

## AFTER HOURS RECEPTIONS: THE ART OF MINGLING

### Messiah College Internship Center



#### Before the Reception

- 1) Think about your purpose for going and what you want to accomplish.
  - Try to secure a participant list prior to the day of the event.
  - What individuals would you specifically like to meet?
  - What is it that you would like to learn about them or from them?
  - Is there something you wish to learn about the organization or facility in which the reception is being held?
- 2) Prepare yourself.
  - Dress appropriately. If it is not stated otherwise on the invitation, dress conservatively in attire that is consistent with your occupation.
  - Don't overdue jewelry or perfume/cologne.
  - Bring along enough business cards. Place them in a convenient pocket for quick access.
  - Read the latest local news. Many potential topics of conversation can be gleaned this way.
  - Research current issues within the particular industry the event is focusing on.
  - Develop a 15 second "sound bite" introduction of yourself.
  - Take along, and use, breath mints.
- 3) Contact a friend to accompany you.

#### Moving Beyond Yourself (How To Win Friends and Influence People, Dale Carnegie)

- 1) Become genuinely interested in other people.
- 2) Smile. It opens a door to other people.
- 3) Remember that a person's name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language. Repeat it back to them several times during the course of the conversation.
- 4) Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
- 5) Talk in terms of the other person's interest.
- 6) Make the other person feel important – and do it sincerely.

#### Meeting and Greeting People

- 1) Remember that many people feel as apprehensive as you about the event.
- 2) Approach someone else who is standing alone. Otherwise, look for those who seem to just be standing together, but not talking a great deal. Look for those whose "circle" is open, allowing you an entrance.
- 3) If people are holding drinks and/or plates of food, do not extend your hand to shake hands.
- 4) Maintain the individual's personal space – approximately an arm's length.
- 5) Use an honest opening line like, "Excuse me, I hope you don't mind my coming up to you like this, but I don't know a single person here. My name is ..."
- 6) Use open-ended questions like, "How are you enjoying the reception (or conference)?"
- 7) Try to learn one new thing about those you meet (organizational affiliation, mutual acquaintances, etc).
- 8) You can also try to quietly ease into a group by standing on the periphery, listening intently to the conversation and slowly making your way closer to eventually join in.

#### Eating and Drinking

- 1) Most of the time it is wise to refrain from alcohol, even at a "Wine and Cheese" event.
- 2) Remember that, for the most part, receptions are not meant to take the place of a regular meal. Food is served in small proportions. The purpose is for socializing more than eating.
- 3) Do not overfill your plate. Take a few items at a time and go back a couple times.

#### Afterwards

- 1) Send a note of appreciation to the event sponsor.
- 2) Send "Nice to meet you" notes to those you met and with whom you exchanged business cards.

**Last, but not least, HAVE FUN!**