



How to Network in Academia

An important component of academia is networking! Attend networking opportunities (conferences, symposia, challenges, other events) to meet new people, foster connections, and expand research horizons.

WHO ARE YOU? INTRODUCE YOURSELF!

“My name is ... and what is your name?” is a great conversation starter! Wear your nametag and add your social media handle or nickname to personalize it. If it’s a virtual event, turn your webcam on and display your proper name onscreen so others can see it when you chat. Try ‘mirroring’ (repeating) to learn a name: “Hello, Jennifer, it’s nice to meet you.” Make a note of the people you meet in case you want to contact them in the future!

PROMOTE PEER CONNECTIONS

Interact with faculty and graduate students to create a professional network, and network with other undergraduate students! Research events such as student clubs (like the Science, Research & Society Club, or student-led clubs in your discipline), conferences, poster competitions and symposiums, and SURE: Student Undergraduate Research Experience are great spaces to meet like-minded peers. Ask about their research experiences and findings, even when their discipline is different from your own. Connections and friendships with fellow students can lead to collaborations within your own university and across different campuses. You never know where you – or your friends – will go!

HELP AND LISTEN

If someone is carrying pizza boxes or frantically trying to re-pin a poster, jump in to help! Being proactive earns lots of social points. If you can, volunteering your time for student clubs opens a lot of doors and looks great on a resume. Likewise, the best networking comes not from talking, but from active listening. Ask questions and listen, focus your attention, and engage.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

Imagine you have 30 seconds with the leading academic in your field, in an elevator at a conference, and she says, “what are you researching?” Practice distilling your work down to 30 seconds: capture why you chose it or love it, and what is fascinating, interesting, or frustrating about what you are working on.

EMBRACE SOCIAL MEDIA ...AND FOLLOW UP

Create a professional profile to connect with a wider network of peers, researchers, and faculty. Look for the social media accounts of student groups, faculty, departments and colleges to follow. LinkedIn is a must – fill out your profile and keep it current. Events and opportunities to network are often posted, and social connections make follow-ups easy! Want to include a message? Great, just keep it short and simple. People have short memories and may meet many people at a time at a networking event so it is good practice to establish a follow-up correspondence. Some places to follow up:

- **With students:** LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email
- **With faculty:** LinkedIn, email, Twitter
- **With Undergraduate Research Initiative:** Instagram (@USask_UG_Research), Twitter (@USaskUGResearch), Facebook (U of S Undergraduate Research Initiative), Website
<https://vpresearch.usask.ca/students/undergraduate/undergraduate-research.php>

