

## What To Expect

Networking Preparation by Cathleen Hanson, International School of Protocol

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Many thanks for participating in this exciting event designed by University Life Arlington. The overarching intent of this evening of networking and dining etiquette is to provide networking instruction and practice, to overview dining etiquette, and to give all participants opportunities to find meaningful professional and social connections.

I expect some of you are quite good at, and enjoy mingling and networking; what you may not know is that if you can network with ease, you are in a minority. Most people have some anxiety about the prospect of going up to new people and conversing, and many people find networking more than just a little uncomfortable. The purpose of this event is to make networking easier.

Things to do before February 24: 1. Read the hosts' bios. It is appropriate to use what you've learned about a person in your conversation with the person. 2. Review items 1-6 below, **Before a Networking Event**. 3. Review **Dining Etiquette** handout.

### **Before a Networking Event.**

1. **Set a goal** before the event. Example, "Tonight I will join 8 groups of people, I will follow up with at least 3."
2. **Arrive early.** If you are able to arrive early you may be able to join or initiate three conversations during this time.
3. **Wear a namebadge.** Namebadges are worn on the right so that they follow the line of sight of the handshake.
4. **Remember the importance of the handshake.** When you meet someone you will have an appropriate handshake that is firm and positioned so that your hands connect at the webbed area between your index finger and thumb and the webbed area between his/her index finger and thumb. Look the person directly in the eye, state your first and last name clearly. The grip should be firm. Smile and stand when shaking hands. As well, when you have the opportunity, **introduce people who have not yet met each other**. A more senior person is always presented to a less senior person. The more senior person's name is stated first. A proper introduction is stated as follows: Dr. Gupta, I would like to introduce to you, my research partner, Ayindé Turner. Ayindé, I would like to introduce you to the president of the Maryland Biotech Leadership, Dr. Nimisha Gupta.
5. **Make sure you have your business cards ready.** Make sure your cards are clean and you have enough for the evening.
6. **Be ready with conversation topics.** Have your "elevator speech" prepared about yourself; but remember, it's not all business, be able to make social conversation. Before the event, survey current topics that are not political, religious, or sad. In addition, you can talk about the event, and/or you can talk about your connection to the event. Consider discussing the weather or the location. Talk about your hobby or interests, or something that has just been interesting to you--a new restaurant or a good book or movie. You can talk about a place you've visited.

### **6:00-6:15. Hors d'oeuvres and Presentation by Cathleen Hanson. 6:00-6:15.**

Remain standing during this time and Cathleen Hanson will review some of the highlights about networking. Included in this 15 minutes will be an overview of entering and exiting conversations

### **Entering**

1. Enter a conversation by sticking out your hand and saying, Hello, I'm...
2. Ask the person or group, How do you know the bride or groom, event host, etc. What is your connection to George Mason. What brings you here ...
3. Stand at the edge of the group and let the group's conversation topics give you a way to enter.
4. Find a group that seems so interesting that you want to join them.
5. You can comment on the food, music, physical space or geographic location.

### **Exiting**

1. Say, Nice to have met you...
2. Fade out
3. Say you would like to get more food, drink
4. When someone comes into your group, you leave
5. Bring someone over, introduce the person to your conversationpartner and leave.

**6:15-6:45. Networking Icebreaker. Stay standing and continue to enjoy the hors d'oeuvres.** Cathleen Hanson will lead a networking activity. While it's tempting to linger with people you know, you'll want to stick to your goal to meet new people . Consider that this venue gives you a great opportunity to practice your conversation skills.

**Dining Etiquette. (Review Dining Etiquette Handout)**

**6:45-6:55. Select table, introduce yourselves, shake hands.** Wait until everyone arrives before you sit down. Once everyone has arrived, at the time, hosts may indicate that it's time to sit. Enter chairs on the right side of the chair.

Place handbags at your feet. If you haven't checked a coat, you may drape it on your seat only. Don't put anything on the back of your chairs.

**6:55-7:00. Networking Debrief.**

**7:00-7:15. Salad Course and Introduction to Dining Etiquette.** Cathleen Hanson will be giving a presentation.

Identify your place setting. Your bread and butter plate will be on your left. Your drink will be on your right. Hosts will place their napkins in their laps, and the other guests will follow suite. Once the hosts begin to eat everyone else will follow. Use first the utensils farthest from the plate for the salad course. You may use a knife and fork for salad, or just a fork.

Eat bread and butter by breaking a bite sized piece of bread and buttering just that piece.

If you are a fast eater slow down, if you are a slow eater, speed up. Pace yourself with your dining companions.

When you are putting your utensils down to eat bread or to take a drink, but you are not yet finished the course, place the utensils so that the handles are apart on the plate. When you have finished a course, place the utensils so that the tips of the handles would be touching the 4 if your plate were the face of a clock.

**7:15-7:30 Table Networking and Dining Instruction.** Some topics will include, *How to Network While Eating. Can I Bring Papers to the Table? When Can I Expect to Seal a Deal?*

**7:30-7:50 Network at the table.**

**Dining Etiquette Presentation. 7:50-8:15.** Cathleen Hanson will walk to tables and answer dining questions, including dining dilemmas.

**8:10-8:50. Dessert and Networking Practice.** You will move to a dessert station and the tables will be cleared. You may continue to move around the room, or you may find a seat and continue to network. If you opt to sit, you do not need to return to your original seat.

**8:50-9:00. Closing Remarks.** Answering the question, *And now, what?* Strategies for following up.