

Hi everyone and welcome back to the next episode of All Careers Considering. I'm your host Molly Mccurdy and today I'm excited to be here with an IU alum named Meghan Caldwell. She lives out in the Bay Area and she works at Elevate Security as the head of customers, so thanks for being here Meghan.

Meghan: Yeah I'm really excited!

Molly: Yeah! So tell me a little bit about you! Kind of when you graduated from IU and what your career has looked like since you graduated.

M: Yeah so I graduated from Bloomington campus in 2012. My graduate degree is from school of public environment affairs and the college, and I went straight to Washington, DC, where I worked for a big consulting firm, Booz Allen. I was there for a couple years. I started out on the Intel side of the house and then moved into healthcare. It was right around the time the Affordable Care Act was getting going on the government side and then I've been staying in healthcare for the next six years. I did a fellowship in a hospital and then eventually moved back out to California, where I'm from and have been working in start-up technology world for the last seven years, first on the healthcare side and now on the security side.

MM: Very cool awesome! So it sounds like you had really some great experiences especially, coming right out of undergrad going right to DC so I'd be curious to hear a little bit about maybe your time as a student and maybe even on just being a young professional, if there were any mentors, if you had any mental relationships, maybe people that were able to kind of guide you and help you kind of get your foot in the door anywhere just anyone that kind of helped you when you were a new professional.

M: Yeah so I actually directly got my job at Booz Allen as a result of sort of a mentor for a lack of a better word. So I had a classmate who was a year ahead of me who had also worked and gotten a job at Booz Allen and in my senior year I remember he was going to date me but I remember messaging him on Facebook and being like "Hey, I see that you work at Booz Allen, I'd love to learn more about it" and he and I started chatting and he was able to actually pass my resume on to someone who hiring at Booz Allen, who actually also I later found out was also an IU alum and so he was the one who really helped me get my foot in the door at Booz Allen and that was great because sort of an unexpected connection and then when I was at Booz Allen in my first role moving into the professional world, can be a pretty overwhelming experience and I was really grateful to have two really strong mentors, both in my immediate boss, Shelley, and in the partner who headed up our part of the business, Dave. Both of them were able to kind of I came to them with questions about what I should be doing both in the media and more in the long term and they remain kind of two voices and counsel I used to this day but they were really helpful in helping me make some of those initial steps into being a professional kind of move through those initial sort of tricky first years of being in the working world and I was really grateful that I could find them.

MM: That's it, yeah. That's really cool and I think a lot of students kind of need to hear that in order to get, you know, that first step. it's really helpful to reach out to someone, um, kind of like you did as a senior so that's really great to hear. I'm curious about what you said about those two mentors they still keep in touch with, um, curious to hear maybe how often you keep in touch with them, what types of conversations you still have if any because I think a lot of students, you know, they might form a mentorship relationship but they they might not know how to keep in touch, like, should they, you know, keep an email communication or how all of that works as you continue through your career.

M: Yeah that's a great question and it can sometimes vary depending on the relationship but as a general rule, I have a small handful of folks that I consider, sort of like Mike, or I use this term a lot, but the board of directors, but the people who are the people I go to no matter where I'm at in my life stage they should be like "Hey I'm thinking about this decision career-wise what is your feedback?" and that group of people, I try to stay in contact with them at least twice a year and sometimes that's something as small as just sending them an email around the holidays just being like, "Hey, I'm, you know, thinking of you and your family", something relevant based on what you know about them. When I'm in a city where they also live reaching out to them to say "Hey, do you have time for coffee?" and if neither of those really make sense I just set up like 30 minutes to chat but I found keeping in touch and keeping it warm really twice a year is enough life is really hectic and that's a lot already to ask people and it still made sure those relationships even after a decade, remain remain good ones that I can call on when I need more than that 30-minute time period.

MM: That sounds like great advice so as we kind of move through your career, what does mentoring mean to you as you've kind of maybe switched from being the mentee to maybe now you're the mentor, do you have any, you know, younger professionals that are reaching out to you now for advice and what does that kind of look like?

M: Yeah, this is really well timed because I just got off the phone with one of my mentees about 30 minutes ago, so well, being a mentor is a really satisfying experience. I think one thing about humans is they like to talk about themselves and be were pretty nostalgic bunch and so I get a lot of joy talking to students who are in Bloomington, it helps me reflect on you know everything I received from being a student there and also it's just fun to talk about something that you don't get to talk about all the time and so I really students have started to reach out to me and I really enjoy that and I'm very open to it. I find that most of my friends and colleagues are as well it's a matter of we can sometimes be busy, so I always tell my students email me twice before you give up three times is also good it doesn't mean that I don't want to do it I'll tell you know if I don't have enough time but sometimes it just takes that second or third paying on me to be like oh the student is quite persistent and oh I may have dropped this because of a busy week or a busy month but it is still important to me to give back so I encourage students, don't give up after the first time. Oftentimes, it's not an issue of not ignoring you, which just get buried and

stuff, so do that second and third outreach, it will pay dividends. I also am impressed by students who continue to stay on top of reminding me to reach out to them, which is good.

MM: Yeah that's really good advice. So obviously we're kind of coming, I guess, we're coming off of a pandemic. I think we're still in it, technically, but it's starting... I think a lot of students that have just graduated or just kind of trying to get settled and figure out what their next steps are might be looking for a mentor or someone to kind of help them with their next steps. For maybe those students that just kind of feel a little nervous, uncomfortable, they don't really know exactly how to like, start to form one of those relationships, do you have any guidance or maybe strategies that they could use?

M: Yeah first of all, full validation that it is very hard out there right now and I appreciate 2020 grads have it... have a different challenge than we've had before and I think the world is very aware of that and so you actually can take advantage of people knowing it's hard and that end of itself is great, so acknowledging that and your communication is really important. I think honestly, the best way to find that I've found to find a mentor is to find someone who is doing something that you're interested in and that you have one sort of shared overlap that doesn't have to do with your career so one of the things that I did after I graduated was I raced in Little 500 and I wanted to get into the Intel community and so I just went on LinkedIn and looked up all the like big consulting firms and then I also looked up little five and it's surprising how many little 500 alums have that on their LinkedIn or I just looked at like the little 500 alumni page and that's a really great way because then not only do people see okay this person student is curious and interested in this thing that I also do professionally but I have this other connection with them that makes me understand their lives a little bit better, so finding both that pairing of the professional and personal is really good and I'm more likely to reply to people who I have who mentioned something that I'm like "oh that's really interesting, I would like to like talk about that" on top of our professional sort of conversation.

MM: Yeah that's really good, thank you! So I think kind of wraps up my question. Do you have any, you know, last words of advice or anything that we didn't cover today?

M: No, I think it's hard out there right now but you have literally half a million living alumni and they are quite generous in their time I mean I got the first two jobs I had as a direct contact with IU alums that I didn't know very well so take that little brave step and send them to at least two emails and know that you have a lot of people have your back during this time and are ready and willing to step in and assist you on that that first first step.

MM: Perfect, thanks Megan and then, if students have any questions or maybe want to follow up with you, would there be like a good place to do that, maybe LinkedIn or something like that?

M: Yeah, you can find me on LinkedIn I think I'm just Megan M Caldwell on LinkedIn, so feel free to message me there. I get to it about once a week or so and that's probably the best way

to get a hold of me but I'm happy to talk and definitely have built a good network of folks as well so even if I'm not the right person I can probably point someone in the right direction.

M: Awesome, perfect Megan. It was great to talk to you and thanks so much for being here today.

MM: Yeah, thanks so much, I appreciate it!

M: Yeah and thanks for everyone listening to this episode of All Careers Consider and we'll see you next time.