

Networking Guide

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You may have heard the phrase “it’s not about what you know, it’s about who you know” before. While we believe this perspective is reductive, pessimistic, and mostly false, there is some truth to the idea that your personal connections can be a difference maker in your job search and application process. The truth is, if all else is equal between two candidates for the same job, it’s more likely that the candidate who has a trusted connection available to vouch for them will be viewed more favorably. This is exactly why it’s important to leverage your personal connections and develop your professional connections throughout your undergraduate career and job search process. Below are some key methods you should be using to build a solid professional network:

Leveraging Personal Connections

There is nothing wrong with consulting your family, friends, and your families' friends for career advice, potential experience opportunities, and knowledge about job openings. These people do not necessarily have to be working in the same field as what you're interested in, but they may be able to introduce you to other professionals who are in that field and can give you a valuable opportunity.

Get Involved On-Campus

Young Harris College offers tons of student employment jobs every semester which require a relatively low hourly commitment but make a great way to meet and develop a relationship with professional faculty and staff. Faculty and staff are here to serve students, so they will often be happy to share opportunities they have knowledge of or insider information in the field you’re interested in. This is also a great way to build a strong connection with a professional who can then become a reference for your job and graduate school applications.

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Utilize LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a widely used professional networking app that makes it easy to connect with alumni, faculty, and staff at YHC as well as any professionals you have a preexisting relationship with. LinkedIn is a great way to explore job fields, make connections, and browse opportunities. Ensure your profile is up to date with all of your relevant experience and include a recent headshot to give yourself a professional presentation.

Get Involved Off-Campus

The great thing about internships and part-time roles which recruit college students is that there is no expectation among the hiring organization for the applicants to have strong connections in their field considering they are just getting their feet wet. However, if you don't take advantage of these lower expectations and work to build connections ahead of time, you could end up behind schedule compared to your peers. Considering this, you should spend your sophomore, junior, and senior years getting involved in internships, volunteering, job shadowing, etc., to develop connections in your field. If you're eager to get involved but don't know where to start, make an appointment with the Internship Coordinator through Handshake to discuss your interests and how you can find and apply for off-campus experiences.

Attend On-Campus Events

The Career and Professional Development Office holds employer and professional development events on-campus almost every month. Attending events such as job fairs, mock interviews, and tabling events is a great way to find and develop connections you would have never guessed existed. To see upcoming events, you can check the YHC website's front page, the YHC app, or check Handshake and plan your attendance.