Attending a Conference 101

Professional Development Series
March 21, 2023

UC RIVERSIDE | School of Education

Goals for session

- **Provide clarity on what to expect attending a conference**

- **Understand strategies for creating a schedule**

- **How to effectively network at a conference and afterwards**

- **Understand roles of participants and session types**

Attendance at a variety of sessions

Online schedule; look at in advance

- Identify topical areas of interest

- Search using keywords or scholar name

- Cannot attend every session

- # of sessions depends on ability to process info

Expansion of networks

1) Attend pre-conference events

- Sessions run day before the conference on site

- Like-minded sessions by research area (ex: qual research for graduate students)

- Opportunity for collaboration in the future

Expansion of networks

2) Send a note to scholars presenting at the conference to setup a meeting once at the location

- **Don't be discouraged if you do not receive a response**

- **Show up to their presentation, introduce yourself and mention your advisor, current institution and reference your pre-conference email**

- **Have a business card ready, but only give if they ask for one**

Expansion of networks

3) Socials – formal and informal

- Formal

  - Approach in the same manner as conference sessions

  - Part of the conference schedule; usually by institution or affiliation (ex: UC or ETA)

  - Typically have food

- Informal

  - Lobby of hotel headquarters; be prepared to open up and initiate conversation

  - Plan get together in advance with friends/colleagues

Tips for presenters

- One month out conduct a dry run in front of allies (colleagues/faculty)

  - Can be via Zoom or in class

  - 9-12 minutes; time it to make sure it's within the limit

  - Ask for feedback

- Check deadline to submit paper to discussant

  - Add a note to paper: Not for distribution, for discussant only

- Make sure you have a flash drive with your presentation (Wi-Fi can be spotty)

- Usually there is a computer in the room

  - If you have a Mac, bring an adapter

Session types: presentations

Roles of people in the room

1) **Presenter**

   - **Graduate student and/or faculty whose proposal was accepted in advance of the conference**

   - **Share their findings on working paper**

2) **Discussant**

   - **Area expert for session topic**

   - **Receives paper prior to conference; provides feedback in session**

3) **Chair**

   - **Runs the sessions (time, pace, introductions)**

   - **Usually emails discussant in advance to confirm allotted time**

4) **Audience**

   - **Can ask presenter questions at conclusion of session**

Session types: round table

- 3-4 presenters grouped together

- Usually have related topics, but not always

- Physically sit at a round table

- No discussant

- May be a Chair; sometimes the Chair is also a presenter

- Not a formal presentation, but may show a PowerPoint or bullet points

- Handouts can be useful (P.P. with contact info)

  - Suggest <u>not</u> sharing working paper

Post-conference: Making a strong connection

The scholars you reached out to prior to and at the conference:

- Send research article/op-ed to make an academic connection

- Offer to help and follow through with projects

- Reciprocity in a student/faculty dynamic makes for a strong connection

General information

Note the location of sessions

- Larger conferences take place in multiples hotels within a 2-mile radius

- Transportation is typically made available

- Consider ADA needs; contact conference administration for arrangements in

  advance

Conference website usually has things to do outside of event

- Opportunity for wellness/sightseeing

General information

Attire – be comfortable

- **Some people are in Sunday best while others are in jeans/tennis shoes**

- **Think about how you want to present yourself to others**

- **Consider future employer/colleagues**