

This is Eastern Michigan University's *Career Corner*. And welcome to Season Two, *Finding your Fit*.

Welcome back to the *Career Corner* podcast. My name is April Calkovsky, one of the career coaches in the University Advising and Career Development Center here at EMU. Today I am joined by my fellow host and career coach, Barb Gehring.

Thanks, April. I'm really excited to be here with you today.

In today's episode, Barb and I will be discussing informational interviews. We will explain exactly what an informational interview is. We will also discuss various ways you can add this to the activities you do to get closer to choosing a major and/or career decision making. So Barb, can you get us started by explaining what an informational interview is?

Absolutely, April. Informational interviews are a great way to learn more about a job or career you may be interested in. Your goal is to gain more insight into a career or job that will allow you to make a more educated decision. We will go through some of the ways you can do this.

Thanks for that, Barb. I would like to add, it is always important to get info like that straight from the people doing the work you think you might like to do. Can you provide our listeners with the ways they will go about obtaining an informational interview with the professional in their field of interest?

Absolutely. You can reach out to people you know or reach out to current connections among your family friends, and people through connections like dentists, hairstylists, places of worship, and of course, through your connections on LinkedIn. LinkedIn you can join groups that relate to your interests and put a request out to those groups.

Prepare specific questions ahead of time to ensure you're taking as little of the individual's time as possible. These can include things you would value in a career, such as work life balance, potential for growth in the company, pros and cons of the career, and diversity in the workplace.

Barb, I find that many students are very nervous to do this type of thing, because they feel shy or uncomfortable. What would you suggest to them?

That's an excellent point, April. We know that many people feel nervous about making that first connection with someone. You want to keep in mind that many people like to share their experiences. So asking them how they feel about aspects of their career allows them to share what they think and

give you honest answers to your questions.

It's important to mention that you never want to ask questions that put them in a compromising situation. Also keep in mind we're here for you. If you need assistance through this process, we can help.

Definitely. I often talk about this with students and have them send me a draft of that initial email before they send it out. I also like to remind students that people want to be supportive and helpful. And they will appreciate the opportunity to not just share their experiences, but to support the next generation of folks entering the workforce,

I am so glad we are discussing this topic. Informational interviews are such a great way to learn more about an industry or a company without having to work there. It can help to sidestep future disappointments by increasing awareness of what your values are and how a company aligns with those values in a quick and easy way.

We also want to make sure that students remember, be professional in all of your communication with those you interview. Be sure to send a thank you card or a thank you email to the person after they've given you their time. And if you obtain the contact information through another person, say your mom's best friend or your dentist, be sure to send them a thank you note too. You always want to leave a good impression wherever you go and with whomever you meet.

So to wrap things up, remember that the career coaches in your UACDC are here to help. Be sure to schedule an appointment through Handshake or call our office to meet with either myself, April, or our other two fellow career coaches, Brad or Logan.

Eagles, stay tuned for next week's episode, as Brad and Logan bring you how to network as a freshman or sophomore and the importance of gaining mentors. As always, stay safe, stay healthy, and remember that we're here for you, and we support your goals.