Alumni Mentoring Tips

Mentoring allows students to interact with alumni who are working in a wide variety of careers. Alumni mentors can provide advice about courses, internships, and activities that may be beneficial in certain careers, and answer questions and concerns about a particular career path. Mentoring develop meaningful relationships with working professionals to share information and resources. *Directly asking alumni for a job or internship is not an effective use of a mentoring relationship*.

Keep it Professional

Career resources like LinkedIn are different from personal resources like MySpace and Facebook. Make sure that your online profile and your communication with others wouldn't embarrass you or any of your contacts. Be on time if you schedule a meeting, be polite and considerate, maintain confidentiality, and act as you would in a business setting. You don't have to be overly formal, but you should put effort into presenting yourself in the best light.

Research Other People's Career Paths

Consider asking questions like:

- What kinds of experiences would you recommend for someone trying to break into your industry?
- How would you plan your career differently if you had the chance?
- What has been your career path since graduation?
- How did you prepare for your career? What was your college major?
- How well-suited is my background for this type of work?
- What kind of prior experience is absolutely essential?
- How did you find your present job?
- Can you connect me with any colleagues who might also be willing to speak with me?

Show Your Appreciation

Always be sure to thank alumni for their time and for sharing their experiences.

A written thank-you note, e-card, or email follow-up are great ways to show your appreciation.