

PACIFIC UNION COLLEGE

Informational Interviewing & Networking

“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”

This well known cliché is useful to keep in mind as you prepare for your career. You will find that relationships are not only important, but key to successful job placement. Networking can be more important than qualifications. Informational interviewing and networking are ways to build relationships that can further your career.

NETWORK: Individuals who serve as primary resources for industry information, referrals, and job leads.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW: One way to network is by asking questions of the professionals in your network, appreciating their advice, allowing them to introduce you to others, and keeping them posted as your career evolves.

WHAT NETWORKING IS –

- Talking with people who have interests similar to your own
- Asking for an expert opinion on your qualifications
- Conversing with professionals about an industry of interest
- Expressing your genuine intentions and motivations

WHAT NETWORKING IS NOT –

- Asking for a job
- Cold calling someone you do not know
- Delivering a slick salesperson’s pitch
- Kissing up

Preparing for the informational interview is an important part of beginning your network.

Professionals are very busy and it’s important they know you made an effort to validate the time they are investing in talking to you. In preparation for an informational interview think about what you hope to learn and what you hope to take away from the meeting. Here are some examples of key areas to focus your questions:

- About the individual and details of their job
- About your marketability
- About the organization itself
- About the “next steps” to take in your career preparation

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Evaluate the information in light of other information you’ve learned.
2. Immediately send a thank-you note to the professional for his/her time.
3. Every few months stay in touch with your contacts to continue that relationship.

Networking is a very important part of your career but does take time. Remember that you will often not see results overnight, so give it time.