Networking Basics

A common synonym for developing and maintaining contacts and personal connections with a variety of people who might be helpful to you and your career. Creating friendships is networking… you do it all the time. You can network with everyone!

Professional Attire

**First Impressions**
- Come prepared! Know who will be at the event, appropriate dress attire, and BE ON TIME!
- Have positive body language—smile, stand up straight, and arms at your side.
- Prepare some conversation topics prior to the event.

**Strategies**
- Start small and practice, attending events is important.
- Work the room/event—if you notice an employer/alum by themselves that you wish to talk to, approach them first.
- Set a goal prior to the event, such as talking to ___ many people, or ___ many companies.

**Conversation**
- Create your Elevator Pitch, this is your 30 second commercial, all about who you are! Include your name, major, year at UNH, and your career goals.
- Avoid religion, politics, money and heated current events.
- Have questions prepared to ask: “Tell me about your background”, “what advice would you have for someone entering the field”, “are there colleagues you would recommend I talk to”, “how did you get started”, to name a few!
- Find commonalities and shared interests. You can also talk about recent events, sports, and other general interest topics
- When ready to leave a conversation, let the person(s) know you were happy to talk to them, ask for a business card, and move on!

**After the event**
- Write notes on the back of business cards!
- Follow up with the contacts that you made.
- Send an email stating it was nice talking with them, who you are, and include something you discussed.

**Handshakes**
- Have a firm handshake - don’t grip too hard, but don’t have a limp hand.
- Your thumb should be up, and between your thumb and index finger should meet.
- It should last about 3 seconds, with a couple of pumps… do not hold on forever! Smile and make good eye contact during the handshake.

https://www.unh.edu/uacc/
Dining Etiquette Specifics

Napkin
- Your napkin will be on your left, or on your plate when you approach your seat.
- Place your napkin on your lap when everyone is seated at the table.
- Place your napkin on your chair when you need to excuse yourself for a moment. Place the napkin on the right side of your plate at the end of your meal, when everyone is done.

Drinks
- It is recommended to not order alcohol during an interview. Some networking events may be acceptable to order, but limit yourself to one.
- Water, juice, and iced tea are safest choices.

Ordering
- You should never order the most expensive item on the menu, unless your host recommends you to and it is something you would like.
- Order a mid-priced item that you will enjoy.
- Try not to order foods that are very messy to eat.
- If you are not sure what to order, ask your host for recommendations!

Passing
- Salt and pepper should always be passed together even when someone asks for only one.
- Community food items (such as a bread-basket) should be passed to the right.
- When passing items such as creamer or a gravy/dressing boat, pass them with the handle towards the recipient.

Cocktail Hour Specifics
- Keep your right hand available to shake hands. You can have your cup sit on your plate to be able to hold both.
- Do NOT overload your plate with Hors d’oeuvres or appetizers.
- Be aware of your beverage, especially when alcohol is involved. Do not drink too much/too many.

General Dining Tips
- Always taste your food before you add salt or pepper.
- Cut one bite at a time, including with salad.
- Pace your eating with your host. Do not finish too quickly or take too long.
- Turn off your cell phone during the meal/event.
- Do NOT talk with food in your mouth, and do NOT chew with your mouth open. You should also avoid slurping and smacking your lips.
- Follow the lead of the host when it comes to dinner conversation! Do not bring up business items until the host/interviewer does.
- If food is hot, allow time for it to cool rather than blowing on it.
- If you drop a utensil, do not pick it up. Politely ask for a new utensil.
- Sit up straight at the dinner table, and do not put elbows on the table.
- Do NOT reach across the table. Politely ask someone to pass the item.
- You may start eating when everyone is served. If you are unsure, follow the lead of the host/interviewer.
- To signal to the server that you are done with your meal, place your utensil across your plate, with the handle at 4 o’clock.