Preventing the Networking Open House

With open networking events such as this, people wonder how to best prepare and how to start a conversation with someone you have never met before. Here is a checklist and follow-up resources to help you make the most of this event.

Preparing for the Event:

• Research the websites of any school or units you are hopeful to connect with. Notice key news items, headlines, major projects.
• Prepare 1-3 questions you would want to ask representatives. Some possible questions might be:
  o What makes people successful at this school or unit?
  o How would you describe the culture of your school or unit?
  o What do you most like about working at this school or unit?
  o What makes your school or unit unique?
• Prepare your “elevator pitch”; the elevator pitch is a 45- to 60-second quick summary of your skills and experience and also includes a bit about what you are interested in. Completing the “Tell Me About Yourself Template” can help you formulate your elevator pitch.
• Dress professionally (not a suit, but work appropriate).
• Bring several copies of your resume or business cards with contact information.

At the Event:

• Some schools or units may accept resumes. Some may not. This will be at the discretion of each school or unit. Do not leave a resume unless you are invited to.
• Have a positive attitude, upbeat tone of voice, good eye contact, firm handshake.
• End the conversation gracefully and move on (keep the length of the line behind you in mind).
• Take good notes – jot down any key information from people you spoke with.
• Remember to thank people upon leaving.

After the Event:

• Follow-up with any connections you have made during the event.
• If you learned about a school or unit of interest, set up a job search on Harvard Careers to be notified of open positions in that school or unit.
• If you find an open position for which you would like to apply, check out the Preparing as an Internal Candidate Checklist to make sure that you are ready to apply.