CEOC Newsletter *Spring 2020*

In this newsletter:

- [The (new) members introduce themselves in the CEOC who's who](#)

- [Learn from the URPP GCB's collective wisdom with a summary of the tips collected from the CEOC Special Pub Night "Tips and Tricks with Dips and Treats" (January 30, 2020)](#)

- [Learn how to implement peer-mentoring with an introduction to the BADGERing system and then find a BADGER (peer-mentor)](#)

- [Links to additional resources on mentoring and mentorship](#)

From the list of topics to discuss within Career and Equal Opportunities Committee, mentoring and mentorship appeared high on our list. We are all familiar with supervision, the default mode of guidance in academic career. A supervisor's expertise in the academic field should ensure appropriate guidance regarding content and progress of the work. However, not all challenges encountered in an academic career are related to a lack of knowledge in or experience with a particular academic research field. In these cases, a mentor can provide complementary support in reaching objectives, whether these are short-term results or long-term career goals. In turn, having a mentee provides an opportunity to gain experience in providing guidance and reflect on past experiences. Many different types mentor-mentee relationships are possible, varying in experience differential, extent of the interaction, and purpose in general. In this newsletter, we will discuss recent discussions within the URPP GCB about mentoring, and provide an introduction into a specific type of peer mentoring system you could choose to join yourself. We are looking forward to continuing the discussion and share experiences with each other about ways in which mentoring can support our endeavors. Looking forward to hearing from you,

Mollie, Sarah, Maarten and Debra from the CEOC

The CEOC who's who

Mollie Chapman, Chairperson: Postdoc in the UZH Department of Geography and URPP GCB Member since January 2018 in the group of Norman Backhaus and part of the project People's Place in Nature led by Anna Deplazes-Zemp. I am a conservation social scientist focusing on environmental values and collaborating across disciplines including philosophy and ecology. As Chair of the CEOC my goal is to create an inclusive and supportive environment such that each member of the URPP GCB and the URPP GCB as a whole can thrive.
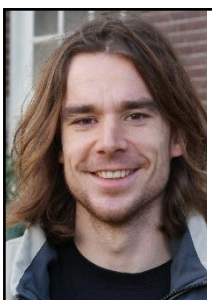
Maarten Eppinga, Mid-career Representative: since November 2018 I work in the UZH Department of Geography, as a Senior Scientist in the Earth System Science group of Maria Santos. I am also an affiliate member of the URPP GCB. I am interested in mathematical modelling of social-ecological systems, and testing predictions of these models with empirical data, preferably collected with our own fieldwork. As a member of the CEOC I am particularly interested in promoting equal opportunities and stimulating developments toward a more diverse academic research community.

Sarah Mayor, Early-career Representative: PhD student since September 2017 in the UZH Department Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Science, in the Soil Ecology & Global Change group of Pascal Niklaus. I am an affiliate member of the URPP GCB studying the relationship between diversity and functioning at the landscape scale and in real world ecosystems. As the PhD rep of the CEOC, I help provide the student perspective when elaborating tools or discussing platforms useful to aid PhD students in their work.

Debra Zuppinger-Dingley, Management Representative: I joined UZH as a masters student in 2008 and went on to do a PhD with Bernhard Schmid. I started working for the URPP GCB in 2015. My research career began in natural science as an ecologist but I have become more interested in an interdisciplinary approach to ecological questions. I hope to be able to help GCB'ers develop their career paths, integrating the research approaches in our program towards more interdisciplinarity in addressing the global change and biodiversity challenge.

URPP GCB Special Pub Night "Tips and Tricks"

30 January 2020

With a view over the Zürich skyline at sunset, URPP GCB members from across the spectrum of departments and career stages gathered to share their hard-won wisdom and their struggles during their career. Read about the knowledge we harvested—from tackling your everyday to long term career pointers… and what strategies you could skip—negative results are also results!

Below are CEOC's top two tips …but read the full list here to learn how to foster interdisciplinary exchange, if daily planners are a good idea, and the best drink to order at the Irchel bar.

Top Tip #1: Structure your supervisor meeting to keep on track with these questions:

1. Of the results I obtained last month, which are the most important?
2. Did I deviate from last month's planning, if so why?
3. What are the most important goals for the upcoming month?
4. What do I need to do to reach these goals? (hurdles and how to overcome them)

Top Tip # 2: How to plan over 4 years?

1. Have long term goals. What needs to get done to work towards them?
2. Figure out what is absolutely essential for the goal and do that.
3. Make your plan have layers that can be peeled off it the more ambitious ones are too hard.
4. Add in the other layers if it turns out to be possible.
5. It's okay to change the layers.

- **<u>Good tips on how to organize work</u>**
  - Get enough sleep
    - For learning
    - Processing
    - Staying in a good mood
  - Be aware of your behaviour and attitude towards others
  - Leaving things half-finished can help you restart them quickly
  - Make MindMaps (using good-old pen & paper, or an online tool like Padlet)

- Staying on top of the literature by registering to your favourite journals
- Answer these questions every month with your supervisor
  - Of the results I obtained last month, which are the most important?
  - Did I deviate from last month's planning, if so why?
  - What are the most important goals for the upcoming month?
  - What do I need to do to reach these goals? (hurdles and how to overcome them)

- **Tips that seemed like a good idea but didn't help me**
  - Learn the whole code behind the software
    - COUNTERED: "tip that turned out a good idea: looking at the whole code to be able to tweak it"
  - Daily planners: took more time making it and felt robotic
  - 5-year plans
  - Trying to be more like *insert name of person*

- **Tips needed**
  - Q: How to deal with the order of the co-authors & how to cope with collaboration?
    - A: http://thetrophiclink.org/posts/valuing-contributions-in-teams/
  - Q: How to not be stuck on a desert island with your supervisor?
    - A: Get feedback from peers
  - Q: How to plan over 4 years?
    - A: Figure out what is absolutely essential for the goal and do that. Add in the other layers if it turns out to be possible. It's okay to change the layers. Have long term goals. What needs to get done to work towards it? Can you make your plan have layers that can be peeled off it the more ambitious ones are too hard?
  - Q: How to foster interdisciplinary exchanges?
    - A: Dig into your assumptions. Be open to different worldviews.
    - A: A great resource on interdisciplinary research can be found here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/book/10.1002/9781444328486
  ➔ UNANSWERED
  - How to link sparkling ideas?
  - What is a good way to organise my to do list?
  - How to secure a permanent contract?

- **What help me to feel satisfied with my work?**
  1) At the end of the DAY
  - Social
    - Calling out bad behaviour of powerful people

- Hug someone
- Spend some time outside, go for a walk
- Go to the Irchel bar, a good white wine spritz

· Time management
- Create enough "white space" around activities so you can appreciate them
- Mark the progress of the most important tasks in the do to list
- Finishing a task even though it's not perfect
- Accept what you have completed
- Ignoring emails
- Replying to email

· Technical
- Leave your computer to process data for you while you go and rest
- Have a "nice" plot

2) At the end of the YEAR

· Time management
- Hold a research diary
- Focus on habits not goals
- Have a monthly report and a half-year report with future plan

· Be kind to yourself
- Making a list of what I've accomplished during the year
- Only making 365 mistakes
- Gratitude for all of the good things

· Social
- BADGERing (*see next item in this newsletter*)
- Investing time in my network at all levels
- Talking with friends and colleagues
- Constructive feedback

· Happy surprises that are (mostly) out of my control
- When there is logic behind my results
- Paper published
- Discovering more and unexpected questions to answer

BADGERing System How To Sheet

BADGER = Buddy Accountability Driving Greatness and Excellence in Research & Scholarship

Why BADGER?

For most people, academia involves a lot of time working alone and independently. While this freedom can be rewarding it can also be challenging. Many of us find ourselves asking questions such as: Which project should I prioritize? What's the next step in writing my paper? How do I even motivate myself to sit down and write? Should I say yes to this cool but time-consuming opportunity? How should I handle a difficult co-author?

In CHANS Lab at University of British Columbia, we developed a system called BADGERing to help each other with our day to day work. The most important thing is to find a support system that helps you, so please consider all of the following guidelines to inspire you, not rules to follow.

How to BADGER

ONE: find a BADGER. We recommend finding someone who is a peer to you, e.g., at about the same career stage. Some people have had enjoyed having a small badgering group with 3-4 people. But for most it is easiest to make pairs—this makes scheduling easier and gives more one on one time. When seeking out a Badger or BADGERing group, make sure to share your expectations and availability with each other to see if you will be a good match. For example: Do you want to have regular meetings every Monday morning to plan your weekly tasks? Or would you rather meet for a beer or walk spontaneously when you are stuck and need someone to talk something through?

To help URPP GCB members find a BADGER, we've set up a doodle poll where you can mark what kind of badger you are looking for:

https://doodle.com/poll/8kwqss3rk7gc6wft

You can then see who has similar interests and email or call them up and ask them if they want to be your BADGER. Or try a first "date" and see if works for you.

TWO: Decide how, where and how often you will meet. We recommend in person meetings if possible, but you can also use video chat or whatever else works for you.

THREE: Feel free to 'break up' with your BADGER if it's not working for you. This should be a source of support and not a burden. That said, like any relationship, it might take some time to find your groove together.

Here are some of the topics you can discuss with your BADGER (but it's really up to you—so don't feel limited!)

<u>Accountability and Productivity</u>

- Your weekly to do list and what you hope to accomplish. You can tell this to your BADGER on Monday and check in again on Friday to see how it went. This can be helpful to keep you accountable and also to learn what's actually realistic in a week.
- Your goals for the month/year. Here your BADGER can help you to think about where you are going, what to prioritize, and what kinds of steps to take to reach your goals.
- Your work or writing habits. You might ask each other what helps you to feel good about your work at the end of the day? Do you work best at 2 am in bed? At a café? In the library? With others or alone?
- Each keep track of how you spend your time for a week. Share your time journals with each other and what insights you got from them.

<u>Support in Sticky Situations</u>

- What's going well or not so well in your relationship with your supervisor? Do you feel you have the support you need? Are you able to disagree? What expectations do you have for your supervisor? What does your supervisor expect of you?
- Which conferences to attend and what to present there
- What side projects to pursue or to say no to
- Having trouble with a co-author or colleague?
- Feeling overwhelmed, confused, not good enough or any other of the emotions that come along with the cycle of judgement and "feedback" we are all part of
- Share something you are proud of from the last week (a situation you handled well, a good conversation you had, a question you answered well, remembering to call your mom on her birthday, making a really great curry, etc.)
- Use your BADGER as a sounding board for a new project idea, maybe one that seems too crazy to tell your supervisor.
- Practice a difficult conversation with you BADGER, e.g., giving some hard to hear feedback to a MSc student you are supervising, or an upcoming job interview
- Balancing personal and work life
- Practice active listening with each other on any of these topics

Additional resources on mentoring and mentorship

We are planning to curate a list of resources on mentoring and mentorship, which will be available and regularly updated on the URPP GCB website. If you have any suggestions to add to this list, please send an email to: ceoc@ieu.uzh.ch , so we can include it.

Resources with UZH:

- The UZH Graduate Campus can support PhDs and postdocs in an advisory capacity. This support can pertain to non-subject specific questions or concerns regarding your work, working environment, employment career or related issues. Options include individual coaching and counselling. You can find more information at: https://www.grc.uzh.ch/en/phd-postdoc/coaching.html

- In case you would like to organize a peer mentoring group for the medium to long-term. The Graduate Research Council (GRC) offers Peer Mentoring Grants, which provide junior researchers with the means for funding activities of peer mentoring groups. A group typically consists of researchers from various career stages (e.g. PhDs and postdocs), so that members can change roles over time through accumulated experience. More information can be found at: https://www.grc.uzh.ch/en/calls/peermentoring.html

Additional resources:

- The Discovery Program for refugees is a joint initiative of the International Relations office and the VSUZH. It enables refugees to attend lectures as guest auditors and to experience student life at the University of Zurich. If you are interested in becoming a mentor in this program, you can find apply here: https://vsuzh.ch/en/dienstleistungen#titel

- In case you are interested in becoming a mentor for an exchange student, you can sign up as a mentor for the Erasmus exchange network buddy system. More information can be found at: https://zurich.esn.ch/w/buddysystem

- Useful advice (including additional links) for both mentees and mentors on adjusting to working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic: https://dynamicecology.wordpress.com/2020/03/15/some-advice-for-phd-students-and-their-mentors-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/

- The results of a large survey under graduate students highlight particular aspects of career development that cannot always be catered to by direct supervisors, and how additional mentoring can assist in these cases: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03535-y