CONNECTING WITH COFC ALUMNI

Networking with alumni is about building relationships and connections in a purposeful, organized way. Networking is not about asking alumni for jobs but asking for assistance. When you contact an alumni to network, it should be to seek out and gather information about career opportunities that interest you. Your questions should focus on asking for advice or assistance based on that purpose. Remember, it is essential that you be informed, confident, and polite throughout this process.

Start by joining the College of Charleston related groups like the College of Charleston Alumni Association (over 12,000 members) or one of the other 70+ groups affiliated with CofC. To find these groups, type “College of Charleston” in the search bar and then select “groups” from the “more” dropdown menu.

College of Charleston also has a school group on LinkedIn with an alumni tab feature embedded in the page that allows you to search for alumni based on the filters you choose and select. For instance, if you wanted to connect with previous marketing majors who are located in Greenville, SC, you would be able to set a major filter and location filter to narrow your search.

In addition, there are specific groups and subgroups for specific majors, geographic areas, etc. including:

- College of Charleston – School of Business Network
- College of Charleston Arts Management Alumni
- College of Charleston Honors College Alumni
- College of Charleston School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Connect with others with whom you share common interests. Conduct a keyword search to find other groups related to:

- Industry/Career Fields – Join groups related to industries that interest you.
- Student Groups, Honor Societies, and Professional Organizations – If you are a member of a local chapter or group, join the corresponding LinkedIn group. You will connect with both alumni and current students from these groups.
- Other Interests/Recreation – Interested in sports or even a career related to sports? Many people that join groups related to sports are in the sports industry.

Once you are approved to be a member of a group, post articles, ask questions, and comment within these groups to raise your professional profile. You can connect directly with individuals or through groups on LinkedIn. In your email or message, clearly articulate who you are and what your goals are with the pending connections.

- State how you are connected and describe who you are.
- Communicate your objectives (wanting to learn about their industry/career field/organization; get advice on the job search process/preparing for an interview)
- For example: “I found your profile through the College of Charleston Alumni Association on LinkedIn. I am a senior business marketing major at the college and am very interested in pursuing a career in public relations. Would you have some time to discuss what you do and recommendations for someone with a marketing background looking
to enter public relations? We can discuss this via email at sykesja@g.cofc.edu or by phone at 843.333.4444, whichever is more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK ALUMNI

• What recommendations would you have for someone looking to enter the industry?
• What skills are required? What are the typical entry channels?
• What types of extracurricular and internship opportunities would best prepare me for a career in this field?
• I’m interested in your organization/industry. What skills and experiences would help me stand out as an applicant?
• Since I am interested in this industry, what are the key companies, organizations, and professional associations that I should know about? Are there other alumni that you recommend I talk to?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO POSE IN ALUMNI GROUPS

• How can students find summer internships in your field? Are there other means of gaining experience before graduating?
• What abilities are important for success in your field? What personality traits or characteristics are important? What is the skill set that an employer in your field would look for in a new hire?
• What advice do you have for students who are preparing to enter your field?
• What related occupations and industries might I explore? What other fields could you see yourself moving into?
• Where can someone in an entry-level position in your field expect to be in 2, 5, or 10 years?