

The Antibody Society's Q&A with Dr. Feng Yang

Feng Yang received her Ph.D. and postdoctoral training in two prominent biological mass spectrometry and proteomics labs, led by Prof. Donald F. Hunt at University of Virginia and Dr. Richard D. Smith at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, respectively. Feng received a US HUPO Career Development Award in Technologies, San Francisco, CA, in March 2012 and Great Manager Award, Leading through Change, in 2018 at Pharma Technical Development US, Genentech. She has in-depth knowledge and technical expertise in mass spectrometry (MS) and related methods for proteomics and antibody characterization, and she is the author of 58 (first author of 17) peer-reviewed publications and 1 book chapter (first author), and was corresponding author of PNAS and Anal. Chem. publications. Currently she is an assistant editor for *mAbs*.

Dr. Yang is currently both a technical and a people leader, and principal scientist at Genentech. She enjoys developing and advocating for the talents with which she has interacted. She has developed a lean-agile mindset through many roles as technical expert, analytical team leader, leading the MS functional excellence core, building a global MS community across Pharma Technical Development at Roche, coach and as leadership team member at Protein Analytical Chemistry department, Genentech.

This is my personal statement. Any views or opinions represented are personal and do not represent those of my current or past employers or institutions.

1. What excites you most about your work and the field of antibody discovery and development?

- Being part of the team that contributes to getting safe and effective antibody drugs developed and delivered to patients in much shorter time.
- Developing and applying modern analytical techniques to fully characterize the antibody biologics to ensure their quality.

2. What has been the most rewarding aspect of your career?

- Learning from and contributing to scientific communities through reading, writing and networking/collaborations.
- Developing talents along the way. It's so rewarding and fun to be able to see and identify the strengths/talents of folks who work with me, postdocs, research associates or junior scientists, help them grow to their best potential by coaching, teaching, training, challenging them directly, and connecting them to other colleagues/networks who might better help them in areas outside of my expertise.
- Getting multi-tasks done efficiently through strategic planning, building an engaged and motivated team that brings different and complementary strengths. The team can be your team members, direct reports or collaborators.

3. What are the most important qualities/traits for a scientist to be successful in their career?

- Critical thinking, making the seemingly complex work simple
- Teamwork, communication & be a people person
- Growth mindset, stay hungry and foolish and be adaptable
- Being lean and agile

4. Do you have any advice about how to cultivate key skills?

- Get to know yourself deeply, through some personality tests or/and collecting feedback from people who know you.
- Focus on your strengths and be mindful of your growing areas.
Think about what you are most passionate about, which

direction can best use of your talents, what areas you need to learn and practice more to help you get there.

- Find mentor(s) that can mentor and support you. This is extremely useful for fresh graduates since most are well trained for technical knowledge, but not necessarily on how to work and grow in a team environment in a real world. Reach out to mentors who are successful in the area of your interest and are willing to mentor and teach others. Their experience sharing especially about soft skills on how to do things, communicate with others, or resolve conflict will help you grow, prevent you from going to unproductive way to do things and help you establish yourself. I have been lucky and got several mentors at each workplace. Some of my managers, friends, collaborators, or anyone that I feel connected and respect, such as my job interviewers, have become my mentors. I will never hesitate to reach out to anyone who has a great reputation but might be a stranger to me to get connected and mentored.