

MCFR Student/New Professional Guide to Attending Conferences

Tips for attending:

- Print off a copy of the program schedule and highlight/mark sessions of interest prior to attending the conference.
- Look for sessions on topics that interest you; look for the presenters working on what's important in your academic/career plans. If you don't have a particular topic of interest attend sessions that look interesting to you.
- Read through **both** the session title and the individual presentation titles. For example, there will likely be a number of poster presentations under the poster session title "Communities & Families."
- Read through the session abstracts, as they provide more detailed information about what information will be discussed in the session than the session title alone can offer.
- Check with your professors and other students about presenters they know and can help you meet.
- Poster sessions can be a much friendlier environment for talking to presenters. Often you make one-to-one contact. And the ideas presented on the poster are an easy reference point to get conversation going.
- Think about basic questions or comments that relate to those subjects/presenters that interest you; when you do connect, you'll have a starting point for a conversation.
- Bring copies of your resume/vita
- Don't hesitate to introduce yourself to conference presenters after the session. Especially if you are interested in the topic or are possibly interested in applying for graduate studies in the program/ university where they are faculty.

Presentation formats:

- **PLENARY SESSIONS** are often keynote speakers who are well known or are speaking on a contemporary topic of particular relevance to the field. All conference attendees are encouraged to attend these sessions.
- **CONCURRENT SESSIONS**, also known as breakout sessions, include 3-4 papers addressing a similar topic being presented during the session followed by audience questions. The presenters typically use PowerPoint to report research findings and discuss implications.
- A **SYMPOSIUM** is a discussion by experts on a particular topic in which opinions are gathered. The chair leads the discussion and introduces the panelists. A discussant summarizes and integrates the papers as they relate to each other and the topic. He/she also develops implications for policy and practice from the research.
- A **WORKSHOP** is a **training session** in which the speaker leads participants through exercises or skills development in a given field. Workshops present material that applies theory to practice.
- A **ROUNDTABLE** is a discussion around a predefined topic involving several conference attendees.
- A **POSTER** is a graphical, instructional display. It provides an opportunity for in-depth discussion between presenters and attendees. This is the most informal presentation format and allows conference attendees to view several posters in one session period.

Friday sessions offered at NCFR/ MCFR Day:

- MCFR Breakfast; 7:30- 8am
- MCFR Business Meeting; 8-8:30am
- MCFR Mentoring & How to Choose Sessions; 8:30-9:30am
- Undergraduate Experiences While Attending the NCFR Conference; Fri, 8-9:30am (a poster session)
- Surviving in Academia: Work-Family Fit; 8:30-10am (a roundtable session)
- Families and Social Media; 10:15 am – Noon (plenary session)
- Negotiating Identity: A Conversation between Students and Professionals; 12:45-1:45pm (a Fellows roundtable)
- Speed Mentoring Session; 12:45-1:45pm
- Fellows Roundtables; 12:45-1:45 (NCFR Fellows discuss a specific topic in a small group setting)
- Applying to Graduate School; 3:45-5:15pm
- MCFR Debriefing
- University Receptions; 6:30-8:30pm