Networking

**What is Networking?**

Networking is the process of making intentional, career-related contacts through acquaintances and referrals. It is an important part of career exploration and finding shadowing or internship opportunities.

* Strengthening connections on campus and in your field of interest by exchanging information
* Gaining access to internship or experience opportunities
* Gaining more knowledge about your major and field of interest
* Getting career advice and support
* Building confidence

**Three Steps to Networking:**

1. Decide what you want to learn and locate networking opportunities. Prepare Questions and write an elevator pitch.
2. Attend networking events, ask questions, and ask for referrals.
3. Write Thank you notes, keep connected on LinkedIn, and maintain a record of your network.

**Where to Find Your Network:**

**Academia** | Professors, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants

**Peers** | Clubs and Professional Organizations

**Professionals** | Alumni Association and LinkedIn

**Informational Interviews:**

An informational interview is an informal conversation you can have with someone working in an area of interest to you. It is an effective research tool and is best done after preliminary online research and an idea of career direction. Most people enjoy taking a few moments out of their day to reflect on their professional lives and give advice to someone with an interest in their field. Remember that it is not a job interview, nor a means to find job openings.

**Conducting an Informational Interview:**

1. Identify a professional and reach out to arrange a meeting. This could be via phone, in-personal, or virtual
2. Prepare your questions
	1. What is the interviewee’s job and responsibilities?
	2. How did they prepare for this career?
	3. What did their career journey look like?
	4. What is it like to work or study in that field?
	5. How can you connect with other professionals?
	6. Are there any professional organizations they are part of?
	7. What other resources do they know about that can help people in this field?
3. Send a Thank you email for their time

**Example Informational Interview Requests:**

**LinkedIn Message**

“I viewed your profile and noticed (what you noticed). I want to learn more about your career path. Would you have the time to have a quick chat?”

**Email**

Subject line: (your major) student at Oklahoma State University, request for information interview

Dear \_\_\_\_,

My name is (\_), and I am a (major) student interested in (field). It’s nice to meet you. If possible, I would like to schedule a quick informational interview with you to learn more about (industry/job title).

I learned about your background (LinkedIn/other) and was hoping to talk to you about your career journey and what it is like to work in this (industry).

Again, please let me know if you have a few minutes to talk. I would appreciate any insight you could provide.

Thank you,

Your name