

# NETWORKING TIPS

Experts say eighty percent of all jobs are landed through networking. Thus, networking is a skill well worth learning and developing. It is an excellent way to begin making contacts, gain information about career options, and meet professionals in your career field.

## The Process

### *Be Flexible*

As you move through the stages of your job search, you will need to adapt your networking approach, identify your alternatives, and adjust your resume to reflect your skills in the particular career field in which you are networking.

### *Reach Out*

Start with friends, relatives, and acquaintances. Talk to these contacts about any firms or companies you may be interested in or any specialty areas of practice. Let them know you are researching employers to begin your job campaign. Any suggestions they might have can be helpful. Approach your professors about their ideas for your job search. Present them with your research and initial preparation of a resume and cover letter, and ask their advice as experts in the field. If you begin your contact with a faculty member by showing how much work you already have expended, he or she will be more inclined to spend time with you brainstorming and thinking of creative approaches to your job search.

Make an appointment with the CSO to discuss other possible contacts. We may be able to connect you with alumni or other friends of UDSL who are in the geographical or practice area in which you are interested.

## Informational Interviews

### *Make Contacts*

Research alumni in the geographical area where you want to be and practicing the type of law you want to practice. Remember when you ask someone to share their time and expertise, you must respect their willingness to help by thanking them. Never ask them to find you a job. YOU are responsible for finding your job and will be respected in return for your professionalism when you ask for insight and advice rather than a handout. However, it is perfectly fine to ask if the alum knows of anyone who is hiring. Early in your meeting, emphasize that you do not expect to learn of a job opening, but are simply seeking information and advice on how to use your abilities and experience most efficiently.

Prepare your thoughts regarding what types of information you would like them to share with you. Be ready to discuss your goals, accomplishments, and abilities. Be concise and factual. The more concrete you are, the better able your contact will be to share appropriate information. Prepare questions and observations about the career field that your contact can discuss. He or she is the expert and will enjoy sharing his/her insights and expertise. Work at making this an enjoyable experience for both of you so that you will be remembered favorably.

### *Ask for Other Resources*

At the conclusion of your meeting, thank the person you are talking to and ask if he or she can suggest two or three other people who might be willing to share their insights in a similar manner. Ask your contact if you can use his or her name when contacting these people. This tends to open more doors. **Send a thank-you note immediately after the interview.**

*Participate in UDSL's MAGNET ("Meet-A-Graduate Networking") Program.*

See Tim Swensen or Julie Jackson in the CSO for details and be watching for email and other notifications.

*Sample Questions for Informational Interviews*

- What is your work and educational background?
- What experience did you have to get your job?
- What are your primary responsibilities and duties?
- What might a typical work day look like?
- How much training/supervision did you receive early in your career? What sort of training/supervision helped you the most? What sort was least helpful and why?
- What do you most enjoy about your job? What do you enjoy the least?
- What trends or changes have you experienced and what do you foresee in your area?
- What books/blogs/journals do you recommend I read on a regular basis if I am interested in your area of practice?
- What professional associations should I join?
- What advice do you have for me regarding my current job search?
- Who else do you recommend I reach out to? May I mention that you referred them to me?