Career Network Training and Guidelines

Once alumni have identified potential network contacts, there are several questions that may arise. View our Career Network training and guideline answers below.

What types of questions should I ask my alumni contacts?
First, research the contact's company to become familiar with the industry. This information will be helpful as you develop questions to ask during your conversation. Your questions could focus on labor trends or other work-related subjects, such as relocation and geographical areas. Sample questions for an informational interview could include:

- *What educational or experiential background preparations are best for entering this field?*
- *What strategies and tactics could you recommend for "getting your foot in the door?"*
- *What are the employment trends in your industry or professional discipline?*
- *Has this industry been hiring or laying off in the last few years?*
- *What recent developments might change that?*
- *What are the benefits and challenges you experience in this line of work?*
- *What type of career experiences led you to your current job?*
- *What is your typical work day like?*

How should I first contact them?
The answer can vary. Meetings with network contacts can range from an informal chat with a coworker to an exchange of e-mail with an online contact to a formal appointment or lunch meeting. The alumnus/alumna contact will then let you know how to contact him/her in future correspondence.

Can I give my resume to my contact?
Yes. Giving your resume to your contact can tell the contact more information about you and your professional development. You should also ask your contact to critique your resume and offer suggestions that could help you be more marketable.

Will my contact help me secure employment?
Perhaps, but it is very unlikely this person will offer you a job with his/her company. The purpose of this networking opportunity is not job placement; the goal of connecting with an identified alumnus/alumna is to network and exchange career-related information within the Trinity community. The contact is not expected to supply a list of potential employers for you; however, if s/he does. You are welcome to follow up with them. Let them know that you appreciate any professional assistance they have to offer you.

Should I send a follow-up letter after a meeting?
Absolutely! A hand-written and hand-addressed thank you note on proper stationery can speak to your sincerity and your professionalism. Thank them for taking time and for sharing their knowledge and professional contacts with you. If they recommended any next steps or provided additional contact names, it is important that you follow through

with these suggestions. By giving you more contacts and thereby, more assistance, the contact is trusting you with his/her own network of contacts and if you do not follow through, it reflects poorly on you, the contact and Trinity University. In the thank you note, let your contacts know that you followed their advice, and tell the, what the results of that contact were. A thank you letter can reinforce some ideas that you thought pertinent to the conversation, thus solidifying the conversation. Subsequent progress report notes can keep your name and your search fresh on their minds and could result in additional help further down the line.

What's the most efficient way to structure my search? Let's say I'm looking for an accounting job in the medical industry.

Because a typical profession can be categorized into more than one category and thus, more than one vocation type in the Alumni Online Directory, search all possible occupations. Begin your search as broadly as possible and then refine your search if results are too numerous until you have a good number of potential leads with which to follow up.