Informational Interview Assignment
Out of class time: 2-3 hours

Learning Objective: Ability to network and identify professionals in his/her career interest area. Increase knowledge of students’ field of interest and how it may relate to the course, their major, or their interests.

Assignment idea
Students will be assigned to identify a professional working in their field of interest and conduct an informational interview with him/her. Students can locate professionals through UMD Alumni Advisor Network, LinkedIn (interview must be via phone, in-person, or skype), professional networking gatherings, or from their personal network. Additional resources are located on the Your Careers BSOS website- www.ter.ps/ConnectAlum.

Student Introduction
Informational Interviews (or “networking meetings”) can be a great way to expand your professional network and learn more about a particular career field. For this assignment, find a person working in a position that you would someday like to have and schedule a time to interview the person. Use the University Career Center’s Terp Guide (page 33) to develop at least ten questions to ask during the informational interview.

After the informational interview, write a 1 to 2 page (double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font) essay reflecting on the experience. Please address the following questions:

- With whom did you meet and why?
- For what organization does this person work, and what is his or her job?
- Describe the interview – what were the main topics that you discussed?
- What did you learn from the interview?
- What steps will you take to follow-up after the interview?

Evaluation options
- Instruct students to upload the essay to Elms/CANVAS. The Instructor would review each and give points for answering the questions above.
- In-class evaluation, each student shares their experiences in a three minute or less standup presentation.
- In-class evaluation, students pair off and are peer interviewed about their informational interview. The peer submits feedback on how their partner addressed the questions above.

Additional Resources to share with students for locating individuals for informational interviews:
- Careers4Terps (www.Careers.umd.edu). Once you log in, click on the employer search tab at the top and sort by industry. Many of these employers list viewable contacts. You could reach out to them by email or phone and ask to set up a brief informational interview.
- Check out the many recruiting events offered every semester by the University Career Center & The President’s Promise. In particular, look for career and internship fairs, employer networking sessions and industry networking series career panels. These events can offer wonderful ways to connect with professionals. Make sure to come to these events prepared and dressed to impress!
- You can also connect with Terp alums on LinkedIn. Visit www.linkedin.com (you will need to set up a profile if you don’t already have one). Click on “contacts” at the top and look for University of Maryland. You can then see where UMD alumni live, work, and what they do. Message Terps of interest and ask questions.
- Finally, consider asking your friends and family—you never know who may be a few degrees of separation away!