

CONFERENCE 101



PREPARED BY:
ASHLEY CARLISLE
EDUCATION COORDINATOR
JANUARY 2020

BENEFITS OF CONFERENCES

- Get to know people in your field
- Hear about the latest research and work in Indian Country
- Gain feedback and advice
- Improve your presentation and communication skills
- Travel to see new places or visit old places
- Engage with your peers
- Enhance your resume and/or CV
- Gather new ideas and opinions



BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

WRITE AND/OR REFLECT ON YOUR GOALS FOR THE CONFERENCE

■ Before going to a conference, it may help you to write and/or reflect on what you want to get out of the conference:

- 1) Connections?
- 2) Ideas for research?
- 3) Collaboration?
- 4) Funding opportunities?
- 5) Internship opportunities?
- 6) Job opportunities?
- 7) Mentorships?
- 8) Presentation experience?
- 9) All of the above?

■ Knowing these can help you prepare yourself and guide you as you navigate the conference as well as who you interact with, what sessions you go to, etc.

PACKING FOR A CONFERENCE

- Make sure you pack a couple sets of professional clothing: **see Dress Professional**
 1. Skirts (make sure they are not too short, an ideal length is just above the knee, be cautious of how high slits go)
 2. Dress pants
 3. Button-ups, Blouses (keep in mind how revealing they may be)
 4. Accessories: ties, bowties, jewelry, hats, etc.
 5. Dress shoes (comfortable ones, if you want to wear heels, be sure to bring flats just in case, your feet start to ache)
 6. Watch (optional, this will prevent you from taking out your phone)
 7. Toiletries (chap stick, mints, shampoo, conditioner, cologne or perfume, toothbrush etc.)
- A bag, tote or purse to carry your laptop, conference swag and other things.
- Water bottle & snack(s), keeping hydrated throughout the day is great as well as keeping a light snack as well. Hotel foods or going out to eat may get expensive or hard to find.
- Notebook or Binder, to take notes as well as keep any brochures or handouts.
- Pens and pencils.
- Business cards.
- If you are job or internship hunting: a couple copies of your resume can be helpful, even copy of your unofficial transcripts.
- Chargers (phone, laptop, apple watch, etc.).
- Optional: a power strip, this can make you very popular, because outlets seem to be rare.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

- Prepare & Practice your Elevator Speech
- Clear | Descriptive | Emotional | Concise
- You want to say who you are and what you do in a concise, yet memorable way. Some people have used short stories or quotes 😊 Demonstrate how unique you are!
- Elements in an Elevator Speech:
 1. Your name
 2. Your affiliation (i.e. where you work, where you go to school)
 3. What are your career goals?
 4. A question
- An elevator speech can help you break the ice when talking with people, as well as make it so you are not trying to come up with something on the fly! It can make people remember you better.
- Example:

“Hi, I am Jess Donaldson, a student at NAFWS University. I am studying Fisheries Biology. I hope to work in the Native species reintroduction in New Mexico, because when I was little, I used to fish for trout with my pops, but now they’re declining. I want to help with that conservation issue. Do you know of anyone I can get in contact with? Or any internships I can apply to?”

PREPARE CONVERSATION STARTERS

- It may sound silly, but this can be a big help!
- Having a little list or script of conversation starters can be beneficial, because it can make you feel more prepared and confident! It also can help prevent you from retreating to a corner and going onto to your phone.
- Examples:
 - What you think of that last speaker?
 - What or How did you hear about this conference?
 - What other sessions are you going to?
 - Hi I'm (Your Name), I don't think we've met yet.
 - How'd you get interested in Natural Resources?
 - You can even ask for advice!

BUSINESS CARDS

- Since, you will be networking like crazy! Bring some business cards!
- It can help you save time & ensures that people have your contact.
(Its not getting written on a napkin, then getting lost later)
- You can make your own! Or order some!
- Make sure it has your:
 1. First and Last Name
 2. School or Job
 3. Email
 4. Address (optional)
 5. Phone number (optional)
- Tip: You will be receiving a lot of business, so write notes on the back of them, so you do not forget the conversation you had with the individual or you don't forget who they are!

REVIEW THE AGENDA, CONFERENCE MAP & CONFERENCE CODE OF CONDUCT

- Look and see who is speaking & what time & where.
- Do not miss a session, you are really interested in!
- Keeping a schedule can help you get the most out of a conference.
- Seeing a map or walking around the conference areas, can help you not get lost or be in the wrong room.
- Conferences tend to post a Code of Conduct, which outlines different guidelines.



DURING THE
CONFERENCE

DRESS PROFESSIONAL

- Depending on the conference, dressing professional can vary.
- There are conferences where people wear business suits, business skirts, button-ups, high heels, dress shoes, etc.!
- For natural resources conferences:
Nice jeans or khakis with a button-up or a polo with some hiking boots (seem to suffice).
- Try to avoid wearing t-shirts.
- If you are a presenter dress up for the occasion, you will be meeting and talking to a lot of people!

BE PROFESSIONAL

- Remember, to be professional which includes dressing professional AND acting professional.
- You represent yourself, your family, your tribe, your school, your organization, your funders, your job and etc..
- Be respectful to the:
 - Presenters
 - Organizers
 - Venue workers
 - Venue property
 - Conference attendees
- Do not wear your headphones, earphones, air pods, wireless earphones while at the conference, EVEN if you're not listening to anything.
- Limit your phone use and laptop use. Put your phone & laptop volume on mute.
- Be on-time. Try to use the bathroom before a session starts, so you don't have to leave in the middle of a session.

TAKE NOTES!

- Don't forget to take notes!
- Who the speaker(s) are, their background, contact information, etc.
- Content of their presentation.
- Also, sometimes you can take notes on how they presented, how they addressed questions, or how they set up their power point --- looking out for these things can help you in the future.

For example: I went to a conference and a speaker was being asked questions from the audience. I was in the front, so I could not hear the person in the back asking a question. The speaker knew and considered that the room was big, so she would repeat the questions so the audience could hear then give her answer. So now, I try to remember to do that too!

DON'T BE SHY!

- Conferences are great for networking!
- So get out there! Talk and meet people -- utilize your elevator speech, & conversation starters.
- Attend the socials, mixers and free meals.
- If you are with co-workers or people you know, challenge yourself & branch away to meet new people.

WARNING! DO NOT RETREAT OR LOCK YOURSELF IN YOUR ROOM THE WHOLE TIME OF THE CONFERENCE!

WARNING! DO NOT BE GLUED TO YOUR PHONE!

GET SLEEP!

- Being at a conference is fun, but also can be very time-consuming and energy-consuming.
- As you go out for dinners or hang out with conference attendees, do not forget to get adequate amount of sleep!
- You will need to be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed for the rest of the conference days.

ENJOY YOURSELF

- Last thing, enjoy yourself!
- Remember to smile.
- Take deep breaths.
- Scope the town or area, do some sight seeing --- BUT, NOT TOO MUCH!
Remember, you are there for a professional conference, not a vacation
- Learn a lot.
- Make friends and connections.
- Take care of yourself: mentally, socially, physically, spiritually, etc.

ENJOY YOURSELF! PART 2, FOR 21 AND OLDER.

- IF you're legal to drink alcoholic beverages, you may have a drink or invite other conference attendees for a drink ... (but, be careful)

^^^ DO NOT DRINK ALOT! This isn't a party nor a time to get plastered. You wouldn't want a hang-over, miss anything because you slept-in because your tired, or do/say anything embarrassing or unprofessional.

^^^ FOR YOUR SAFETY AND NO MATTER WHAT GENDER YOU IDENTIFY AS: MAKE SURE YOU LET SOMEONE KNOW WHERE YOU ARE & WHO YOU ARE WITH.

- IF you're legal to gamble, you can spend your free time doing so ... (but, be careful)

^^^ DON'T SPEND THE WHOLE CONFERENCE GAMBLING!

REMEMBER TO TAKE SOME PICTURES!

- If you need some picture for that social media, take some pics! Although, be sure that they are appropriate photos.
- Use the conference hashtag, if there is one.
- Also, it is great to take pictures, you can use them for future presentations.
- Keep & take for memories 😊

POST-CONFERENCE TIPS



- FOLLOW UP WITH THE PEOPLE YOU MEET!
- IF YOU PRESENTED, RECEIVED AN AWARD, HAD A GREAT CONVERSATIONS AND/OR SOMEONE INSPIRED YOU: SEND A THANK YOU CARD.
- SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHERS.