



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • CAREER CENTER

Networking and Informational Interviewing





AU Career Center Online Seminars

- Turn on your speakers
 - Adjust your volume
- Print the seminar handouts
- Start and stop at your convenience





What is Networking?

- Communication between you and the people who can assist you in planning and achieving your employment goals
- Utilizing known and, as yet, unknown resources to uncover potential career opportunities
- Interpersonal exchange of information via telephone, letter, fax, e-mail, or in person (face-to-face meetings often in the form of an informational interview)





The Value of Networking

- U.S. Department of Labor reports that 63.4 % of all workers find employment through informal job search methods such as networking!
- Gain further knowledge of your:
 - a. major
 - b. career field
 - c. targeted organization
- Build a network of future leads for jobs
- Enhance your job searching techniques
- Learn about skills/qualifications you need to develop





Common Networking

Misconception #1 MYTH

“I don’t know anyone in the field of _____! I’m not connected and can’t find a job through networking”

REALITY

It is most often the contacts of contacts that get networkers closer to their target market.





Networking Opportunities at AU

- Job & Internship Fairs
- Clubs/Organizations
- Faculty & Staff
- Special Events
- Guest Lectures
- Sporting Events
- Company Presentations
- Administration
- Career Center Workshops
- Classmates and Peers
- inCircle AU Online Community





Networking Opportunities Beyond AU

- Professional Associations
- Friends
- Community Events
- Professional Service Providers
- External Career Fairs
- Family
- Conferences
- Neighbors
- Online (listservs, chatrooms)
- Former Employers





Common Networking Misconception #2

MYTH

“People don’t want to be bothered by me calling them to ask questions about their organization.”

REALITY

Individuals are much more comfortable offering advice and help to people who show an interest and knowledge about their work.

Some companies or government agencies offer a monetary reward for identifying and bringing in new employees. You could be very valuable to that person.





The Networking Tree Exercise

- Take 5-10 minutes to begin identifying your personal & professional network
- Identify several individuals you will contact in the next month
- Generate a short list of questions you'd like answered





What is Informational Interviewing?

- An exchange of questions and answers with individuals who are knowledgeable in your area of interest
- Less stressful than a job interview because an offer for employment is not at stake and you are not asking to be hired for a job
- A great opportunity to learn what skills and attributes are key to your career

The inCircle AU Alumni Online Community is an excellent network of contacts that is available to AU students...





inCircle AU Alumni Online Community

How Do I Register?

- Sign in at <https://incircle.alumni.american.edu>
- Register by selecting the “*Have you REGISTERED for inCircle yet?*” link located at the bottom left hand corner of the page. Follow three simple steps, and you’re in!





Making Contact!

By Telephone:

Identify the purpose of your call and ask if this is a good time to speak or if another time is better

By Mail/E-mail/Fax:

Keep the correspondence as WARM as possible (polite and not too informal) and be sure to tell them you will follow-up with a phone call in the near future

Setting up a Meeting:

Offer to meet at their office or close to it for coffee, lunch, or right after work

In your conversation, mention any individuals
that referred you to them





Sample Networking Introduction

"Hello, my name is _____, Carol Smiley referred me to you as someone who may be able to help me.

I am a sophomore at American University and I am very interested in eventually working for a non-profit when I graduate. I am calling professionals in (area of interest) such as yourself to seek advice. Would you have 15-20 minutes to talk with me on (name day) or at another time?"





The Interview

- Prepare questions and rehearse
- Act maturely and professionally
- Wear business attire
- Take notes
- Ask for other contacts
- Be mindful of their time - stick to 15-20 minutes
- Get a business card and send a thank-you note!





Sample Interview Questions

- What skills will I need to be successful in this field?
- What steps did you take to get where you are now?
- What are the most important issues affecting the field or your organization?
- What kind of work or internship experience is valuable for preparation to working in this industry?
- What attributes to successful applicants have in common? (Good attitude, experience, passion, graduate degree)





Questions or Comments?

For additional assistance or
to set up a mock interview contact:

American University Career Center

Butler Pavilion, 5th Floor

4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20016-8011

Phone: 202-885-1804 Fax: 202-885-1861

Web: www.american.edu/careercenter