

Networking Tips for Scientific Meetings (and beyond)ⁱ

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PREPARE:

- **Identify your goal**
 - Get advice
 - Find a job
 - Learn a skill
- **Identify potential contacts**
 - Program speakers
 - Poster presenters
 - Other conference attendees
- **Determine what you want to learn from the people you meet.**
 - Learn about new opportunities
 - Become more knowledgeable about the field
 - Meet people who can help you with your career planning/job search
- **Create a list of questions** that you could ask.
 - You'll need to be organized so that you don't waste your contacts time and gain as much as possible from each contact you make.
- **Prepare a 30-60 second "elevator speech"** to introduce yourself.
 - Say who you are (e.g., My name is Mary Jones and I'm a student...)
 - What and where you are studying (...at Harvard majoring in biochemistry...)
 - Give a snapshot of your relevant experience and preparation (...I just finished the intro courses and pre-med requirements...)
 - Goal of your conversation (...and I would like to--- learn about your career path/ get your advice on getting into med school/apply for a summer research job)

CONTACT:

- **Find the people who can help you**
 - **Go to conferences and educational programs** that will put you in contact with people who can help with your career search
 - **Keep careful records** of everyone you meet at conferences, class presentations, lectures, friends, or through your current or previous work or volunteer experiences
 - **When you read an article or hear someone speak** on a topic that matches your career interests, make a note of the author or speaker so you can contact them later about your career.
- **Prioritize your list of possible contacts**
 - It is impossible to follow-up with everyone you meet, so decide who may be most helpful
- **Collect business cards** and write notes on the back to help you remember something about the individual
- **Create a system to organize your contacts** that will allow you to track and fully utilize your network
- **For the initial contact, send an email or a letter of introduction** and, if you have a referral, mention their name.
 - Tell them a little about your background and the goal of your conversation (basically, a written form of your elevator speech) Example: *"At the suggestion of [Contact Name and title/relationship] I am writing to ask for your advice on how I can best launch my career in [career field/research interest]. In June I will graduate with my [degree] from [Institution]."*

FOLLOW-UP:

- Always email **letters of appreciation** after a phone, or in-person meeting.
 - Remind your contact of the context of your conversation (where you met, what you discussed)
 - Request that they recommend other people with whom you can speak. Be sure to ask if you can use their name when contacting the person that they recommend.
 - Example: *"Dr. Jones, thank you so much for talking with me at the Annual Conference last week. I appreciated your advice on summer research opportunities. As you suggested, I have contacted the Office of Student Programs. Please let me know if you hear of any other opportunities that may be of interest to me. Thank you again!"*

ⁱ Adapted from Harvard School of Public Health. Career Services Office. "Step-By-Step Guide to Networking"