**Student Mentor Groups: October 27, 2016**

**Topic: Attending Scientific Meetings**

**Check-in:**

* How is your second rotation going?
* How did the Genetics Core Course exam go?
* Are there any questions or concerns?
* Start thinking about set-up of third rotations.

**Guide to Attending Scientific Meetings**

***Before you go: Practice your elevator pitch. This is a 1-2 minute overview of yourself, your research, and your interests.***

1. These meetings are ALWAYS networking opportunities. Even if you are in your first year of grad school, you can benefit from networking. You can find collaborators and potential employers at any point.
2. Read through the scientific program ahead of time.
   * Look for names of people you recognize from papers.
   * Look for interesting titles for talks; check who is presenting these talks
   * Google these names so that you know what people look like. You never know who you will run into at lunch or dinner.
   * Create yourself a schedule of talks that you plan to go to.
3. Attend as many talks as you can.
   * Bring a small notebook but mostly focus on listening. Stay attentive.
   * If you think of a good question, write it down in your notebook. Remember to ask at the end. If there is no time for questions, go up to the person afterwards and ask your question.
   * It is okay to jump around between sessions, but try to be quiet as you leave one room and go to the other.
   * Stay off your phone while you are at talks.
4. An open bar does not mean you must drink as much as humanly possible.
   * You are at a conference and your career is just starting out.
   * Use this time at the meeting to network as much as you can!
   * Be responsible and make sure you are prepared to attend the morning talks the following day.
5. Take advantage of any opportunity you can to meet and interact with new people.
   * Do not always retreat to your hotel room or stay within in a clique of people consisting of your labmates that you see on a daily basis.
   * Spend as much of your free time as you can to be in the company of the other attendees at the conference. That may mean loitering in the lobby until you see a chance to strike up a conversation.
   * Don’t be shy, if there is a particular researcher that you would really like to meet and speak with, have the confidence to walk up and introduce yourself. You may not get another opportunity like that to put a face to your name.
   * Going to lunch or dinner with people is one of the best ways to have some social time with someone you are interested in talking to. Many times, conferences have free periods for lunch and dinner. Sometimes it is as simple as asking someone where there are going for lunch and ask if you can tag along. Worst that can happen is they say no so put yourself out there!
6. Pack your clothes carefully.
   * This seems like a silly thing, but ironing all your clothes the night before an 8am session is no fun.
   * Have extra clothes that are more formal and more casual.
   * Wear whatever makes you feel confident. No fidgeting, pulling at your shirt collar, readjusting your dress.
7. Enjoy yourself!!
   * Conferences are incredibly fun and they are usually held in great cities.
   * Explore if you have time or at least have dinner out in the town.