Networking for Career Success

What is Networking?

- Networking is the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts. Networking is used by professionals to widen their circles of acquaintances, discover job opportunities, and increase awareness of news and trends in specific fields.

Who should you network with?

- You should include all kinds of people in your network. This can include people from your past and present, including colleagues, industry contacts, friends, relatives, friends of friends, people outside of your profession (or desired profession), social media connections, and much more. Adding these contacts to your professional network is vital, because you never know who can help you (or who you can help) in your professional journey.

Why is networking important?

- Networking is important because:
    - It can help you advance different skill sets
    - It can offer you new opportunities
    - It can grow your self-confidence
    - It can help you develop new relationships
    - It can provide you valuable career advice and support

How do you network in a virtual environment?

- **Schedule time on your calendar** to attend professional virtual events, talk with professional contacts, or join different social media groups regarding your profession (or desired profession).
- **Update your online presence.** This can include creating a LinkedIn profile or other professional networking platform profile to display your resume, search for jobs, and enhance your professional reputation by posting updates and interacting with other people.
- **Reach out to current and former faculty, bosses, and peers.** Check in with them via phone or email and ask them questions, this can lead to many different opportunities, job offers, new contacts, and much more.
- **Use video calls when you can.** This will help improve your connection with a person, since being in-person is not possible at the moment due to COVID-19. It will also enhance engagement and communication.
- **Do your research.** Research about people, jobs, industries, and positions before talking with people. This will help you feel confident when you are networking, help you feel prepared, make you look organized and interested. Researching is essential when it comes to networking.
- **Have your virtual environment/background be professional.** Make sure there is not a mess behind you, that the lighting is good, or that there is not any background noise. It is important to have a professional background when meeting with people virtually.