

A Beginners Guide to the IDRC and Chambersburg

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Welcome to Chambersburg, Wilson College and the 18th. International Diffuse Reflectance Conference (IDRC). We'd like to give you a brief overview of what to expect, what not to expect, and a few helpful hints on what to bring, what to wear, and where to go (and what to do) once you are here.

How to get to Wilson College

If you're driving, it used to be that you had to get off at US30 and wind your way through Chambersburg. No more! Instead, get off at the Walker Road exit of I-81, head west on Walker Road and turn right onto Norland Avenue (where all the shopping malls are). Follow Norland about a mile and go under the old railway viaduct. In about 0.3 miles, Norland will 'end' at a stop light onto US Route 11. Turn left at the light (watch out for on-coming traffic from both directions!)- the Wilson College athletic fields will be on your right. Take a 90° right turn in about 0.2 miles, then look for the Wilson College driveway, which will be just ahead on your right. You can park out front of Norland Hall while you check in.

By air- If you aren't renting a car, if you contact the Conference Transportation Coordinator a few weeks ahead of time by email, we can generally provide rides from Dulles, BWI (Baltimore) and Harrisburg airports. It's not guaranteed and may be inconvenient, but we try our best!

Check-In and Accommodations

If you are checking in on Sunday, simply come to the desk right inside the door of Norland Hall. You'll be greeted by someone from the IDRC staff (likely Susan Foulk, our Treasurer) who will check you in. They will verify you've paid (you have paid, haven't you?) and, if you are staying on campus, give you your room key. And now you'll drag your luggage and everything up to your room.

About the room key—don't leave your room without it! The door locks behind you when it closes. You wouldn't be the first to make a visit to the College Security office in the middle of the night with a towel wrapped around you.

A caution- the accommodations are clean but Spartan. You get a couple of thin towels and a washcloth, a thin bar of soap, two sheets and a thin cotton blanket. The beds are small and not horribly comfortable, and you'll be sharing bathroom facilities with about 20 of your new friends! Just like summer camp, or basic training... And no, there are no maid services. The good news is that the rooms are now air-conditioned (or at least almost all of them are). Gone are the days where bringing or buying a fan was a prerequisite. A small note on the air conditioning – there is no thermostat in each

room. So, if you aren't used to air conditioning the temperature may be on the cool side.

If this seems a bit rustic for you, there are a number of motels/hotels in the area that are moderately inexpensive. But you will miss most of the interplay with the rest of the conferees which, in my humble opinion, is as valuable (if not more so) than the formal papers.

Food at the conference: well, a couple things. It is pretty basic- college cafeteria food. There is plenty to eat, but you shouldn't expect gourmet fare. Meat, fish, starches, a sparse salad bar. Breakfast is the good old American staple of scrambled eggs/bacon/sausage/fried potatoes. You can get cereal and toast, of course, and yogurt. There is always a sandwich bar at lunch, with a decent selection of cold cuts and good bread. The highlight of the food service is that at lunch and dinner there is always scoop your own ice cream. It's a local brand and very good, usually available in 4-5 flavors.

There are a number of decent restaurants within walking distance. These are mostly American chain restaurants but there are a couple of nice places downtown- I even found a new Korean restaurant at IDRC 17. Forget the local barbeque places- not worth the time or money!

Do and Don'ts and Other Stuff

If you are trying to give up smoking, this is the place for you! No smoking is allowed on campus, so if you want to light up, you're going to have to take a walk off the Wilson College campus to do so. And they DO enforce this and the in-room smoke detectors are quite sensitive. At the most recent conference, the authorities did set aside a small smoking area just outside the reception area, but that's only for a couple hours in the evening and we have no assurance that they will allow it for the next conference.

Parking- If you bring a car, make sure you park in the spots that Wilson College has assigned to the Conference. Those spots are behind Rosenkrans Hall and behind Laird Hall. The campus police are pretty aggressive in enforcing parking regulations.

Dress- The conference is VERY informal, so you aren't even expected to dress 'business casual' (although you probably might not want to wear shorts to the lectures- the air conditioning tends to be a bit on the cold side.) Most presenters don't even wear suits and ties. Chambersburg can be extremely hot and humid in late July/early August (although it wasn't for IDRC 17), so plan accordingly. It's also useful to bring a light jacket or sweater for evenings, which can be cool. You should also bring something nice to wear for the banquet. (I mean, I <Art S.> even wear a tie, which I do only for this occasion and funerals- no, there is no relationship...).

Internet- Well, it's better than it used to be. The WiFi is sporadic and not very fast. In the lecture hall, it depends on where you sit- higher up and to the left when

facing the speaker seems to be better. Part of the problem is that there are a lot of people trying to access the server at one time, which slows things down. The service is pretty much ok in the residence hall. But don't try to use Skype (or so I've heard) as the bandwidth just isn't there to handle it.

Places to go, Things to do

There isn't a whole lot of free time at the conference, as there are typically meetings and other things going on every afternoon. If you do have free time and have a car, it's worth taking the 40 minute drive to Gettysburg, east on US Route 30. Seek out one of the National Park guides- they are amazing in their amount of knowledge and their way of presenting history in an interesting manner.

Another place to go is Hershey, PA, about an hour or so away. This is, of course, the Capital of Chocolate. I've never been there but I hear it is fascinating- and they give out free samples!

We hope this has been helpful in giving you an idea what to expect, A final word- don't be afraid to talk with anyone, no matter how old or 'famous'. While there are a few 'big egos' around, you'll find almost everyone is overjoyed to share their knowledge with you. It's how the old guy here (Art) learned the field and I'm sure Suz will agree. This is THE place to learn about NIR and diffuse reflectance.