

## **Coping with College Series**

### **Jumpstart Your Future Career Over This Holiday Break**

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As you bundle up in your parka and load up the snow encrusted car for the semester break, don't think your career planning should go on holiday too.

Semester breaks are a great time to do informational interviewing with persons who currently work in careers that interest you.

What is informational interviewing? This is an interview in which you are exploring a career field with someone who currently works in that occupation. You ask questions to learn more about what it's really like from someone who knows.

Talking to a professional who is currently in the field can offer a look into the job environment, an opportunity to hear a personal reaction to the joys and frustrations of the job and information about recent trends in the field. You may want to hear about a typical day on the job or find out what some related career paths are like when people choose to leave the field. You may want to know about hiring trends with the economic "down-sizing" that surrounds us.

Whatever your question, hearing someone's personal experiences can help bring this career to life, making it easier to imagine yourself in this role. It's also a great time to ask about any recommendations your interviewee has about preparing for a job while you are still a student.

Information interviewing can offer you a lot more than reading about a career. As a former instructor of career planning courses, I've heard students rave about how much they learned and how much fun they had doing informational interviews, so I always recommend it.

If you want to learn more about informational interviewing, check out Richard Bolles book, [What Color Is Your Parachute?](#) The Career Center, Room 185 of the Student Services Building also has information about ways to arrange an interview and some common questions to ask.

Finally, informational interviewing can serve as an initial step in networking. Although the purpose of your interview is not to get a job, meeting people in the field can be helpful in finding volunteer or part-time job experience or in launching your job search.

So between snowy trips to the mall, glasses of warm cider and that semester break job, consider doing an informational interview. It can help prevent your career from "being left out in the cold!"