GRADUATE STUDENT NETWORKING AT ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

1. **Update Your Resume:** Take advantage of the free resume review service offered by Teachers College Career Services (TCCS).

2. **Get Business Cards:** Bring plenty of business cards to pass out. Get them on the main campus (http://print.columbia.edu/business-cards--250 cards for $35.00 plus tax, 7-10 days to produce)

3. **Dress for success:** This doesn’t mean you have to wear a suit, but it is important to dress professionally in your efforts to present your best self.

4. **Set Up Coffee Dates with Key People In Advance:** See if you can set up coffee dates in advance if there are key people you want to talk to (e.g., professors at other institutions if you are interested in PhD programs, or employees at organizations you want to work with). Check out the CIES program now and send some introductory emails in advance of the conference before their schedules get filled.

5. **Leverage Your Own Network:** Use friends, acquaintances, professors and colleagues strategically - ask them to make introductions for you during the conference. Be sure to branch out to make new friends – don’t just hang with the TC crowd. You can always network with them on campus.

6. **Attend Sessions:** Carefully review the conference program to choose the right sessions for you. Go to panels you are interested in and approach the speakers after the presentation either to compliment what you liked and/or ask if it’s possible to continue the conversation over coffee or a call/meeting in the future. Research the scholars and/or organizations in advance of the conference session; come to the session ready to pose well thought out and articulate questions either during the Q&A or after the panel with the presenter(s).

7. **Visit Conference Booths:** Talk to the people staffing organizational and other vendor booths. They aren’t very busy so it’s a great time to chat up different employees, ask about upcoming jobs, what types of work they are doing, etc. You can leave your business cards or resumes there--the organizations are there specifically because they are looking for good future employees!!

8. **Participate in Social Events:** Go to the introductory receptions and just mingle. There are lots of people to meet in a casual setting. Consider attending the conference dinner (fees apply), sit with new and interesting people and even dance!
9. Get Involved: One great way to get involved is by joining a Special Interest Group (SIG). The SIGs hold business meetings during CIES, which is a good opportunity to meet others with shared thematic interests. If you are considering joining a SIG, you might sit in on the meeting to make up your mind. As your time allows, volunteer for a leadership position with a SIG. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know others in your field and develop working relationships.

10. Connect with Fellow Panelists (if presenting): Arrive to your session early and meet everyone on your panel; if you were grouped together, there is a good chance your interests might overlap. Pass out business cards. Stay after to talk to those interested in your work. DO NOT prep last minute for your presentation. Make sure to prep and practice your presentation beforehand – attend the “How to Present at Conferences” session this Thursday! See delivering a good presentation as a reflection of the quality of your work (which will build interest in you as a scholar and potential employee!).

11. Follow-up: Definitely follow-up with contacts after the conference. Send them an email about how much you enjoyed meeting them and maintain that connection.

12. Change Your Mindset: If you think of networking as an evil word that implies “schmoozing” then you will never feel good about it. Instead, think of networking as a positive process that builds your social capital. Scholars in the field are eager to meet students and organizations are always looking for qualified and ambitious staff. Think of networking as simply “meeting people.” Extroverts and introverts can both be successful networkers – prepare your “pitch,” be confident, maintain eye contact and break out of your comfort zone.

13. Be Gracious, Be Humble: No matter what your approach, be gracious and humble when meeting new people. Don’t try to oversell yourself or come across as pushy when asking for advice and/or coffee chats. Being friendly, engaged and brief in your outreach efforts will go a long way in helping you establish new connections.

14. Have Fun! Enjoy yourself, take advantage of the opportunities to learn more about the ICE field and to meet scholars, practitioners and students from around the world.

Professors Benson, Buckner, Mendenhall, Pizmony-Levy, Russell and Tibbits all contributed their ideas for this tip sheet.

Check out these additional resources:
• Networking Tips for Graduate Students: [http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2013/06/20/networking-tips-for-graduate-students/](http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2013/06/20/networking-tips-for-graduate-students/)
  [https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/06/24/essay-how-attend-academic-conference](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/06/24/essay-how-attend-academic-conference)
• Surviving Academic Conferences Without Crying: [https://brainthatwouldntdie.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/surviving-academic-conferences-without-crying/](https://brainthatwouldntdie.wordpress.com/2013/07/30/surviving-academic-conferences-without-crying/)