



# The Graduate School **Attending Alumni Career Panels**

Meeting Howard doctoral alumni can serve three unique goals:

1. Alumni share insider information about their transition to the career world
2. Doctoral students can have an open and honest discussion with alumni about their challenges, as well as, their successes as they tried to access new places, employers and organizations.
3. Panels are an opportunity to network through a shared identity.

## Some Suggestions

- Attendee preparation is key to a successful career panel:
  - Keeping an open mind is critical - one never know what one might learn.
  - Researching the speaker/alum on LinkedIn or Google (current employer, position and background). If the institution has an alumni networking platform, it might help to connect with that person ahead of time.
  - Preparing some questions for the panelists. Examples:
    - Is the organization hiring? If not for a specific role, then what others are available/related?
    - What skills were needed beyond your academic training to be successful in your role? Did you engage in any professional development outside of Howard University?
    - Anything about the transition (from the doctoral program) you wish you would have known? Any advice?
    - How did you network (any professional organizations, social media, events/conferences etc)?
    - What is a typical work day for you look like?
    - Work-life balance? (If a panelist has a family or in a long-term relationship, it might be useful to ask how they juggle all of that with their current position?)
- A few days (timely communication is important) after the panel, it helps to email or message the speaker (LinkedIn) to thank them for speaking. This might also be an opportunity to follow-up with questions, especially if a student remains interested in the organization or the transition to a particular industry/area.