Making the Most of Conferences

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
CAREER CONNECTIONS CENTER
Meet Your Facilitator

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Today's Agenda

- Setting Your Conference Goals
- Getting the Most Out of Your Sessions
- Making Connections
Why should you attend a conference.

Networking
- Experts
- Peers
- Collaborators
- Industry partners

Learning
- Trends
- Data
- Skill development

Personal Development
- Step outside of your own focus
- Reinvigorate your interest or find new ones
- Inspiration
- Challenge yourself
Virtual Conferences

- Research attendee, sponsors, exhibitors and presenter lists beforehand
- Prep your background environment and your tools (conference app, session software)
- Dress professionally and be well groomed
- Disconnect from your work
- Take breaks
- Take notes
- Plan 1:1 “coffee chats”
Setting Your Conference Goals

- What does the agenda look like?
- Where is it located?
- Who typically attends?
- What skills and insights are you looking for?
- Are you preparing for a job search?
Getting the Most Out of Your Sessions

- Be facilitator or volunteer
- Build a diverse schedule: balance expertise of presenter, skills building, networking, topics both related and unrelated to your research agenda
- Take notes on the sessions and reach out to the presenter afterword
- Connect with presenters and panelists on Twitter or other social media
- Scan the poster areas
- Ask advice from your chair or advisor about who to connect with or what sessions you should attend
Making Connections

Connect → Ask Questions → Tweet or engage on social media → Send a follow-up email
Dear [name],

My name is [your name], and I am a graduate student at the University of Florida, and I am studying [field]. I read that you will be [attending/presenting] at [conference name], and I am reaching out to see if you are available to meet for 15-20 minutes. I am interested in learning more about [what you want to know from this person].

Thank you,

[Your name]
Conversation Starters

- What was your favorite session so far?
- What did you think of the keynote?
- Is this your first time at this event?
- What’s an interesting [idea, method, or trend] you’ve learned about here?
- Why did you choose to attend this conference?
- Are you working on any exciting projects?
Prepare Your Academic Elevator Pitch

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<th>Introduction</th>
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<td>What you do</td>
<td>Analysis action verb</td>
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<td>Summarize Your Research Interests</td>
<td>How your work connects to the broader field</td>
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<td>Why it matters</td>
<td>What problems does your research solve or address</td>
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Hi, I am Jaime Harsell from the University of Florida, I analyze labor market outcomes for individuals who complete Career and Technical Education credentials to evaluate the equity and efficacy of federal policy interventions.
• What resources were most impactful for your job search?
• What experiences were most valuable for you in your graduate program?
• What were your biggest lessons learned early in your career?
• How do you evaluate candidates when you are on search committees? What do you wish candidates would do more/less of?
• What is the biggest challenge you face in your area of research?
Thank You. Questions?