



NETWORKING GUIDE

The term ‘networking’ describes a variety of actions taken to establish and develop professional relationships and to exchange information about particular positions, organizations, or industries. It’s a two-way street, in which both participants learn new things and connect for short-term learning and long-term career advancement goals. Networking is NOT asking someone for a job.

Why Network:

- It’s a great way to explore different career options! Talking to someone with experience in the field can help you determine if an industry or specific role is truly interesting to you.
- It helps you establish relationships with people in certain industries and potentially could help you later on in your job search.
- It can help you learn about different job openings. By connecting with people within your desired industry, you can learn about positions that have not yet been made public and put yourself ahead of other job-seekers.
- It helps you build your career readiness competencies, such as Career & Life Design by articulating and talking with someone about your future goals.

Who to Network with:

Whether or not you realize it, you already have a network. Networks do not just consist of high-powered people, like CEOs or executive directors. Rather, networks consist of people we know, people they know, and people we make an intentional effort to get to know.

Consider:

- Friends & family
- Faculty & staff
- Classmates & alumni
- Professional associations & conferences
- Clubs & extracurriculars
- Former/current coworkers & supervisors

Where to Network:

- **Anywhere:** You might meet someone in your neighborhood or dorm, on the bus, at an event, or in a variety of other places. Practice introducing yourself and asking questions so that you'll feel comfortable as you approach networking.
- **Organized Events:** The Career Center offers a variety of events and programs to facilitate networking. Employer information sessions and industry programming to name a few.
- **[Tiger Link](#):** CC's own professional networking platform compatible with LinkedIn. You can connect with alumni and family of CC who can assist in exploring careers and industries, learning about companies/organizations, and answering other career-related questions.
- **[LinkedIn](#):** LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. You can use LinkedIn to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career.
 - [How to find CC Alums on LinkedIn](#)

How to Network:

Informal Career Conversation: This happens in any social setting (family gatherings, weddings, college events, etc.) or any professional gathering (networking event, conferences, meetings, etc.) where you might be asked "What kind of work do you want to do?". During these informal situations it's helpful to have prepared and practiced your "elevator pitch".

Elevator Pitch: the name comes from the idea that you should be able to sell your pitch in the span of an elevator ride (about 30 seconds). In this case, you're selling yourself; your pitch should communicate your personal brand, convey your unique selling points, and answer the question "Tell me about yourself".

What to include in your pitch:

- Your name + a credential/connection = Share something that distinguishes you from your peers (like club involvement, athlete, etc.) and/or something that can build a connection between you and the person you're talking to (hometown, interests, etc.)
- Your career interests and goals = Things you are interested in and what you are hoping to do in the future
- How you've worked toward your goal/interests = Provide examples of internships, volunteer experiences, jobs, research, coursework, or anything else you've done in your field of interest.

Writing your Pitch:

Write down everything you want to say about yourself:

- Take a blank piece of paper and write down everything you would want someone to know about you.
- If you're feeling stuck try asking yourself questions like: what makes you different in your interest areas? How do you stand out? What benefits would you like to bring to the world? How do your current skills and experiences relate to where you want to be?

Now, write it on a sticky note:

- You will do the same exercise but with only the space of a sticky note. What will you prioritize?
- Look over your thoughts from the first exercise and find redundancies, what you want to keep, and what's really not important.
- If you're having a hard time getting it to fit on a sticky note, a good framework to use is to come up with a few sentences that answer the following questions: What do you do? Why does it matter? Why do you do it? What's next?

Lastly, speak it out loud:

- You will want to test out your pitch out loud. You want this to sound like something you would actually say in normal conversation.

Example:

Hi, my name is Jane Doe, and I'm a senior Political Science and Environmental Science double major at Colorado College. In addition, I am president of the Black Student Union. I want to explore the intersections of racial and environmental justice. I have interned at several environmental policy organizations, including Environment Colorado and the Earth Policy Institute in Washington D.C. I'm currently writing my senior thesis on fracking and environmental racism in Colorado. I'll be in Seattle this summer and would love to connect with you to talk more about your work with Got Green. Would you have time to meet for a brief conversation sometime in July?

Example:

Hello, my name is Jane Doe, and I'm a senior English major at Colorado College. As an amateur fiction writer, I'm a strong believer in creative storytelling. In my Senior Capstone, I found that marketing campaigns centered around a narrative were more memorable than those based on promoting benefits. I would love to apply my skills in storytelling for marketing as a Digital Content Creator. Could you tell me more about your current challenges with digital content creation?

How to Network:

Planned Career Conversation: This is a scheduled, brief (15-30 minute) conversation (also known as informational interview) conducted via phone, video call, or in person. You will prepare questions to ask that will help you learn more about a person's career journey and the particular industry, job, or organization. Primarily you will reach out to these individuals via email, LinkedIn or Tiger Link.

Reach Out Examples:

Email for Informational Interview:

Dear [Their Name],

I'm a current student at Colorado College and I am considering a career in journalism. I [found, received] your information [on TigerLink, from Career Center, etc.], and I am interested in learning more about your [your experience, your role, your career journey, etc.]

I would appreciate an opportunity to learn more about your experience, as well as any advice you might be willing to share with me. When time allows on your end, would you be willing to schedule a [15-30 min] conversation via [phone or zoom]?

I look forward to the possibility of connect with you and thank you for considering my request!

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Tiger Link Message for Informational Interview:

Dear [Their Name],

While browsing Tiger Link for [industry name] professionals, I came across your profile. Your profile specifically stuck out to me because [X, Y, & Z].

As a CC student currently studying [major], it would be valuable to learn more about your [career journey, experience, your role, etc.] Would you be available in the next few weeks for a brief [phone or zoom] conversation? I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to learn more about you, as well as any advice you might be willing to share with me about [industry].

I look forward to hearing from you and the possibility to connect!

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Reach Out Examples on LinkedIn:

A great way to get a message across to someone on LinkedIn (that you are not connected with already) is to attach a message with your connection request. Note that you only have 300 characters that you can [send in your connection message](#). You want to make this message brief but to the point. Once the connection request has been approved then you will be able to message that new connection without a character limit.

If your connection request doesn't message you back from the initial connection message sent, you can utilize the email template above to ask for an informational interview.

LinkedIn Message attached to Connection Request to a CC Alum:

Hi [Their Name], I'm a current student at Colorado College studying [major]. While looking through LinkedIn profiles of CC grads, I see that you are currently working in/as [industry/role]. I'm incredibly interested in [industry/role] and I would love to learn more about your experience!

LinkedIn Message attached to Connection Request:

Hi [Their Name]! I came across your profile through [mutual connection, group, etc.]. I see that you are working in [industry]. I'm currently a student studying [major] with a huge interest in [industry]. I'd love to connect to learn more from someone in [industry].

Prepare for your Career Conversation:

When you have set up a planned career conversation (or informational interview) it is really important to come prepared. You will want to have prepared questions to ask the person you are meeting with. Build your questions around answers you are genuinely interested in knowing.

Sample Questions:

How did you begin in this field?
What aspects of your role do you like the most?
What is the most rewarding part of your job?
What is the most difficult?
Could you walk me through what a typical day or week looks like for you?
What advice would you give to someone trying to get into this field?
Could you recommend anyone else in your network with whom I can connect with?

Be Professional:

- Respect your contact's time! Keep tabs on the clock and be sure to wrap up your conversation in the agreed timeframe.
- Be attentive during the conversation and practice active listening.
- If you are on a zoom call be sure to dress professionally. Collared shirts or blouses.

Following Up & Keeping in Touch after Career Conversations:

Tip: If you are networking with a handful of people it can be helpful to keep a simple spreadsheet to keep track of who you have connected with, followed up with, and how you want to continue the professional relationship.

Following up:

Sending a thank you after each conversation only takes a few minutes of your time and can leave your contacts with a positive impression of you as a courteous professional. Take time to personalize your thank you email/LinkedIn message and refer to specific topics or take aways that were helpful to you.

Keeping in Touch:

If you sense that your contact might be helpful to you in the future, look for opportunities to keep in touch with them. Record takeaways from your conversations and then use these as strategies to keep in touch. For example:

- If a contact suggests connecting with someone in their network be sure to check back in with them once you've done so. You could talk about what you learned and thank them for their help.
- Ask your contact if they would be open to sharing their thoughts about your resume and experience.
- If something you discussed with a contact comes up in a class, the news, a project you're working on, etc. tell them about it.
- Use transitions in the year (like a new semester) as excuses to reach out to contacts who you haven't heard from in awhile to wish them well and provide updates.
- If you started volunteering or gained an internship within the industry your contact works in you can message and let them know about your experience so far.

Note: While it is important to follow up and stay in touch you also don't want to force a professional relationship. If you have tried multiple times to connect with someone and they are not responding it is important to not waste energy and bombard them with messages. They may not be interested in maintaining the connection - and that's okay, don't take it personally. Instead focus your attention on continuing to build your network with other professionals.