NETWORKING: CONNECTIONS MADE EASY

WHY?
According to a recent survey by Manpower Group that analyzed data from 60,000 clients, networking was the single most effective way to land a job (nearly as effective as all other job search methods combined!). Who you know may not get you the job, but it might get you in the right hands, your credentials a second look, or get you pointed in the right direction. Real and effective networking is simply being genuinely interested in others and building and maintaining relationships over time. People like to meet those with similar interests and help others if it’s easy for them to do so. Networking is not about asking everyone you know for a job, but can simply be asking for general job search advice, information, tips and referrals.

HOW?

Online: Give LinkedIn a try (view the student orientation videos at http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/).

Phone: Schedule a phone conversation following an in-person or email introduction.

In person: Network at student club meetings, while you’re volunteering at a professional association meeting or community event, job fairs, alumni events and career panels, conferences, etc. Still nervous? Start conversations with one person at a time; pay a sincere compliment and ask questions; extend your hand with a smile and an introduction; it always will be reciprocated.

Email: Send an introductory email to someone you’ve been referred to, found via a professional association, read an article/blog post, or identified via the Career Mentor Database.

GIVE AND TAKE
People like to help, so feel free to ask for it. Just be polite and make it easy for them to do so. Think about how you can be a resource to them, too (this is how you forge long-term relationships). Forward along an interesting article you read. Who could you introduce your contacts to? Build rapport, follow up, then ask if it’s okay to keep in touch (and do so!). Always send a thank-you note.

30-SECOND COMMERCIAL
Providing a short synopsis of your skills, experiences and strengths makes introducing yourself to someone so much easier and effective. Keep it short and practice! Focus on: who you are, your key strengths, what sets you apart, and what you’re looking for. For example:

“I am a senior at Towson University majoring in x. I’ve worked my way through college and still maintained a 3.5 GPA. I’m particularly good at a and b, and really enjoy c. I was able to apply my skill in b in my internship with company z where I did h and i. I’d love to know how you think someone like me might fit in with your organization (or if you have a specific goal, “I’m seeking an opportunity in x where I can z”)."

This approach will generate questions/conversation. Next steps can include getting a business card, asking if you can set up a quick follow-up meeting or phone call at the person’s convenience, and requesting a referral (“Would you happen to know of anyone who would be interested in talking with me?”).