

# Building Relationships with Alumni using UROnline

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Office Hours: M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. | Drop-in Hours: M-F, 2 to 4 p.m.



## Alumni & Career Services

### UROLNLINE DIRECTORY

The goal for student access to the UR Online alumni directory is to create and foster the professional relationships between alumni and students. Alumni provide valuable support and assistance to students as they explore potential career paths, open doors to industry networking opportunities, and provide a glimpse into the day-to-day life of professionals.

**Terms of Use Policy:** <https://uronline.net/pages/terms-of-use>

**FAQ's:** <https://uronline.net/FAQ3>

**Privacy Policy:** <https://uronline.net/PrivacyPolicy>

### EVERYONE BENEFITS

A natural place for students to begin building a professional network is with University of Richmond alumni, as everyone already shares a common experience. UR Online is a starting point that helps facilitate connections with alumni, which ideally may lead to establishing a professional relationship.

#### Benefits for Students

- Get insider advice on entering a field(s); including if you need additional certifications/trainings
- Learn about the work environment and culture, as well as industry trends and jargon
- Practice talking about your experiences and telling your story as they relate to your career
- Build confidence in your skills and decision to enter the industry or attend graduate school
- Decide whether a field is (or isn't) for you
- Develop and maintain your professional network of contacts – maybe even find a mentor
- Gain tips about moving to a new area

#### Benefits for Alumni

- An opportunity to stay engaged with the University
- A way to meet students who will soon enter the workforce and who may become a future colleague
- An increased understanding of what is important to new graduates when entering the field

### HOW STUDENTS GAIN ACCESS

Students who complete [Resume Check](#) in SpiderConnect will be given access to UROnline. Prior to reaching out to alumni, it is recommended that students

- ☐ Read through this handout
- ☐ [Make an appointment](#) with a Career Advisor to discuss their goals

*Remember to **never** ask directly for a job/internship...opportunities will come as relationships develop*

## BEFORE YOU USE UR ONLINE TO CONTACT ALUMNI

- ☐ Determine your goal(s) for contacting the UR alumnus/a. Why are you reaching out? What do you want to learn from him/her?
- ☐ [Make an appointment](#) with a Career Advisor to identify your career likes/dislikes before connecting with a professional.
- ☐ Develop your brief personal introduction, including what you are (or considering) studying, your field(s) of interest, and why you want to connect with that individual. Use this for your elevator pitch and introductory email message (see page 3).
- ☐ [Create a system](#) to manage contacts and follow-up/referrals, e.g. Excel spreadsheet, Google Docs, etc.
- ☐ Have a genuine interest in learning from others and an openness to meeting new people.
- ☐ Prepare questions to guide the conversation. Think about your goals from above and frame questions around that.
- ☐ Be aware and sensitive that the alum may hold a different position than what is listed in the UROnline Directory.

## ETIQUETTE AND GUIDELINES FOR CONNECTING WITH ALUMNI

- ☐ Get the best interaction by researching ahead of time.
  - o Research the alumnus/a's industry and company before speaking.
  - o Cross-reference their current company/position with LinkedIn information.
- ☐ Be prepared to share your resume with the alum if asked.
- ☐ Be respectful and acknowledge this may not be a convenient time for them to respond.
- ☐ Ask for 10-15 minutes and offer several days/times to chat (either email, phone or video chat).
- ☐ Conduct an [Informational Interview](#). Ask for advice on *how* to find jobs/internships in their field instead of asking for opportunities.
- ☐ Bring a list of questions with you to guide the conversation, and keep notes of any advice or referrals during the interview; clarify anything you don't understand.
- ☐ Ask for names of other people in the field that you can contact, or if they are willing to refer you.
- ☐ Stay in touch! Periodically update the alum and others in your network as you make significant progress related to your research or job search to keep your relationship going.
- ☐ Connect on LinkedIn within 24-48 hours; personalize the Connection message.
- ☐ **SEND A [THANK YOU NOTE](#)!** Show your appreciation for their time and effort.
- ☐ Remember: a great impression may lead to a referral\* within their organization if a position is open.

### \* Employee Referrals

A referral from a trusted employee often plays an important role in the hiring process, which is a great benefit for you, the seeker of opportunities. Organizations typically value the opinion of their employees, and encourage them to refer qualified job-seeking candidates. And, in fact, often employee referrals who are ultimately hired come with financial incentives for the one who referred.

**Your introduction** should include: who you are, how you found their information, the purpose for contacting them, and what you'd like to learn from them. Additionally, ask their preferred method for communication and offer a few days/times that are convenient for you to connect (see next page for examples).

## Sample Introductory Email

Dear Ms. Jones,

Currently, I'm studying Journalism, with a minor in Rhetoric and Communication, at the University of Richmond and will graduate in May 2020. I found your name through the Richmond alumni database (UR Online), and I am writing to ask your advice about the journalism field.

Journalism is a career option I have considered for some time. I'm currently a writer for *The Collegian* and also sit on the editorial board. Prior to attending UR, I was the editor of my high school newspaper and contributed to a local weekly circulation as a movie critic. I am eager to learn more about the field of journalism to determine if my interests would be a good fit with the industry.

I will be in New York the week of October 9th and would greatly appreciate the chance to speak with you about your experience. If meeting with you at that time isn't convenient, perhaps we could talk by phone at another time.

Please let me know if there are any particular dates/times that work best with your schedule. Typically, I have class most of the day on Tuesday and Thursday, and have more flexibility on other days of the week. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

### Remember:

If you haven't heard back from your contact within a week or so, don't be afraid to follow-up and change how you contact them (phone vs email). People are busy, but it doesn't mean they don't want to speak with you. Maybe your email got buried in their inbox, so a gentle reminder is often appreciated.

If you haven't heard back after two follow-ups, focus your attention on other contacts.

## DEVELOPING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Now, and in the future, it's important to articulate to people who you are and what it is you are looking for in a job and/or your career. An 'elevator pitch' serves as your quick introduction in a variety of settings: job fairs, networking events/receptions, and job interviews.

Consider the following when developing your introduction:

- ☐ Name and major(s)/minor(s) (or areas of interest if undecided), and anticipated graduation year
- ☐ What is your current career interest(s) and how has that developed?
- ☐ Demonstrate your knowledge about the field and/or organization
- ☐ Ask for advice or other information/questions to get the conversation started

The same pitch is not necessarily appropriate for all situations. Develop your basic introduction, then alter it for different audiences and situations. Practice delivering your introduction to yourself and friends, so it will be natural when you need to use it.