and universities offer lunch-and-learns, one-day events, or mini-courses (both online and in-person) designed to help graduate students and faculty develop their teaching, research, and soft skills. Often, these offerings are free. However, beware: despite the best intentions of the staff offering them, these trainings may provide advice that is outdated, incorrect, or (more commonly) not relevant to your field. Make sure to run what you learn at cross-disciplinary trainings by your advisor or another trusted faculty member. These experienced members of your field will let you know if the training you received about how to write an NSF grant was more relevant for a biologist than a sociologist, for example.

You should also check to see if your graduate institution has a subscription to the [National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity \(NCFDD\)](#). Started by sociologist and long-time SWS member [Dr. Kerry Ann Rockquemore](#), NCFDD provides an array of articles, webinars, short courses, and programs aimed at helping people at all stages of their academic careers. Most of these helpful resources are free to graduate students, post-docs, and faculty who have an institutional agreement with NCFDD.

In addition to resources that may be available through your institution, there are many great online resources, most of which are free. For example, the [Center for Advancement of Women's Leadership](#) at [the Clayman Institute for Gender Research](#) at Stanford University offers almost a

dozen free professional development videos for people at various stages of their careers. You can learn how to [build effective networks](#) from Dr. Herminia Ibarra (Cora Chaired Professor of Leadership and Learning, and Professor of Organizational Behavior at INSEAD), how to [negotiate](#) from Dr. Margaret Neale (Adams Distinguished Professor of Management at the Stanford Graduate School of Business), and how to provide effective [mentoring](#) from Dr. Stacey Blake-Beard (Professor of Management at the Simmons School of Management). Contributors are experts in their fields who have developed research-based best practices for employees seeking to navigate the [labyrinth](#) to leadership as well as managers and employers seeking to create more inclusive workplaces.

There are also many great online resources for graduate students seeking to learn about and prepare for an academic or alt-ac career. [The Chronicle for Higher Education](#), for example, devotes a [whole section](#) to career advice. Similarly, [Inside Higher Education](#), hosts a [career advice library](#), which collates past articles on a wide range of topics, including alt-ac careers, diversity, cover letters, working outside the U.S., interviews, adjuncting, working at community colleges, and more.

I also encourage you to bookmark [Conditionally Accepted](#) on your computer. An off-shoot of a blog started by SWS member [Dr. Eric Anthony Grollman](#) to provide a space for “[scholars on the margins of academe](#),” contributors to this [Inside Higher Education](#) column provide a range of advice, stories, and news of interest to feminist scholars. You might want also want to check out [Conditionally Accepted’s blogroll](#), which includes links to a large number of blogs written “for and/or by scholars on the margins of academia.” Many of these blogs recognize that a one-size-fits-all policy of advice-giving isn’t helpful, and are sensitive to the different barriers and challenges faced by scholars as they navigate their academic careers.

Finally, some people have started businesses to provide professional development and career advice to graduate students and others on the academic track. Some of the resources they provide are free or can be obtained at a low-cost. For example, [Dr. Karen Kelsky](#) runs “[The Professor is In](#),” a website that includes free resources for graduate students and early- and mid-career academics. She recently published a book of the same name, available at her [website](#) or your local library.

See below for these resources and more:

[Center for Advancement of Women’s Leadership](#)
[Chronicle of Higher Education: Advice Section](#)
[Chronicle Vitae](#)
[Conditionally Accepted](#)
[Inside Higher Education: Career advice library](#)
[“The Professor is In” blog](#)
[National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity](#)