# CAREER NETWORKING GUIDE

## How to prepare for a networking meeting:

**Find a contact:**
- Look for contacts with career experiences related to your interests.
- Make a list of friends, professors and teachers, classmates, even family members – you may be surprised by whom you already know.
- Explore social media, particularly LinkedIn. Join groups that reflect your career interests.
- Career Services can also provide you with suggestions for potential contacts.

**Request a meeting:**
- Introduce yourself via email.
- Indicate your interest in connecting. Make it clear to your contact that you find them a valuable source of information.
- Remember that every email you send is an unofficial writing sample. Watch your grammar, punctuation, and word choices, and use an easy-to-read font.

**Gather information:**
- Be familiar with your contact's professional world: trends, innovations, competition.
- Know what you want to learn from the meeting. Remember why you contacted this person in the first place.
- Know and be able to explain why you are interested in this field.
- Know your skills related to the field. What do you want people to know?

**During the meeting:**
- Ask open-ended questions to gather the most information.
- Be comfortable discussing your skills and how you acquired them. Many people are nervous or uncomfortable talking about themselves, but you can discuss your accomplishments while remaining humble!

**Other Networking Dos & Don'ts:**

- Don't think that by contacting someone, you are bothering them. Most people want to help, and will be flattered that you are coming to them for advice.
- Don't think you need dozens of contacts! A short list of people you've really paid attention to will prove more valuable.
- Don't ask your contact directly if they can give you a job or internship. You don't want to risk making your contact uncomfortable.
- Do send a thank you note! Failure to do so is a major networking faux pas.
- Do prepare extensively! You want your contact to know that you are serious about the field.