INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

The best way to learn about whether a particular career/job path is a good match for your interests and skills is to talk with people who work in that field. Informational interviews are valuable for the following reasons:

- to explore careers and clarify your career goal
- to expand your professional network
- to build confidence for your job interviews
- to access the most up-to-date career information

Sample questions:

- What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?
- How do you spend your time during a typical work day?
- What kinds of problems do you deal with?
- What kinds of decisions do you make?
- What percentage of your time is spent doing what?
- How does the time use vary? Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant?
- How did you get your job? What jobs and experiences have led you to your present position?
- What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging? What do you like and not like about working in this field?
- What other jobs can you get with the same background?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your occupation?
- What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job? How did you learn these skills? Did you enter this position through a formal training program? How can I evaluate whether or not I have the necessary skills for a position such as yours?
- How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work?
- What work-related values are strongest in this type of work (security, high income, variety, independence)?
- How is the economy affecting this industry?
- What can you tell me about the employment outlook in your occupational field? How much demand is there for people in this occupation? How rapidly is the field growing?
- How has your job affected your lifestyle?
- What are the major rewards aside from extrinsic rewards such as money, fringe benefits, travel, etc.?
- What are the educational, requirements for this job?
- How did you prepare for this work? If you were entering this career today, would you change your preparation in any way to facilitate entry?
- What abilities or personal qualities do you believe contribute most to success in this field/job?
- Do you have any advice for someone interested in this field/job? Are there any written materials you suggest I read? Which professional journals and organizations would help me learn more about this field?
- What kinds of experience, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?