

The Online Alumni Directory



Using the Directory

- Link to the directory through the CEL website.
- Search by entering a combination of two or more variables to get a more refined list of alumni.
- If searching by place of employment, educational institution or degree earned, you may need to enter variations of the name you are entering as the search variable.
- Each search will pull a random sample of alumni fitting the search criteria entered and will produce a maximum listing of 50 alumni. If you are interested in contacting specific alumni listed, click on their name to get contact information. If you do not have time to gather the contact information on alumni listed, jot down the names of those you'd like to look at more carefully in the future. That way you can locate the specific alum the next time you use the directory by entering first and last name as the search criteria as the next sampling of 50 produced may be different than the first.

Getting Started

- Alumni may not be aware that students have access to the Online Alumni Directory. When making an initial contact (whether by phone, e-mail or letter) introduce yourself as a St. Olaf student (include class standing and major), specify that you found the alum's name through the Online Alumni Directory, and indicate your purpose in making the contact.
- Alumni are an invaluable resource for gathering information on a specific field or occupation, a particular organization, how best to approach the job/internship search, or on a specific geographical location. Alumni may not be in a position to offer an internship, summer job or full-time employment, but can often offer valuable advice or assistance in how to go about securing these opportunities. Whether you are researching career opportunities or seeking a job or internship, it is best to pursue the information you need in the context of an informational interview.
- When calling to arrange an informational interview, introduce yourself, state your purpose, and ask if the alum has a few minutes to talk. If the alum does not have time to talk just then, arrange a better time for you to return a call. Be prepared to leave a specific message if you get voice mail when you call; include your name, phone number and when you'll try to call back. If you choose to make the initial contact via e-mail or letter, state that you will call to follow up and then follow through with a phone call within the designated time frame.
- If you are planning an event in which you'd like alumni participation, make the invitation no later than a month prior to the date of the event. Be clear about the specifics of the event – date, time, place, duration of the event, expectations for the individual's participation and the date by when you need a response. Confirm a positive response to a phone invitation with an e-mail or letter so that the alum has the specifics of the event in writing. If a contact is not able to accept an invitation, remember to thank the alum and ask if he/she would like to be invited to similar events in the future.

What to Say

You may call, write, or email an alum and simply say something like this:

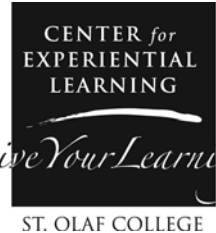
“Hi, my name is _____. I am a (*class year*) at St. Olaf College exploring career options and am interested in your career field. I found your name on the alumni directory (or was passed on to me by _____) and I was hoping you might be someone I could talk with about exploring career opportunities in _____. Is now a good time to discuss this, or should I get back to you another time? I will be free the week of _____ and was hoping to spend about 20-30 minutes discussing (*your company, your position, how to job search in this area, etc.*). Is that something that might work with your schedule?”

St. Olaf College – Center for Experiential Learning

Career Connections Internships Civic Engagement Entrepreneurship
Phone: (507) 786-3268 Fax: (507) 786-3626 www.stolaf.edu/services/cel

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How to Prepare

- Research your field of interest by reviewing resources available at the CEL or on our website.
- Be ready to answer questions about yourself that relate to your experiences, skills, interests, and goals.
- Think through several areas you'd like to know more about and generate specific questions you may want to ask during the day's down-time. Some questions you may want to ask are:
 - What do you do in a typical day?
 - How did you first enter this job/career?
 - What are the career prospects of this field?
 - How would you recommend someone break into this field?
 - What kind of background is required for this type of position? What kind of background do you (the contact person) have, and did it help you in this field?
 - What kind of experience (internships?) would be advantageous in this field?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of this field?
 - What motivated you to pursue this work, and what motivates you to stay in it?
 - What values do you find in this job environment? Are there any general characteristics that are typical of someone in this field?
 - What are the typical working conditions of this job? (Probe for specifics about workload, expectations, dress codes, degree of independence, amount of supervision, closeness of relationships, pressures, degree of cooperation or competition)
 - What kind of compensation can one expect when deciding to pursue this career (salary & benefits)?
 - What is the philosophy of the company like in terms of time share, flex time, sick leave, personal days, daycare, etc.?
 - Is there much travel involved?
 - What are the mobility possibilities in this career? From one level to another? Between companies? Between states? Outside of the country?
 - What technologies are integrated into this career?
 - What is the management style of this organization?
 - Is there something you would recommend I do to test whether this type of job is a fit for me? Is there any other information you can give me to help me understand what it might be like to work in this sort of job?
 - Who else would you recommend I contact for more information about this career track/organization?
 - Could you recommend a person or organization that might provide a shadowing experience for a day?

Following Up

Send a thank-you note! You should always thank your contact person for their valuable time and for any referrals with which they may have provided you. It can be personalized by commenting on information that was especially helpful to you.

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