

Five Tips for your First ULI Fall Meeting

Alison Wicks, 2018 WLI Prologis Scholarship Winner, ULI Northwest - Portland

I attended my first ULI Fall Meeting through the support of the WLI Prologis Scholarship. The 2018 ULI Fall Meeting in Boston had over 6,000 attendees and dozens of tours, sessions, and receptions. Signing up for a four-day conference can be intimidating, and attending can feel like running a marathon, but as with any challenge a little preparation can go a long way. I wanted to share five tips to help future first time attendees prepare and have a successful experience.

1. **Research the host city before you takeoff.** What is the population? Is the region growing or shrinking? What are the biggest infrastructure projects and political issues the city is facing? Knowing a few key figures and facts about the host city is a great way to ground yourself, and to start making comparisons to your home city, before you even leave the runway.
2. **Plan a meet-up.** If your local ULI chapter doesn't send out a list of attendees to Fall Meeting, ask them to. It is great way to know who is attending from your home city or state. Use the Fall Meeting as an excuse to connect with people from back home. Get in touch in advance and coordinate to take a tour together or to go out to dinner one evening. Members of the Young Leaders Group from Seattle reached out to me and other YLG members from Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver B.C. and set up a time for all us to get together. It was great to get to know new people in a relaxed setting and to connect with people I knew I would see again back home in Portland.
3. **Ask to be a Guest at a Product Council.** As a part of the WLI Prologis Scholarship, I was invited to attend an Urban Development and Mixed-Use Product Council. The experience went a long way to demystify Product Councils for me. It was an educational day, full of specialized speakers and tours, coordinated by the members of the Product Council. It was like a conference within a conference planned by the smartest people you know. I especially enjoyed learning how Product Council members connect and reconnect at Fall and Spring Meetings each year, and how over the years they build a valuable network of colleagues around the country. If you're interested in learning more about any of the 80 plus Product Councils, find one that you are interested in, or that you know someone who is a member, and ask to be a guest at the next Spring or Fall meeting.
4. **Apply for a scholarship.** Being a part of the 2018 WLI Prologis cohort shaped my first Fall Meeting experience. The first morning of the conference, I met the other nine women at the Scholarship Breakfast and they became a touch point for me throughout the conference. It seemed like whenever I was feeling alone in large lecture or reception, I would see another scholarship winner across the room and have someone to connect with. I look forward to attending future Fall Meetings, getting to see members of my cohort again, and being able to meet new winners.
5. **Enjoy the city.** Part of the fun of the Fall Meeting is exploring a new city or having the chance to show off one you know well to first timers. Whether you are dining out on lobster rolls overlooking the Boston Harbor, or checking out live music in Nashville, be sure to take time a little time to little like a local and take in the host city.