Informational Interview Assignment

Objectives:

• Engage in conversations with professionals in fields of interest to gain greater insight into career possibilities
• Demonstrate professional communication skills by arranging a meeting, conversing with employers, and writing appropriate follow-up correspondence.

Informational Interview:

Identify a professional in a career field(s) of interest.
How?
  ○ Speak with faculty, family, friends, and co-workers for in-network connections
  ○ Use LinkedIn’s alumni search tool to identify UNH alumni in your field(s) of interest
  ○ Search members of professional associations working in relevant areas

Reach out to arrange a meeting
How? Sample:
Dear __________,

My name is __________. I am a student at the University of New Hampshire pursuing a degree in__________. I am currently exploring areas of interest, to guide me in determining my future career path. I was referred to you by…/I found your information through_______. I am hoping you might be available for a short 20-30 minute informational interview, either in person or by phone, sometime in the next few weeks. Please let me know and thank you for considering my request. You may reach me at…(phone and email.)

Sincerely,

Your Name

Prepare your questions (Use attached document to record):

Think about what you want to know about the job, the company, the path to this career, and how the position aligns to your personal skills and values. Then create your questions accordingly.

Sample Questions:
  ○ What is a typical day like?
  ○ What has your career path looked like?
  ○ What jobs and experiences prepared you for your current position?
  ○ Is there anything you would have done differently in pursuing your current field?
  ○ What skills are most desirable and important in this field?
  ○ What is the most rewarding part of your job? What is the most challenging?
  ○ Can you recommend other individuals in this field that I should speak with?
Success Tips:
- Dress professionally in a manner that is appropriate for the field.
- Introduce yourself, shake hands, and make eye contact.
- Come prepared with your questions.
- Be conscious of the time. This means arrive on time and plan to work within the agreed upon meeting time (20-30 minutes). Remember the interviewee is taking time out of his/her day to meet with you.
- Show your gratitude and thank the interviewee for meeting with you.

Follow-up:

Send a thank you note within 24 hours of your meeting. You may send a written note or via email; both are acceptable.

Reflect on the experience (see attached document)
Informational Interview Questions

Date: __________  Name of Contact: ____________________  Company: ________________

Create open-ended and thoughtful questions that will help you gain a greater understanding of:

- The interviewee’s job and responsibilities
- The preparation needed to pursue this career (academic requirements, skills, experiences, certifications)
- The interviewee’s unique career path
- What it is like working at the interviewee’s specific company (company culture, opportunities for advancement, plans for growth, company needs)

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Notes:
Informational Interview Reflection:

Write a reflection on your informational interview experience which addresses the following questions. Remember all outcomes of your informational interview can be viewed useful even if you discover a dislike for the occupation. This experience can be a valuable learning opportunity to explore multiple career areas, and reassess your plans as needed.

- After speaking with a professional in this field, how has your understanding of a career in this industry developed (e.g. what have you learned?)
- What was the most useful piece of information you took away from your conversation?
- Is this a career path you will consider pursuing? Why or why not?
- What steps will you take next to either pursue this career path or explore other career areas?