

A Guide for Future Students

by Andrew Barker

The opportunity to attend the 2009 RIMS Canada Conference as part of the McGannon Foundation's 'Student Involvement Program' is one that I will forever be thankful for. The conference was extremely beneficial to me and complemented my risk management studies at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business perfectly.

Being the first student selected to attend the conference in the foundation's history, I felt it was important to share my experience with future student attendees. There are several "must do's" at the conference in order to get the most out of the experience and this guide will hopefully steer students in the right direction. Hopefully, those students who attend in the years to come can enjoy the experience and take away as much information as I did.

Attend All Breakout And Plenary Sessions

Throughout my three days at the conference, I had the chance to attend four plenary speakers and five breakout sessions. My advice: Don't miss out on any of them. Each session provided a choice of several different topics allowing me to choose those that piqued my own interests. The quality of the speakers and panelists is second to none, with internationally recognized industry leaders abound. The quality of information and insight was crucial in furthering my understanding and appreciation for the profession. From oil & gas risks to ethical risks, this conference discussed it all.

Network With Rims Representatives

When you get a chance to meet and network with RIMS organizers and staff, take advantage of it. The RIMS staff are extremely helpful and the organization provides support through educational programs, career development programs, etc. I learned a great deal about the industry as a whole and the profession - RIMS is an invaluable resource and will undoubtedly help you in your future career, so get to know its function and its people.

Take Part In Everything

Be sure to visit every information booth at the exhibition hall. The hall gives students amazing exposure to all the different career paths the industry can offer. It is also a great chance to network with industry professionals. There are also many prize draws to be entered into - In fact, my fellow student attendee won a \$1,000 travel gift certificate! There are also many events to take part in such as the McGannon Foundation Fun Run/Walk, the RIMS Gala Dinner, 'Death by Chocolate', as well as numerous company

events. Don't be afraid to ask for invitations to these great events! Again, these events are a great way to meet many industry professionals and who wouldn't want unlimited access to a chocolate fountain! Take full advantage of the experience while you are there.

Visit Rims, McGannon, Spencer Websites

Be sure to visit all three websites before and after the RIMS conference. There are many updates, valuable resources, and scholarship opportunities listed. As well, there are great employment and educational resources. If you choose to make the RIMS Conference one of your annual events like so many others, these websites are your best sources of information.

Don't Be Shy, Bring Lots Of Business Cards & Start Your Own Collection

One of the most impressive aspects of the entire conference was how approachable every person was. Everyone was willing to spend time with the students, get to know them, and discuss their futures. This is how my fellow attendee and myself were able to secure invitations to company dinners and parties. Interestingly, we even had the chance to meet a broker from Lloyd's of London who gave us his business card and said that if we were ever in London, we should give him a call and he would give us a personal tour of Lloyd's.

Speaking of business cards, if you have them, bring lots of them! This is how we managed to enter into so many different draws and how we have managed to keep contact with many people we met at the conference. As well, many will want your card to get a hold of you in the future and who knows, maybe they'll be looking to hire!

Say Thanks And Stay In Touch

Following the conclusion of the conference, do not forget to thank all those who made it possible for you to attend the conference. In my case, I thanked every board member of the McGannon Foundation and have stayed in touch with them since. You never know if you will need their help in the future or if your paths will cross again. Everyone involved made a great effort to make us feel welcome and to make the experience a success, let them know how appreciated their efforts are and how important the program is.