Welcome back! As The President of the 2017 Freshman Class I want to take a moment to welcome you back to campus. The University has a legacy that runs deep and the class of 2018 will continue to build upon that. We are all a part of one B-CU family. Your commitment to mentor, to encourage, and to serve are what makes B-CU great! I look forward to meeting you on campus as you participate in the Alumni Day of Service. ~Derrol

Derrol D. Dillard
Freshman Class President
Class of 2017

Freshman Class President Welcome

The Art of Networking

(Modified from the Book: Master Student to Master Employee by David Ellis)

Networking means staying in touch with people to share career-planning ideas and track job openings. It’s possible that more jobs are filled through networking than through any other method. It’s never too early to start networking. And if you want a job when you complete your diploma, you've got to know people in the industry in which you want to work. "The concept is to plant the seeds before you need to harvest them," says Heather Krasna, Director of Career Services at the University of Washington’s Evans School of Public Affairs. "By the time you're about to graduate, it's getting to be a little late in the day to start building those connections."

So how should college students go about making new connections and getting the most out of them when they have a full course load—and a social schedule to boot?

Play the Student Card
Alumni and other contacts are more likely to want to help you while you're still a student, Krasna says. "It's less pressure because the person is just asking for advice," she says, and not yet looking for a job. That means if you want to pick the brain of someone who works in the industry you want to go in to or even request an informational interview, now's the time to do it. Grow those relationships while there's no pressure, so those contacts will want to help you when you transition to the work world.

Start by Listing Contacts
A contact is anyone who can help you implement your career plan. Contacts can include classmates, roommates, teachers, friends, relatives, and their friends. You can also add to the list former employers, current employers, and people who meet you for informational interviews.
Words of Wisdom:
“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Barack Obama

Start your contact list now. List each person’s name, phone number, and e-mail address on a separate 3x5 card. There are even apps for phones that help you manage your contacts, such as Go Contacts or Contacts+. Another option is to keep your list on a computer, using word processing, database, or contact management software. Whenever you speak to someone on your contact list, make brief notes about what you discussed. You should also jot down any further actions you’ll take to follow up on your discussion.

Craft your “elevator speech”
Develop a short statement of your career plan that you can easily share with people. Make it short enough to deliver in 30 seconds or less. This is what you will say if someone asks “What do you do?” while you’re riding an elevator or waiting in line to grab a cup of coffee. An effective elevator speech has three main parts. First, state your name. Second, say what you do in an intriguing way, focusing on the main benefit that you create. Third, explain in a more straightforward way how you create that benefit. For example: “I am Tanisha Jones. My job is to help people think inside the box. My company helps people and businesses find off-site storage space.” Write out your speech. Revise and rehearse it until it sounds natural.

Meet contacts in person
Any gathering of people—from a family gathering to a chance conversation at the bus stop—can become a place and time to network. Of course, formal gatherings such as an alumni event at your school are great places to network. Consider joining a professional association related to your career plan. These exist for just about every profession, from the American Dental Association to the Association for Women in Communication. These groups are tailor-made for networking. Many associations have student chapters, and perhaps one already meets on your campus. When you talk to people, avoid asking for a job outright. Instead, say something like, “I’m in the job market right now” or, “If you hear about anyone who’s hiring, would you please keep me in mind?”

Have some business cards printed with your name and contact information. This makes it easy for people to follow up with you when they do hear of something. Another way to connect people is through the Internet. LinkedIn is designed for professional networking, and Facebook and Twitter are being used for the same purpose. Search for blogs related to your career and notice who comments on articles. You might be able to find contact information for these people through a search engine such as pipl (pipl.com), PeekYou (www.peekyou.com), or wink (wink.com).

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