

Attending Research Conferences Successfully

CSUDH

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What is a research conference

- Gathering of academics of all levels
- Professional Organization Representatives
- Can be one day
- Can be multiple days
- Can be in-person or virtual
- Can be local or in a new destination
- Can be national or international



What kind of events happen?

- **Research Presentations:**
 - From Professionals
 - From students
 - Poster Presentations
 - Talk Presentation
- **Professional Development Sessions**
- **Exhibit Hall Tabelling**
 - Vendors
 - Recruitment



Content

Conferences tend to have a focus on the area of interest:

- **Major/Field of Study, for example:**
 - American Physical Society
- **Professional area of work, for example:**
 - Society of Professional Journalists
- **Shared interest, for example:**
 - National Political Caucuses
- **Population demographics, for example:**
 - Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Physics (SACNAS)

Why should you attend?

- Opportunity to share your knowledge with others
- Learn from others
- Network
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 - Learn about grad programs
 - Learn about summer research internships
 - Learn about what you don't know (you don't know what you don't know)
 - Make new friends
- Often students who have never attended a conference feel very nervous
- **Often students, after their 1st conference, feel like it has been a life changing experience.**

Who here has attended a conference before?

What were your experiences?

What did you like?

What didn't you like?

What advice would you give to others for their first time?

How to prepare for a conference

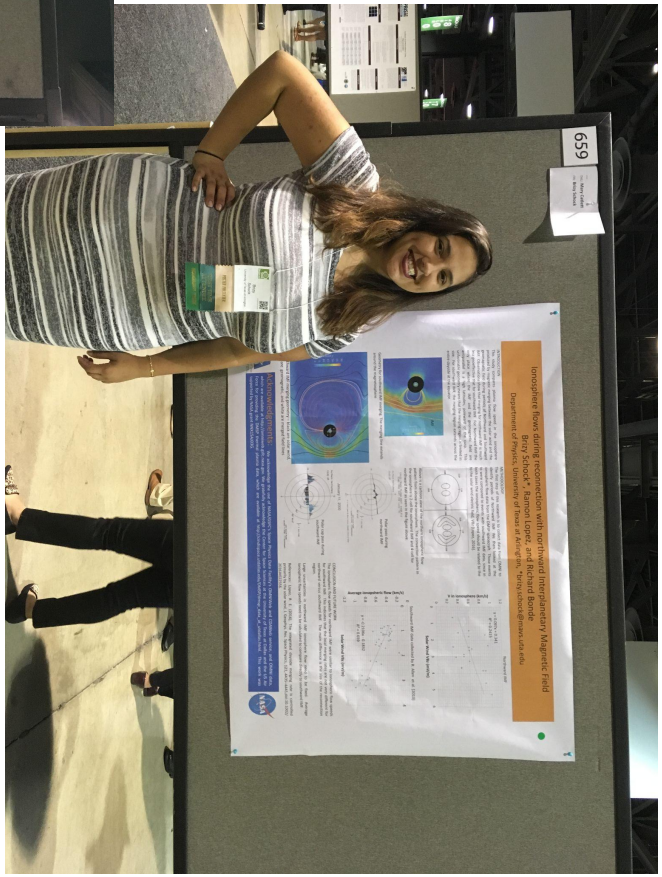
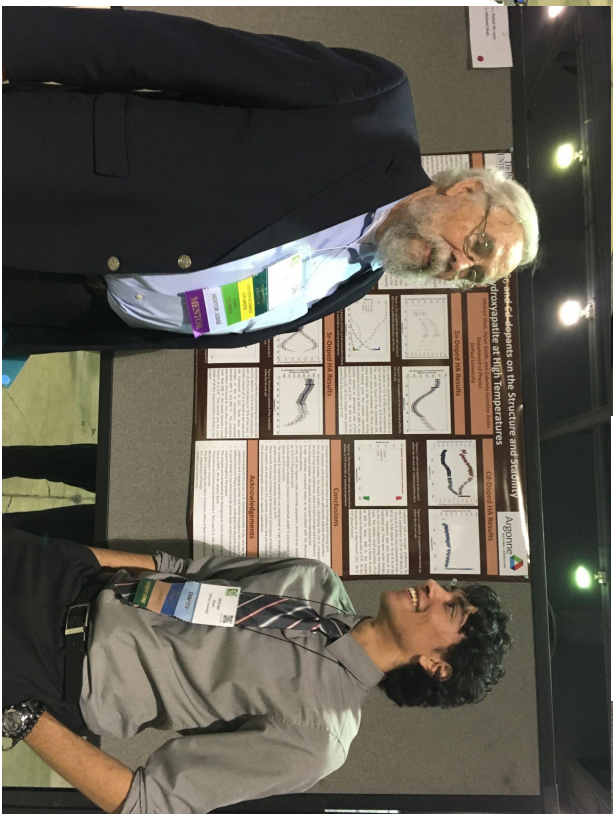
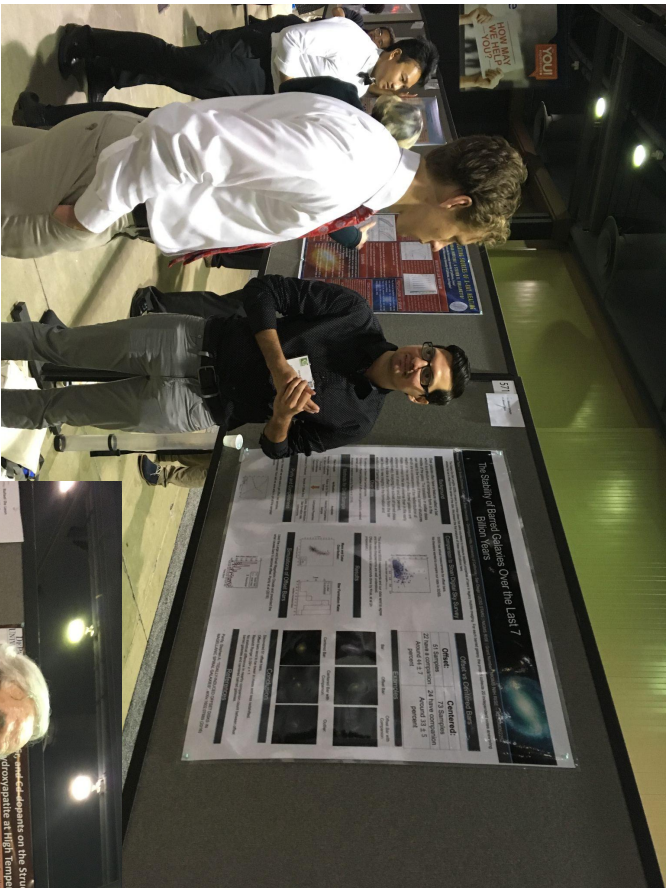
- Conference Agendas and Conference Information are posted online well in advance
 - Go to the website and explore!
 - Explore the agenda
 - Find sessions that sound interesting to you and go to them
 - Plan your days
 - Think about what your needs are
 - What topics do you get excited about?
 - What do you
 - Read the Codes of Conduct!!
 - Be respectful and understand what the conference expects of you in terms of respecting others
 - Be aware of your surroundings and make sure you are always taking precautions for your own safety

How to prepare: Talk with your professors, program directors, peers, advisors

- Ask them:
 - What conferences do they know of that might be appropriate for you to attend?
 - Are there deadlines that you should be aware of (explore the website)
 - Travel Scholarships (flight, hotel, transportation, food stipend)
 - A lot of opportunities for students to attend conferences from the organizations themselves
 - Presentation submission deadlines
 - Membership dues for reduced rates
 - Does campus have support for students to travel to conferences?
 - YES!!! Lots of offices on campus support students to attend conferences
 - Office of undergrad research
 - Student programs
 - Major programs
 - Professors that you do work with often have funding
 - Can they help you prepare for a conference?
 - Most of us are excited to work with our students to help them prepare.

If you are presenting

- Start developing your presentation early so you can practice
- Practice with your friends and your family
- Learn the language of the topic you are working on
- Learn your topics
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- Make sure you know the day, time, and location of where/when your presentation is
 - Poster presentations are different than talk presentations
- Make sure to ask your advisor to help you understand what to expect during your presentation
 - it should be more fun and exciting kind of nerves as opposed to fear...at least that is the goal)



**Who here has presented at a conference
before?**

What it a talk or a poster presentation?

What was it like?

Would you do it again?

If you are not presenting

- **Be engaged.**
 - Do not treat conferences like a vacation.
 - You are there to deepen your knowledge and to make connections
- **Attend student presentations**
 - Support friends you are attending with
 - Support other students
 - Be positive and give constructive feedback
 - Do not focus on the negative, it helps no one to only hear how they messed up
- **Attend the professional development sessions.**
 - Resume building
 - Personal statements
 - scholarship/fellowship/grant workshops
- **Explore the exhibit halls (often a lot of free swag, and don't be shy...take all the things that are offered, but don't be wasteful).**

How to Prepare: know yourself and your habits

- Do you get overwhelmed easily?
 - Build in breaks
- Are you are morning person?
 - If not, what steps can you take to overcome your morning struggles?
- Are you a shy person?
 - If so, practice introducing yourself so you are comfortable with the word and phrases
- Are you an introvert?
 - Conserve your energy
- Are you an extravert?
 - Pay attention to how you are engaging with others. If you are talking more than everyone else, practice active listening or asking questions of others
- Do you get anxiety?
 - Work with Student Psychological Services as they have free workshops and trainings on how to manage your anxiety.

Elevator Statements

- Imagine you step onto an elevator and someone you admire walks in behind you?
 - In the time it take to go from the 1st floor to say the 5th floor, how would you introduce yourself?
- Who are you, what do you do, and why should that person care?
 - Why should that person care?
 - What is exciting about the work you do?
 - How does that connect to the broader society?
- What one thing should the person remember you for? (your hook)
 - Think about why your voice matters in the field.
 - Think about your ask?
 - Are you trying to apply for a scholarship?
 - Are you trying to apply for a summer program?
 - Are you trying to learn about something?

Lets practice:

Who are you?

What do you do?

Why should your partner care?

(what are your goals can be a good start)

These are kind of like ice breakers but so much more because of the impact they can have on getting you the things you need or want!

How to Prepare: Attire

- A lot of conferences have become more relaxed in their attire but always try and make sure you are presentable (but check the website).
 - Doesn't mean you have to be wearing a suit
 - You can wear jeans but maybe not a lot of holes or cut outs
- Rule of thumb: if people are paying more attention to what you are wearing, they are not paying attention to what you are saying (but no one should be subjected to the clothes police. It is never ok to shame others or to be shamed!!)
 - What if you have limited funds and can't buy a whole new wardrobe?
 - Thrift stores and clothes closets are your friend
 - We used to have a clothes closet on campus (hopefully it still exists)
- Make sure to attend to your hygiene!
- Pay attention to the weather and time of year as well as environment and pack accordingly (if conference is not local)







Virtual Conferences

- More popular since covid
- Variety of platforms
 - Zoom/teams
 - Gathertown
- **TURN YOUR CAMERA ON!!!**
- Dedicate time to the virtual conference and try very hard not to multitask
 - Be present and engaged
- Ask questions
- Turn your mic on
- “Raise your hand”
- Comment in the chat
- Introduce yourself when you unmute yourself to talk
 - Name, institution, student or position, major
 - Introduce yourself multiple times
- It takes a lot more effort to be engaged in a virtual conference than in-person

QR Codes vs. Business Cards

- Both are good
- QR codes are starting to be more popular because you don't have to carry things
 - Lots of free sites will generate QR codes, you can take a picture and pull it up on your phone to share, or print it as a sticker and put it on the back your badge.
- If you don't have a website, or a LinkedIn profile, make a google slide of your contact information and your relevant information
- If you take business cards, write yourself a note as to who that person was and why you took their card (very short as business cards are small)
 - If you are at big conferences you get handed a business cards and when you get back to your rooms or homes, it's hard to remember everyone from just the business card

When the conference is over, more work to do...

- Let all the information settle
- Make some notes to yourself about what you enjoyed, what opportunities you learned about, people you have met, institutional representatives you have met.
- Organize your thoughts and information
- Dedicate time to follow up with people that you met, especially those that told you “reach out to me”
 - When you do reach out to them, remind them of who you are and where you met.
 - A lot of us meet students and others at conferences and if you don't remind us who you are, we likely won't put in the effort to job our memories as we have a lot going on.
 - It doesn't have to be formal (but remember to be professional), it could be a 2 sentence email: Thank you for taking time to talk with me. I wanted to follow up about that thing we talked about. Can we set up a time to chat or can you forward me the website about that opportunity.
- Follow thru with the opportunities!!!

Thank you!
Questions?

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