"Practice how you will introduce yourself. Prepare a 30-second version about you and your research and a slightly longer version in case someone asks for more. Check out your handshake to be sure it is not too limp or too strong. A good handshake can make a great impression."

Tomorrow's Professor Msg.#1030 Getting the Most Out of a Research Conference

Folks:

The posting below gives some good tips on getting the most out of a research conference. It is from the April 2010 issue of the online publication Graduate Connections Newsletter [http://www.unl.edu/gracestudies/current/dev/newsletter/] , pp 4-5, from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is published by the Office of Graduate Studies. ©2010 Graduate Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Reprinted with permission.

Regards,

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UP NEXT: Gaining Factual Knowledge

Tomorrow's Research

-------------------------------------- 586 words --------------------------------------

Getting the Most Out of a Research Conference

Traveling to a research conference as a graduate student is expensive but priceless. To keep costs down, buy your airline ticket well in advance and try to share a hotel room with one or more of your colleagues. The benefits of attending may outweigh the cost because conferences can offer opportunities for career enhancement, help you gain more information about your research and lead to valuable contacts with other people in your research area.

Here are some tips to help you get the most out of the experience.

Before the Conference

* Think about the connection between the value of going to the conference and your professional and personal goals.

* Strategize about your main goals for attending, and decide what you want to achieve. Make as detailed a list as possible.

* Look at the conference schedule as soon as it is available and decide what sessions, activities, panel discussions, dinners, receptions, etc., will help you get more information about your research and enable you to make valuable contacts.

* Gather information about the speakers, make a priority list of who you want to meet, and research them. Call or e-mail to introduce yourself and make an appointment with them in advance, if possible. (Information sources include their business Web site, and possibly blogs, twitter streams and other social media sites.) Practice how you will introduce yourself. Prepare a 30-second version about you and your research and a slightly longer version if case someone asks for more.Check out your handshake to be sure it is not too limp or too strong. A good handshake can make a great impression.

* Make some business cards with your name, e-mail and research interest and carry them with you to give to people you want to contact you later.

* Prepare a list of questions you need to have answered or discussed.

* Print out the conference details, your planning or goals list, and travel details in advance; check the weather forecast; back up your laptop and charge the batteries.

During the Conference
* Stay at the same hotel as the conference, if possible, because valuable contact can take place in the lobby or in the hotel coffee shop.

* Dress for success. Looking like a professional will help you make a good impression.

* Don't drink alcohol at the conference venue or around people with whom you want to create a professional relationship.

After the Conference

* Take time to reflect on what took place. Did you get the information you needed and did you make good contacts? If not, why not? How could you do a better job? If you didn't do so well, maybe it's time to take advantage of graduate student development. See the Graduate Studies Web site [http://www.url.edu/gradstudies/current/dev/ ] for some helpful resources.

* Craft or update your CV so it illustrates your education, awards background and skills.

* Contact people whose presentations you could not attend and get materials if they are not available through the conference Web site.

* Stay in contact with your department alumni to increase opportunities for future contact with people sharing your research interests.

* Send a thank you e-mail to those who went out of their way to meet with you or those who provided you with important information. Let them know what you took away with you.

Sources: