**Build Your Network Through Career Conversations:**

**What to Do Before, During and After**

**Before the Conversation**

Think about  what you’d like to learn from your industry connection, creating a list of five to seven questions you want to ask. Then prioritize your questions by order of importance, so you can cover the most pressing ones first in case your meeting is cut short.

Next, research the person, role, company and industry. You can find information on LinkedIn and visit the organization’s website.

Lastly, don’t forget to develop your **elevator pitch** and prepare an answer to the question “How can I help?”

**During the Conversation**

It’s a good idea to start the interview with a quick refresher of who you are and what you hope to learn.

*Sample Introduction: “I really appreciate your taking the time to talk with me. I graduated from Queens College in (year) with a degree in (major). I’m especially interested in learning more about (role, organization, field) as I explore various career opportunities in (industry). I’d appreciate any insights or advice you can offer me about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (career path, role, company or industry).”*

Now’s also the time to put that **elevator pitch** to use and give the alum a sense of your experience, skills, interests or values. Aim for it to be about 90 seconds long.

People enjoy talking about themselves and sharing what they know, so try asking about the person’s work, role or company, or seek advice and perspective on their field. Just remember that since you requested the meeting, it's up to you to keep the conversation going and be mindful of the time.

*Sample Questions: How would you advise me to get started on building experience in this field?* *Can you provide any resources that were helpful to you in this stage of your career?* *What are typical career paths in this field?*

Always, always, always say thank you. Ask if you can stay in touch (e.g., by connecting on LinkedIn or exchanging contact info) if you have additional questions or updates.

*Closing message: You've been very generous with your time, and you've given me several new ideas to explore.*

*If I have more questions, may I contact you? Would you prefer email or phone? I would love to keep in touch, could I add you as a connection on LinkedIn?*

**After the Conversation**

After the meeting, send an email to thank them for their time, listing specific ways they’ve been helpful to you.

*Sample email:*

*Subject: Your Name - Thank You
Dear (Name of Alum),
It was a pleasure speaking with you earlier today. I truly appreciate that you took time out of your schedule to share your story with me and offer valuable insight about entering the (name of field/industry). I will certainly follow your suggestion to (advice shared with you). Thank you again for your time and for all the information.

Best,

Your Name
Email / Phone*