

DAVISCONNECTS GUIDE TO NETWORKING

NETWORKING is one of the most effective strategies you can use to learn more about the roles, industries, companies and post-graduate educational paths that interest you. AND approximately 85% of jobs and internships are filled through networking [HubSpot, 2019]. This section of the guide walks you through the steps involved in networking *authentically* and *effectively*.

WHAT IS NETWORKING? Talking to people doing work that interests you to *LEARN MORE* about their role/industry/experience.

WHAT NETWORKING IS NOT: Asking for a job or internship.

WHY NETWORK?

- Gain clarity about what you want to do next.
- Understand the next steps you need to take.
- Discover opportunities (listed and unlisted).
- Build relationships with interesting people.
- Get referrals for jobs and internships.

85%

According to HubSpot, **85%** of jobs are filled through networking. In fact, according to CNBC, 70% of jobs are never published publicly. These jobs are either posted internally or are created specifically for candidates that recruiters meet through networking. May 25, 2022

FINDING PEOPLE WITH INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

1. Colby Alumni – Colby LinkedIn page + Professional Networking Group
2. Companies of interest – company LinkedIn page + company websites
3. Personal network – family, friends, professors, coaches, classmates, etc. (past and present)

COLBY ALUMNI – visit the Colby College page on LinkedIn and click the ‘Alumni’ tab

- Search any role, company, industry, or topic that interests you (i.e. 'Fintech', 'Environmental Consulting', 'Reproductive Justice')
- Filter people by where they live, where they work, what they studied, etc.
 - Review profiles to learn more about what people did during their time at Colby and their career path since.
- Join the Colby Professional Networking Group and browse members.
- **Who you're looking for:** People with experience in a role / company / industry / program that interests you.
- ***Build your confidence and credibility** by speaking with entry-level people before senior-level people.

COMPANIES OF INTEREST – go to a company's LinkedIn page and click 'People'

- Filter people by what they do, where they studied, what they studied, etc.
- For smaller organizations/nonprofits/academia – visit the organization's website and navigate to the 'Our Staff'/'Our Team' page.
- **Who you're looking for:** Colby, Bates, Bowdoin alum / People who have something in common with you (major, hometown, etc.) / ANY employees with exceptionally interesting experience.

PERSONAL NETWORK – friends, family, professors, coaches, classmates.

- Send out a text/email to people in your network asking if they know anyone with experience in [industry / role / etc.] that you might be able to chat with to learn more about their experience.

ASKING FOR A SHORT CONVERSATION

1. LinkedIn connection note / DM.
2. Email - if not on LinkedIn.

On LinkedIn: Click connect > Add a note (if 'connect' doesn't show, click 'more' > 'connect' > 'add a note' / using browser is better than the app):

- What NOT to say: I'm looking for a job / internship.
- What to include:
 - Class year at Colby – sophomore/junior/senior
 - What you are interested in / working to learn more about.
 - Why you are reaching out to them.
- Ask for a respectful amount of time – 15-20 minutes is generally good.

- Protip: If the person is higher up in the space, click 'Follow' before you click connect to show further interest in their work.

Email – if a person is not on LinkedIn:

- For larger companies, Google search: '[company name] email format'
- For smaller organizations, nonprofits, government or higher ed – emails are generally listed on the 'Our Staff/'Our People' page on the organization's website.
- Example Subject lines:
 - *Conversation with Colby Student*
 - *Colby student interested in X / inspired by your work*
 - *Conversation with [mutual connection]'s friend*

*Be open to connecting at the time and via the medium that is best for them.

*Wait one week before following up on a previous message.

PREPARING FOR A CONVERSATION

Background research:

- Look through ALL of their work experiences from school to today.
- Visit current and past company LinkedIn pages and websites
 - Be sure to check the 'careers' page to know whether they are currently hiring for any internships/entry-level roles.
- Browse industry news and blog articles to build your knowledge of the space.

Specific questions:

- About things you are genuinely curious to know more about.
- Not questions you could find the answers to online (i.e. What was your first job after Colby? How big is your organization?)

Topics to ask about:

- Their story / career path
- Specifics of the industry / company / role
 - Example projects
 - Key skills
 - Hot topics
- Interview / application tips

Ask yourself: what would be very valuable for me to hear more about based on where I am in the process?

HAVING A CONVERSATION

Be prepared to answer “tell me a little bit about yourself”: Where you’re at in your academic career + 2-3 relevant pieces of info about you (interest in X, experience in Y, etc.) + why you wanted to speak to them today.

Be mindful of this person’s cultural context and background: Consider this person’s background when introducing yourself and communicating. What communication norms and values might they be used to given their cultural background and current professional context? For example, many idiomatic expressions used in America are not used or understood by English speakers from other cultures. In many corporate settings and amongst individuals from different generations, “hey” can be considered informal or impolite. Be thoughtful and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

***Close with an ask** about next steps you could take:

- **Other people who would be valuable for you to speak to
- Reaching back out with questions in the future
- Tips for a specific application

Follow up (within 24 hours) – Thank them again for their time + Give them an update on any next steps you’ve taken since the conversation.

KEEPING IN TOUCH (optional)

- Semi-regularly and thoughtfully
- Sharing big professional/academic updates + thanking them again for their support
- Sharing / Interacting with content on LinkedIn