

Networking

Networking is the process of building connections and forming a professional community.

If you've ever kept in touch with a former teacher or supervisor, gone to a professor's office hours, talked with a family friend about your major, or made conversation with someone on a plane, you've participated in a form of networking. In addition to these interactions, we encourage you to utilize Fort Lewis College resources and connections to take a strategic, professional approach. Connecting with people who share professional interests can help you learn more about majors, career paths, internships, jobs, graduate school, and more.

Networking Myths

You must be extroverted to network successfully.

Fact: Networking often involves one-on-one conversations, rather than large, formal events with many people present. Those opportunities exist as well, but they are not the only form of networking.

You need to have connections and I don't have any.

Fact: As a Fort Lewis student, [you do have connections](#). You have Fort Lewis College alumni, professors, and fellow students; all of whom have their own personal networks to share.

No one will want to meet with me.

Fact: People love to talk about themselves and their careers. Fort Lewis College's alumni volunteer to be part of [Fort Lewis College Career Network on LinkedIn](#) to network with students and alumni.

You should only talk to people at senior levels.

Fact: Recent graduates are very familiar with entry-level positions and the interview process. Similarly, fellow students can often speak to the internship hiring process for organizations that interest you.

Benefits of Networking

Networking can help you to:

- Build confidence in communicating professionally
- Explore industries through an insider's perspective
- Identify career-related skills and experiences
- Develop personal criteria to make career choices
- Improve interview skills through conversations
- Expand your circle of connections in fields of interest

- Learn about jobs and internships with target employers
- Give back by advising others

Career Conversations

A [career conversation or informational interview](#) is a networking meeting where you can learn more about a particular career path, industry, job function, or organization. These conversations can take place in person, on the phone, or via Zoom or another video platform. It can be one of the most valuable ways to network because it can provide you with an intimate, insider's perspective that other sources cannot replicate.

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