

1. **DRESS:** Ole Arts is not intended to be a formal event so please do not wear a suit! Instead, the recommended style is “Nice Casual”. Please avoid sloppy or overly casual clothing, such as gym wear or t-shirts. Name tags typically go on your right shoulder side.
2. **SET GOALS:** Come with a goal in mind of meeting 3-4 alums and perhaps leaving with their contact information.. Think about what you really want to get out of this event (e.g., to learn more about specific careers in the arts, to develop internship leads, find a potential mentor, etc.)
3. **HAVE THE RIGHT MINDSET:** The arts intersect in many ways – so be curious, flexible, and open to all conversations. You never know who has great advice, an opportunity, or a connection that could be valuable for you. If you expect to find the “exact right person for you”, you may be closed off to the wonderful opportunities that can arise from happenstance.
4. **POSITIVE ATTITUDE GOES A LONG WAY:** Many of us are reluctant to approach strangers in new social situations, so understandably it's not always easy to muster the energy to try and connect with people at events. That's why it's important to get mentally geared up before you show up. Know that you are in a friendly crowd, and this is a wonderful setting to practice how to connect with people. You will be doing this repeatedly throughout your career, so this is a great place to start!
5. **HAVE A BRIEF INTRODUCTION READY:** Think about a very simple, brief statement that you know you can use to begin a conversation. Make eye contact, smile, put your hand out to shake the alum’s hand and give a firm handshake. “Hi Tom, I’m Jane Johnson. I am a junior at St. Olaf and majoring in Dance. Thanks for coming to this event tonight.”
6. **HAVE A CONVERSATION:** Relax and have fun. These alums are thrilled to be here and want to talk to you! Find a way to connect by asking questions about their life at St. Olaf and their job. Some suggested questions are listed below for you to consider:
 - What careers are there for me in my area of interest?
 - How do I get started in the area I’m interested in?
 - What is your job like?
 - What was your first internship? Your first job?
 - What do you like about what you do? What do you least like?
 - What advice would you have for me?
 - What is life like as a performer/artist/educator?
6. **ENDING A CONVERSATION:** Ending a conversation can sometimes feel just as challenging as starting one. Every conversation has to end and if the conversation seems to be dragging on, it’s perfectly fine to disengage. When there is a pause in the conversation, shake their hand, thank them for their time and that it was good talking with them.

Examples:

“Well, Gail, thank you so much for chatting with me. I really appreciate that you were here tonight. Would you mind if I follow-up with you after today and could we connect on LinkedIn?”

“Thank you Darnell for coming - it was great to learn about your work at the museum. It’s definitely something I hope to do someday. Would you mind if I stayed in touch?”

“Well, Deborah, thank you so much for speaking with me and coming tonight. I enjoyed learning about your work.”

7. **LISTEN & FOLLOW-UP:** During the conversation, listen carefully to discover shared interests or goals. Share a piece of information that could reveal the common thread you share with them. “I am a musician as well and am a member of the St. Olaf Band.” Use your shared background or interests as the basis for sustaining conversations.
8. **HELP EACH OTHER:** This is NOT a competitive event. If you see another student standing near you and waiting to talk, invite him/her to join the conversation or move on and thank the alum for his/her time. You’ll make a great impression on the alum and other students.
9. **MOVE AROUND:** Remember, you came here to meet alums so that you can learn about careers in the arts. If you find yourself in a corner talking only with your friends, it’s time to move on and find someone to talk to.
10. **FACULTY & STAFF:** Having trouble getting started or meeting someone? Faculty and Staff often know alumni and can be very helpful to connect you with someone or to help you get started in conversation.
11. **THE CONVERSATION THAT WENT NOWHERE:** It happens. Even in a friendly Ole crowd, there may be that one awkward conversation. Some individuals may not respond to your introduction in the way you would like. If that takes place, don’t take it personally. The alum could have had a bad day—who knows! It’s not about you. Maintain an outgoing and friendly attitude, thank the alum for taking time out of his/her schedule to come to this event, and move on.
12. **FOLLOW UP:** Follow up with an email to at least one alum to set up an informational interview, job shadow, or maybe to meet for coffee. This will provide a valuable opportunity for you to ask follow up questions about pursuing a career in in the arts, and any other questions that you have. Hint: At your meeting, ask for advice about careers, etc.—alums love to give advice! This will then give you great opportunities for follow up in the future so that you can let the alum know that the advice was helpful and what the outcome was.

And let’s talk about those phones in your pockets ...

- **Don’t:** Hide your face in your phone the whole night, however tempting it may be! People will be more inclined to talk to you if you appear approachable, and part of that means *not* being fixated on your mobile phone or tablet.
- **Do:** Use your phone to scan business cards, obtain contact info without trading cards, and send thank you notes from the bus on the way back to campus. Use your status as a digital native to your advantage!

More digital etiquette to consider:

- **LinkedIn:** People have different preferences about who they want to connect with via LinkedIn, and that’s ok. If you meet an alum with whom you’re particularly interested in keeping in touch, you can ask them if they’d be interested in connecting on LinkedIn. If they say “I prefer to keep that network for professionals I know well,” don’t take it personally. That said, many alums will likely be happy to connect with you via LinkedIn, especially if you remind them who you are and how they met you when you send the invitation message. LinkedIn is currently the default professional networking platform.