Networking Tips
By Julie Draczynski, Holy Cross Career Planning Center

What is Networking?

- Networking IS a process of building relationships with people who can provide you with information, advice and referrals to increase your visibility in the job market.
- Networking IS NOT contacting people to ask for a specific job within a company.

Key Networking Tool: Alumni Online Community

- Alumni Online Community is a great resource to use to connect with Alumni that are in an industry and/or role aligned with your job search. Search the database for Alumni that meet your specified criteria. Then, reach out to them to set up an informational discussion.
- To access the Alumni Online Community, go to Holycross.edu, click on “Resources for: Alumni & Friends” in top right corner. Click the link to “Online Community” from the right-hand list of options.

Drafting the introductory email

Determining how to best reach out to a potential networking connect can be a daunting task for many people. Below is a structure and some sample verbiage to help you draft the initial email to the person you are hoping to set up an informational discussion with:

- **Introduction**: “Good morning, my name is __________.”
- **Reason for your email**: Provide a brief description your career history and current focus. For example, “I am a Holy Cross graduate, class of XX, and am looking to redirect my career / reenter the workforce after a career break, etc... I am interested in XX industry, XX type of role, etc…”
- **Why them?**: “You have a broad background in the XX industry, have great experience as a XX (role), etc…”
- **Ask for a meeting**: “I’d love to talk with you about companies that would value my skills, strategies for getting into this industry, role, etc... Would you be willing to talk with me (or meet for coffee in the contact is local) sometime over the next week or two? When would be a convenient date and time for you?”
Preparing for the discussion

- Determine the objective of the meeting and prepare an agenda with questions to ask.
- Research the company. If possible, obtain any background information on the person and their role.
- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask (below are some samples):
  - Are there any industries, sectors or roles that you think would best match my skill set? How do you recommend I position myself?
  - What do you think are the most effective techniques for obtaining work in this field?
  - What are the necessary skills and abilities for someone in this field, role, etc...?
  - What do you like and/or dislike about your company/organization?
  - How did you get into this field?
  - What is the current demand for people in this field?
  - Given your understanding of my skills and background, what barriers would I have to overcome to make a move into this field, industry, role, etc...?
  - Are there particular companies or employers that might be good targets for me? Are you familiar with individuals in any of those companies that I might talk to?

Conducting the meeting

- Establish rapport up front and thank the person for meeting.
- Set tone and clarify purpose: discuss your career goals and what you are hoping to get out of the discussion.
- Utilize your prepared questions to help drive the conversation.
- Close: thank them again and discuss any next steps, if applicable.

Follow Up

- Send a thank you note or email.
- Check in with the contact from time to time to maintain the relationship: provide updates on your job progress, highlighting any role they may have had in your progress.