

In 2019, I attended my first DSI conference as a doctoral student. This conference celebrated the 50th anniversary of DSI and was held in the same city as the first DSI annual meeting. My experience was invaluable and filled with memories that still linger! I met with professors from outside of my institution, gained an immense experience presenting my dissertation research, and timely feedback that helped me defend my dissertation the following spring semester. I also had several interviews that deepened my knowledge about tenure track positions and got me closer to landing my first Assistant Professor job!

From the get-go, I was immersed in the professional experience of academic conferencing. I was given a conference role to chair a session titled Sustainability, CSR, and Humanitarian Operations: Emerging Topics in Sustainability. This experience was added to my leadership toolbox and boosted my conference experience. During this year's (virtual) conference, I look forward to participating in the new faculty consortium, which will provide valuable information about navigating academics as a new faculty member. DSI is a well-organized and inclusive conference, and I can't speak highly enough about the networking and opportunities that abound. DSI is one of the very few conferences that I call home, and I look forward to giving back and getting involved in committees.

-Bukola Bakare, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Western Carolina University