

# Business 1

By Ahmad Murrah

“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood and sorry I could not travel both.”

~ Robert Frost

Enrolled in the last four classes of my academic career? Check! Filed my degree conferral? Check! Have my job lined up in June? Not quite...

As many of us are approaching graduation we are faced with the open-ended question, “What’s next?” For many others, we find ourselves asking the question, “How are we going to prepare for what’s next?” Though the university invests four (sometimes five or six) years in us as students to prepare us to be socially conscious and responsible individuals, it cannot hold our hands when the dreaded day that we walk the stage comes.

As underrepresented students within the College of Commerce the challenges that lay ahead of us plenty. This can cause apprehension in any of us as we move out of the transition period of our lives to become immersed in life’s realities. But for some of us, the realities are far more fearful. Coupled with an unsettled economy and poor job security is the fact that being a racial minority once again weighs heavy on the minds of young emerging professionals who once held unrestrained excitement to change the world. But a vivid reflection of this dismal reality can be seen on both sides of the transition. Minorities are few and far between in executive level positions and the classroom is host to you as the only black student.

Through professional organizations such as the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality and the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), we are able to discover the road to our career aspirations by attending one of the most crucial tools to success - conventions.

Recently, members of DePaul University’s National Society of Minorities in Hospitality attended the 22nd Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. Conventions serve as the ultimate networking tool. These events provided the opportunity for students to connect with recruiters from across the nation in hopes to find internships or jobs to launch their career. Nearly 800 students from across the nation traveled to Atlanta to network and most importantly interview with industry representatives such as Marriott International, Four Seasons, Hilton Worldwide, and General Mills, just to name a few. Besides having the opportunity to interview with companies, students were able to attend insightful workshops on current industry trends.

There are also conventions and conferences available through the National Association of Black Accountants. The NABA Conferences not only provide students with the cutting-edge information on industry trends but also give students opportunities to interview with employers across the country and network with peers, NABA members, and professionals. The Conference Committees work continuously throughout the year to introduce new minority accounting, finance, and business major students to NABA and the conferences. Did I mention it was a great setting for networking? All students are given the chance to establish relationships with members of the professional chapter and other student members from other areas. In addition, scholarships are offered to help supplement your educational pursuits, many of which have been awarded to students of DePaul's National Association for Black Accountants. Other components of the conferences are interview and learning sessions. Students are able to submit resumés before the conference and attend a career fair with the hopes of landing an internship or full-time job opportunity. Students are also able to attend sessions of their interest to learn more about the accounting industry or build personal skills.

Taking advantage of these opportunities better position you to secure employment after graduation, or at the very least, learn and build necessary skills in interviewing o, public speaking, etc. After attending the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality National Convention, I left Atlanta with seven different job offers in locations from Honolulu to New York City. In addition, DePaul students can attend many of these industry events at little to no cost to the student. Through my experience I strongly urge commerce students to choose the road less traveled by selecting a professional organization where you can build the foundation to your career.

To learn more information about NSMH and NABA, you can always send an email to [depaul@nsmh.org](mailto:depaul@nsmh.org) or [naba@depaul.edu](mailto:naba@depaul.edu).