

## THE LOWDOWN ON INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Informational interviewing is a great way to learn about possible jobs, career options, and paths to reach them. It's also a useful networking tool.

**WHERE TO BEGIN** – Better than an email, call the organization, office, or person that interests you. With a very short introduction, explain that you are a student at APU and the degree you're pursuing, and let them know what you're seeking, which is primarily to learn more about the organization/office/position. Ask for about 30 minutes of their time.

**HOW TO PREPARE** – Organize a few questions to get the conversation going. You might inquire about:

- the goals and key projects of the organization, and specifically of the person's role
- what they enjoy about the work they do; what's stressful or not very enjoyable
- what other positions work closely with them
- what other organizations interact with them
- how the person got into his/her job
- what qualifications or experience are needed
- if there are others in the organization with whom you should talk, or if the person can refer you to someone else in a related organization (that leads to networking and can open unexpected doors!)

**DURING THE MEETING** – Dress should be business casual, and bring a notebook or notepad to take notes. Be sure to get a business card at the end so you have the person's official title and contact info. Be aware of the time and try not to let the meeting go longer than planned, unless invited to do so. You could ask for a follow-up meeting if there's more you want to learn or discuss.

**CLOSING THE MEETING** – Thank the person for her/his time. If you're comfortable with it, you could ask the person to review your resume for you, and give her/him a copy, or ask if you can email a copy. This is a great way to have someone in your preferred field or organization review your resume, see if it fits in with jobs they post, and get some feedback.

**FOLLOW UP** – Be sure to follow up with a thank-you note or email. This can make all the difference in the world, showing an extra bit of courtesy and appreciation of the person's time. It's possible that this could lead to a mentoring relationship, which can then lead to lots of opportunities later on.