What is an Informational Interview?

- The informational interview is an opportunity to learn about a career which interests you by meeting or talking with someone who is working professionally or who has completed an internship in that field.
- In a question-and-answer session in person or via phone you will learn first-hand about a job directly from someone who performs or has performed the tasks daily.

Arranging an Informational Interview:

- Your Career Advisor at the Pomerantz Career Center can help you “brainstorm” potential people to interview. Friends, parents, friends’ parents, and parents’ friends are potential sources of locating people who might be willing to participate in an informational interview with you.
- Use LinkedIn® to find Iowa alums to network with or to set up informational interviews. Your Career Advisor can teach you more about using LinkedIn® (see pages 45-46 for more information).
- Prioritize your list based on areas of greatest interest to you and convenience of arrangements. Select two or three prospective subjects to interview. When you contact them, identify yourself as a student at The University of Iowa, state that you are interested in the career or internships they have chosen, and ask if they mind meeting or speaking with you for 20-30 minutes to discuss their career and to answer some questions.
- See Informational Interview Request sample email below.

Preparing for an Informational Interview:

- Consider what you want to learn during the interview and select questions accordingly.
- Utilize Informational Interview Questions (see page 15) to help you select your questions.
- If meeting in-person dress for the job you are investigating and arrive 10-15 minutes early.
- If speaking with the volunteer over the phone be sure that you have reception and are in a quiet place.
- Bring or email a copy of your resume in case it is requested. However, don’t approach the interview as if you are looking for a job—your purpose is to gather information.

Informational Interview Etiquette:

- Be sure to give your volunteer ample time to schedule the informational interview.
- It is not appropriate to email them the day before and ask to meet or speak with them the following day.

Evaluation and Follow Up:

- Evaluate your experience. What did you learn from it? Do you have new questions? Did the interview reinforce your interest in this career? How does this career “fit” you? Talk with your Career Advisor about it.
- Keep names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your contacts for future reference.
- Send a brief thank you note to each person you interviewed thanking them for their time.

Sample Email:

Subject Line: Informational Interview Request

Dear Mr./Ms. XYZ,

I found your name on LinkedIn through The University of Iowa alumni group and I wanted to contact you about information pertaining to careers in accounting. Your experience would be insightful to me as I choose my own career.

Schedule permitting, I am hoping that I could conduct a brief informational interview with you during the week of February 20th to learn more about your career path. I would really appreciate any insight you could provide to me about careers in accounting.

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jan Student
jan-student@uiowa.edu