

## *net·work* ['net,wɜrk]

1. *noun*. To be connected to, or operate within, a greater whole or network.  
"The faculty members and students formed a useful network across many areas and issues."
2. *verb*. To interact with other people to exchange information and develop contacts, especially to further one's career.  
"The student demonstrated many types of networking skills: presentation, connection through mutual benefit, bargaining and negotiating."
3. **action, To research and contact 2-3 people in your chosen location or field, whom you will ask for an 'informational interview'.**

## *informational interview* [in-fer-mey-shuh n-al 'in(t)ər,vyoo/]

1. *noun*. A short meeting in person, by skype, or by phone in which two people have a broad conversation, perhaps about a specific location or profession.

### **The goal is at least fourfold:**

1. *verb*. Serve as an introduction so they might alert you in the future or be someone to contact should future positions come up;
2. *verb*. Become part of your professional network in the broadest sense (the more senior they are the, less likely it is that they will be a regular contact but hopefully become more of a 'mentor' - while the more 'equal' you are in standing with them, the more likely it is that you might begin more regular contact in the future);
3. *verb*, Provide an educational opportunity to learn more about the current issues in the field and keep you current/more employable;
4. *verb*, Give you practice in the interview situation but without the pressure of a 'job on the line.'

The informational interview is a good way to build a network, and it can be done even from Humboldt County. However, the key to any strong network is an appreciation of how the links connect and what YOU bring to the table. This is a mutually beneficial relationship, though often, as students, your biggest asset is enthusiasm and youth. You are looking not only for an 'in' to a place, city or organization, but also for a mentoring relationships with someone older and more experienced in your chosen field.

Assignment:

1. Brainstorm a list of your current contacts relevant to your professional area of interest (or the part of the world/country where you wish to live). This list may include faculty, staff, coaches, high school contacts, and from outside activities – anyone who you can initiate a conversation with.
2. Narrow your list to 2 or 3 people with whom you feel you have an immediate rapport, people who will remember you and/or have an interest or desire to help you in some way.
3. If you haven't kept up with them lately (actively - i.e. not just Facebook), research them via social media, the web, their company/organization, etc., to ensure you know where they are and what they are up to (if you contact them for their job at company X and they just got laid off that would be awkward).
4. Email them, ensuring to reintroduce yourself fully (NEVER assume they will know you unless they are a very close friend or family member), explain that you are interested in their field/location and request a 15-20 minute conversation to find out more.
5. Attach your resume and be sure to ask them the best way to contact them/set up a time and be sure your own contact details are in the email (so they don't have to open a document as well).
6. Ideally, you will be able to do this face-to-face (perhaps you can couch surf for a week in that city and set up several at one time) but if not, you want to be brief, to the point, and take up no more of their time than necessary. They are doing YOU a favor, so be respectful of their constraints.
7. Provide a one-page write-up on what you learned from your informational interviews, and be prepared to share you top 5 insights with the class.