

### **Networking is about asking for advice and information.**

It is about talking to people, creating opportunities to exchange information and viewing relationships as ways to be mutual resources for each other. Networking is a way of life versus an activity with particular start and end dates. Networking is a way for you to learn about different occupations and to learn about potential graduate programs and employment prospects.

### **Networking is not asking for a job.**

Do not ask anyone directly if they have jobs or internships. This is a closed question to which the answer is typically “no.” Asking for suggestions and information are more open-ended questions likely to result in brainstorming possibilities.

### **Anyone you know is a networking contact. Use them all as a resource.**

To network, you do not need the name of the one person in your industry area of interest in your preferred geographic location. People know people. Those in your preferred geographic areas might know people in your preferred industry. People in your industry area of interest might know people in your preferred geographic location. Your friends, parents, faculty, staff, former supervisors, doctors, everyone you know, might know people who know people who would be good for you to meet.

### **It only takes one person on your list to get started.**

You do not need a list of 100 people to get started (although you likely know at least 100 people). Start with one person. Ask him or her about your areas of interest and ask him or her for the names of 2 other people with whom you should speak. If you then contact those two people and repeat the cycle, you will never run out of networking contacts. And the number of people who know about you and the amount of information you know will both exponentially increase.

### **People like to help people. Asking for ideas and suggestions is not bothering them.**

If you are polite, respectful of people’s time, and appreciative of their assistance, you do not need to worry that you are bothering them. People like to talk about themselves and give advice. Don’t you? If a friend of a friend wanted you to talk to someone about Davidson, would you mind?

### **Networking is beneficial to everyone.**

Perhaps through your conversations, someone will refer you to someone who offers you a job. If you do well in the job, then you reflect positively on the person who hired you and on the person who referred you to that hiring manager.

Also, as you talk to people, you will find yourself giving advice and suggestions in your areas of expertise. You will likely be in the position to refer or introduce friends, students, alumni and others to those who you think might be helpful for them to know. In this way others also benefit from your expertise and from the network of people who you know.

### **Prepare for your networking conversations.**

Identify what information about you that you want people to know, and practice delivering the information. Also know what you want to learn from the people with whom you meet. Make notes about your conversations in a spreadsheet that include who you talked to, how you got his/her name, what you discussed and who else your contact thought you should get to know.

### **Set a goal for networking**

Set a goal of how many people you will contact in a particular time period. At the end of the time period, evaluate how things are going, whether you wish to change the information you seek, and who to contact next.

If you are at a function, introduce yourself to people so you can add them to your contact list. Ask them what they do and how they got into it. Be prepared to tell them about yourself. Also ask them for their business card or contact information so you can follow up with them later.

# HOW TO NETWORK

- 1. Compose a letter or email to one person on your list.**  
When you contact people to whom you are referred, follow the format for networking letters. Be sure that you indicate how you know about the person, what about them interests you, and what about you they should know to be interested in giving you advice and information. Request an opportunity to speak with your contact on the telephone.
- 2. Phone the contact at an agreed upon time.**  
Ideally, you would use this opportunity to set up an in person meeting with your contact. If this is not possible, set up another phone conversation to pose your networking questions.
- 3. Attend your in person meeting with your contact.**  
Arrive promptly at your scheduled meeting time. Bring prepared questions with you. Listen to the information people give to you. Be ready to talk about yourself and the qualities or experiences you have that make you interested in learning more from your contact.
- 4. Write or email a thank you note to the people with whom you speak.**  
Write a formal thank you note to your contact acknowledging the time and expertise he or she shared with you and what you learned from the experience.
- 5. Follow up with your contacts and nurture the relationship.**  
Keep in touch with contacts you speak to by updating them on how you are doing. If you meet with a contact to whom they referred you, let them know how that meeting went. By maintaining your relationships with your contacts, you put yourself in a place to be giving and receiving information on an ongoing basis. This is critical to the lifestyle of networking.
- 6. Repeat Step 1!**

## FORMAT FOR NETWORKING EMAIL

Dear Mr. or Ms. Contact Name:

In the first paragraph, you will mention where you found this contact's name and what information you are seeking from this person.

The next paragraph should discuss what you know about the person, his/her organization or work, and the skills and attributes of work in this industry or field.

The third paragraph should provide information about you. Describe your personal experiences that cause you to be interested in this person's work or industry. The focus here should be on knowledge you have gained through work, campus involvement, or volunteer opportunities. You should give 3 to 5 brief examples from several different experiences that are pertinent to your reader's interest.

The final paragraph should thank the reader for considering your request and let him/her know that you will be following up within a specified period of time to be certain the message was received. It is important that you communicate what you will do next in the process.

Sincerely,

Your Name