

Networking Strategies and Tips: Holy Cross Seniors

What is Networking?

- Networking IS a process of building relationships with people who can provide you with information, advice and referrals to increase your visibility in the job market.
- Networking IS NOT contacting people to ask for a specific job within a company.

Key Networking Tools: Alumni Online Community & LinkedIn.com

When do I use which tool?

- Alumni Online Community is a great resource to use to connect with Alumni that are in an industry and/or role aligned with your job search. Search the database for Alumni that meet your specified criteria. Then, reach out to them to set up an informational discussion.
- LinkedIn.com is a great resource to use to target specific companies and/or jobs within industries that you may be interested in. Search for companies that are in the industry you are targeting. Search for specific jobs within the industry/field that you are interested in. Then, see if you have any linked in connections at those companies. Reach out to those people to set up an informational discussion.

Drafting the introductory email

Determining how to best reach out to a potential networking connect can be a daunting task for many students. Below is a structure and some sample verbiage to help you draft the initial email to the person you are hoping to set up an informational discussion with:

- **Introduction:** "Good morning, my name is _____."
- **Reason for your email:** "I am a senior at Holy Cross and am conducting a job search as I prepare to graduate in May. I am interested in XX industry, XX type of role, etc..."
- **Why them?:** "You have a broad background in the XX industry, have great experience as a XX (role), etc..."
- **Ask for a meeting:** "I'd love to talk with you about companies that would value my skills, strategies for getting into this industry, role, etc... Would you be willing to talk with me (or meet for coffee in the contact is local) sometime over the next week or two? When would be a convenient date and time for you?"

Preparing for the discussion

- Determine the objective of the meeting and prepare an agenda with questions to ask.
- Research the company. If possible, obtain any background information on the person and their role.
- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask (below are some samples):
 - Are there any industries, sectors or roles that you think would best match my skill set? How do you recommend I position myself?
 - What do you think are the most effective techniques for obtaining work in this field?
 - What are the necessary skills and abilities for someone in this field, role, etc...?
 - What do you like and/or dislike about your company/organization?
 - How did you get into this field?
 - What is the current demand for people in this field?
 - Given your understanding of my skills and background, what barriers would I have to overcome to make a move into this field, industry, role, etc...?
 - Are there particular companies or employers that might be good targets for me? Are you familiar with individuals in any of those companies that I might talk to?

Conducting the meeting

- Establish rapport up front and thank the person for meeting.
- Set tone and clarify purpose: discuss your career goals and what you are hoping to get out of the discussion.
- Utilize your prepared questions to help drive the conversation.
- Close: thank them again and discuss any next steps, if applicable.

Follow Up

- Send a thank you note or email.
- Check in with the contact from time to time to maintain the relationship: provide updates on your job progress, highlighting any role they may have had in your progress.