INTERVIEWING:  
INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW  

CAREER PLANNING CENTER  
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INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS
An informational interview is a key networking tool during the job search process. Keep in mind, an informational interview is not a job interview. Rather, it's an interview with an individual working in a career you would like to learn more about. Just because it is not an interview for a job does not mean you cannot take it seriously. Preparing for an informational interview is just as important and necessary as preparing for an interview for an actual position, specifically because you are the one asking the questions. A Career Planning Center counselor is available to assist you in honing your interviewing skills and can help you prepare for any type of interview! For an appointment call (203) 254-4081 or e-mail CPC@fairfield.edu.

Why use informational interviews?
• To collect information about a career or organization that interests you.
• Learn about different job opportunities in different career fields.
• To develop a network of contacts with key people in your career interest area.
• To find the HIDDEN JOB markets!

Where do I find contacts?
Personal Network
Make a list of people in your personal network who might be able to connect you with a person in your industry of interest. When you find a connection, express your interest in the potential job or career and respectfully ask them to make a referral for you.

- Professors
- Family members (they might surprise you!)
- Friends

- Friend’s Parents
- Neighbors
- Co-workers

LinkedIn
LinkedIn is an invaluable networking tool. The first step is to create a LinkedIn Profile and start making connections! Join the Fairfield Alumni Group and other Fairfield groups and continue to make connections. For more information regarding utilizing LinkedIn, visit http://university.linkedin.com/ or make an appointment with a CPC counselor.

Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN)
FAN is a network of Fairfield Alumni who can offer guidance, career advice, and helpful tips to fellow Stags. Students can search alumni who have opted into FAN as mentors. FAN is intended to be a resource, so do not use it as a job search engine. FAN can be found at http://www.fairfield.edu/alumni/ar_fan.html.

Alright, so I have the contact... What do I do next?
Once you have identified your potential contact, the next step is to request an informational meeting by calling, e-mailing, or sending a LinkedIn message. When making contact with the person, you should include: who you are, why you are calling or writing, and the desired outcome (i.e., in-person meeting). The message should be brief (6-8 sentences) and professional.

When calling, always ask if the person has a few minutes and/or if this is a good time to talk. Explain the reason why you want to meet with the person. Be courteous and always thank an individual for his or her time. If you cannot arrange an on-site interview, ask for a telephone interview. Be prepared to conduct the interview immediately if the opportunity arises. If you do not hear back from the individual, follow up once.
**Sample Informational Interview Requests**

**Sample Phone Call:**
Hello Mr. Bigshot, my name is Mya Firstjob. I was given your name by one of my professors, Dr. Learnsalot. Is this a good time for you to talk? I am currently a junior Accounting major at Fairfield University. I really enjoy my coursework and am seeking to learn more about working in the accounting industry. I’m interested in exploring the differences between tax and audit accounting and what it’s like to work at a public accounting firm. Because of your experience in the field, I would like to know if we can schedule a time to meet, maybe for 30 minutes, to further discuss this.

**Sample E-mail:**
From: Lstagg@fairfield.edu
Subject: Request for Informational Interview from a Fairfield University Student

Dear Ms. Alumna,

My name is Lucas Stag and I am currently a junior Marketing major at Fairfield University. I found your name on the Fairfield Alumni Network (FAN) as I was exploring alumni who currently work in the field of brand marketing. My hope after graduation is to work in marketing either for a consumer brand or an agency. I was wondering if you might have a few minutes to speak, either in person or over the phone, about your role at Brand Manager, LCC to gain insight into how I might make a successful transition into the field of marketing.

I appreciate your time in advance and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Lucas Stag

**Sample LinkedIn Connection Request:**
Dear Mr. Job,

I am a Fairfield University junior. I found your profile through the Alumni Tool and I would like to connect because I see you are a lawyer at NY Law Firm. I am interested in speaking with you to learn about your career and to gather your advice.

Thank you and I look forward to connecting,

Sally Smith

**Sample Informational Interview Questions**

What are the main responsibilities associated with work in your field?
Could you describe a typical day, week, month?
What interests and skills are needed for successful employment in this field?
What are the advantages of working in this field? Disadvantages?
What education and experiences will I need to break into your field?
What type of work schedule does this field require?
How do people find out about job openings in your occupation?
What opportunities exist for advancement and/or lateral movement?
What are the emerging jobs in this field?
What is the current outlook for new college graduates in your field?
Are you satisfied with your field? How could it be improved upon?
What do you see happening to your profession in the next ten years? Twenty years?
Please tell me more about your organization and its purposes.
How do you think your job would be different if you worked in a larger or smaller organization?
What field did you prepare for and expect to enter originally?
How did you get where you are in your field?
If you needed to leave your present job, to what other jobs could you apply your skills?
Would you advise someone else to enter your career field?
What would you have done differently in your own career?
Do you like your job?