Organize Yourself

- Look at the conference program to identify the faculty that you have an interest in meeting (tag the program with post-its)
- Create a schedule for each day of the conference
- Highlight the workshops that overlap and the events you do not want to miss
- Create business cards before the conference
- Attend every social and professional workshop possible
- Make note of the extra activities that peers are organizing

Attire

- Wear something comfortable but professional
  - No shorts or mini-skirts, skirts on the knee or slightly above
  - Caution with tight clothes, you do not want to be preoccupied with your clothes - no clingy shirts or open buttons
  - Iron your shirts, do not come to the sessions wrinkled or stained
- Have an extra set of clothes ready in case of accidents - spills
- If presenting, bring a blazer and men wear a tie
- If you are simply attending workshops, do not wear colors that are too bright and stay away from flashy patterns
- For the awards ceremony, wear something more formal
  - Ladies, be cautious not to be too revealing given the audience
- Conservative 2 piece
- Colors – grey, black, navy blue, brown
- Panty hose – skin color, black - not white
- Wear slips and undershirts, no mules or clogs
- Do not wear flashy jewelry
- Black leather portfolio
- Put cell on vibration mode
- Pull hair from your eyes
- Natural makeup, light perfume and cologne

Social Encounters

- Attend the workshops by faculty/professionals you want to meet
  - Be genuine, respectful and natural
  - Read their work prior to approaching them; bring research to conference for review
  - Be respectful and call professionals by their titles – unless told otherwise
- Attend socials and attempt to sit in tables with professionals
  - Introduce yourself and ask them about their area of interest
    - Where are you from? Do you work in the community, at a university?
    - Engage in casual conversations
    - Do not talk about politics, religion or anything controversial
  - Faculty can sometimes be socially awkward
    - Let them lead the conversation
    - Do not be overly anxious to fill in the silence
  - Practice a good hand shake, saying your name, school affiliation, etc – when shaking hands make eye contact, firm not destructive
  - Have your card to give to the faculty if interested in reconnecting
  - Ask them for a card
    - Look at it before putting it away
    - Pay attention to your non-verbals
    - Shaking of legs, eye contact, playing with pens

Important Non-Verbals

- Eye contact helps regulate communication flow. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility.
- Facial Expressions: Smiling transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking.
- Gestures: If you fail to gesture while speaking you may be perceived as bored.
- Posture and body orientation: Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that you are approachable, receptive and friendly.
- Proximity: Look for signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person's space. Some of these are: rocking, leg swinging, tapping, and gaze aversion.
- Vocal: Speaking can signal nonverbal communication when you include such vocal elements as: tone, pitch, rhythm, timbre, loudness, and inflection.

Source: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leadcom.html

Active Listening

- Spend more time listening than talking
- Do not finish others' sentences
- Do not answer questions with questions
- Be aware of biases
- Never daydream or become preoccupied with your own thoughts when others talk
- Let others talk/ Do not dominate
- Plan responses after the other person has finish speaking, NOT while they are speaking
- Provide feedback, but do not interrupt incessantly

Source: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/leader.html

Ways of Improving the Experience

- Identify a conference buddy
- Do not talk in the hallway during a session
- Do not be loud
- Do not sit in the front of a session if you need to leave early
- Do not text your friends during a session
- Do not answer the phone during a session

Mannerism of Communication

- Always stand up when introduced (wear your name tag)
- Smile
- Shake hands
- Make eye contact
- Introduce yourself
- Put your name tag on the right
- Transitioning
  - It was great to meet you. Excuse me, I must
  - Dr. xx it was a pleasure to meet you. I look forward to remaining in contact with you.
Eating a Meal
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement
- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything
- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a talking business lunch order something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision
- Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body
- Bring food to your mouth, not your head to the plate
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself
- Start eating with the utensil that is farthest away from your plate. Remember to work from the outside in
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down)
- Don’t chew with your mouth open or blow on your food

Source: http://www.placementmanual.com/interviewing/interviewing-08.html

The Value of Graduate School
- Education is a venue that has historically assisted groups to gain social status and economic mobility
- Graduate school is one of the means to increase your career options
- Graduate school assists students to develop personal and professional skills
  - Graduate training increases a person’s income, job options, career options, versatility, etc (career vs. job)
- The benefits will subside the cost
  - It is not as expensive as you think
- Use this conference to learn about graduate school opportunities
- Ask professors about their programs, the focus and research opportunities
- Visit any graduate school tables that may be at the conference
- Talk to students about their graduate school experiences and the programs
- Attend graduate school workshops
- Make an intentional effort to meet the faculty in the programs you are considering

Tips to Successful Conferencing
- Bring a positive attitude to sessions.
- Learn the names, interests and strengths of the people you meet
- Develop a social network with other students
- Take initiative!
- Avoid gossip!
- Make an extra effort to attend orientation workshops and student related programming
- Go to most socials to network
- Set personal goals for yourself to gain from the conference

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