



LAKE FOREST
COLLEGE

Career Milestone Guide: Building Your Network

Networking is developing and building relationships with professionals. It is a great way to learn about an industry, field, organization or opportunity that you may be interested in. Good networking relationships are built over time and are mutually beneficial. Start networking early by having conversations with people in your *closest network* (professors, classmates, alumni, family members, and friends) about what they do and why they do it. You can expand your network by targeting professionals in your desired field, industry, organization or position. Each person in your network also has his or her own network that you can potentially tap into: this is your *extended network*.

Step 1: Identify your networking goal (select one of the following boxes)

Explore different career options

This type of networking is best for students who have a general idea about fields that they would be interested in working in (i.e. health professions). It helps to gather information about options within the field so that you can determine which professional pathway may be a good fit for you. It is also a way for professionals to get to know you, your strengths and your interests. Start broadly and slowly tighten your focus. Be sure to keep track of possible fits, organizations, and contacts you discover.

Learn more about a specific field/industry/organization/career

This type of networking is best for students who are targeting a particular professional pathway (i.e. physical therapy). It will help you understand the skills and experiences that are required to be a competitive applicant in that area. It can also help you develop relationships with professionals who may be able to help find internships and/or full-time job opportunities.

Fill out the information below to get started:

Which professional pathways are you considering/targeting? List up to 3 below:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

What do you want to learn about each pathway/profession from your discussion?

1. _____ 2. _____

Which 3 things do you want the person you are interviewing to know about you?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Step 2: Identify the people in your network.

Complete “Identify People in Your Network” worksheet.

Identify People in Your Network

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex. Professors, alumni, classmates• _____• _____• _____	LAKE FOREST COLLEGE
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FAMILY & FRIENDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex. Parents, aunts and uncles, high school friends, neighbors• _____• _____• _____
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex. Supervisor, co-workers• _____• _____• _____	WORK
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AFFILIATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex. Religious group, service organization• _____• _____• _____
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List 5 people from your network who you will contact, starting with those you are most familiar with.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 3: Identify opportunities for networking.

Networking can take place in both formal and informal settings. Informal networking can happen in the dugout during a softball game, at a holiday party, or while chatting with family friends. Any time that you and a professional have the chance to talk is a chance to network. Formal networking opportunities are arranged in advance in order to make new connections or to gather information. These opportunities can include attending professional association meetings, conducting informational interviews, or by participating in CAC networking events including Speed Networking and Get Hired.

List when and where you will speak with the 5 people you identified above:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

To learn more about *Informational Interviewing*, see the [Career Milestone Guide: Conducting an Informational Interview.](#)