Networking is the process of meeting and connecting with new people who can share information and opportunities about various professional fields.

**Where to Start**

It can be difficult to know how to start networking, but there are easy ways to begin. Here are some tips for those who want to grow their network.

- Reach out to family and friends and ask if they recommend any contacts
- Attend career fairs and other University networking events
- Build connections with your professors as they may refer you to new connections
- Create a LinkedIn profile and begin connecting with other students, UW alumni, and follow companies and people of interest

**Research**

Before attending networking events or career fairs, research the companies and people who are attending the event. This will help you find the best connections to make. Using the information from your research, you can begin to form questions to ask. Helpful resources for this research are Handshake and LinkedIn.

**Networking In-Person**

It is important to present yourself well. This means doing the following:

- Always stand to introduce yourself
- Introduce yourself by stating your first and last name
- Give a firm handshake with good eye contact. The first impression is important and can form a person’s lasting impression of you

For in-person networking, it is also important that you know how to sell yourself. Be prepared with an elevator pitch. Your elevator pitch will communicate to the employer where you are currently and what your future goals. With this information an employer or contact can learn how to help you.
Don't be Afraid to Ask Questions and Listen

When creating new connections you will often need to initiate the conversation. Ask open-ended questions allowing you to expand on their answer. During these conversations, show that you are actively listening to them. Maintain eye contact and give feedback while they are speaking by nodding your head and giving non-verbal cues. Show them you are listening by repeating what they have said and ask questions.

Keep in Touch

Networking doesn’t end after the career fair or networking event. Exchange contact information and keep in touch with your new connections. Keeping in touch allows you to build on the connection and you will gain more information. You never know when these contacts can be helpful, so it is beneficial not to lose contact. Even after you make your first few connections it is important to continue networking. You can never have too many connections in your network. Don’t be afraid to meet new people. You never know when your connections will be able to help you reach your goals. One day, people will be reaching out to connect with you and you will help others meet their goals.