Networking is the most effective way to find a job or internship. Through networking, you can learn more about career opportunities, specific organizations, industries, and career fields. It is much more than a way to find a job!

The primary purpose of networking is to give and receive information, advice, and referrals. Other reasons to network include academic research, discovering career options, job or internship searching, career management, business development, improving your brand, and building a community around hobbies or interests. Your emphasis should be on building relationships and making connections in a purposeful, organized way.

WHAT IS A NETWORK?
A network is that group of people who may be willing to help you in your job search for personal, professional, or purely altruistic reasons. The people in your network are those who can give you advice, insights, and perhaps leads to specific opportunities.

WHO IS IN YOUR NETWORK?
Take the time to consider the people you know in all areas of your life. They are your potential, personal, and professional network, and can lead to the best information and job leads for you. Every person you know knows another person!

Your network includes people from all parts of your life like neighbors, colleagues, family, doctors, professors, and other service providers. The average person has 80-100 immediate contacts. Many of your most effective leads will come through your network.

Try to list 6-10 people in each of the following categories:

1. Personal: Significant Others, Family, Friends, Neighbors, Religious Groups, Services (accountant, lawyer, doctor, dry cleaner, hairdresser), Sports, Gym
2. University: Hopkins Alumni, Students, Faculty, Staff
3. Professional Contacts: Colleagues, Supervisors, Customers, Professional Associations, Trade Shows, Career Events
4. Community: Interest Groups, Hobbies, Community or Volunteer Groups, Charities, Government Representatives (local, state, national)
5. Electronic: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK
There is almost no one in the world you cannot try to contact. People like to help students out with career information and share their insights, especially when the job seeker appears knowledgeable, focused, and sincerely interested in what they do and how they succeeded. Being asked for advice is a sign of professional success and will be well received.

Start with lists of people you already know: friends, fellow students, present or former co-workers, supervisors, neighbors, professional organizations, organizational directories, journals and magazines, state associations, and public speakers are good resources. Try searching in easily accessible periodicals, such as local and large metropolitan newspapers. You may also call an organization and ask for the name of the person that works with the issues that interest you. Locate both graduate and undergraduate alumni, people you’ve read about, or people your parents know. Broaden your scope by searching outside your immediate field. This is a great way to learn new things, make indirect connections to your field of interest, and meet new people. You can never have too many contacts in your network.
BE PREPARED BEFORE REACHING OUT
Research the organization, person you will be speaking with, product produced by the organization, etc. If your contact is an alumnus/alumna, look him/her up on GoHopOnline. The more you know, the better you will be able to formulate questions pertaining to the organization and field, and the more confident you will feel.

Once you have a list of contacts, it is important that you strategize your next steps. When reaching out to a contact, prepare an elevator speech and questions to ask in advance.

REACH OUT
It’s better to have someone you know introduce you to a new contact (warm call) than to connect with someone new without an introduction (cold call). LinkedIn is a good tool to help with this, but don’t be afraid to ask for direct referrals from your contacts. Emails are the most used and effective way to connect with someone for the first time. An email allows you to carefully compose your thoughts in a professional manner. It may not result in a written response; therefore, you will have to follow up by phone. The advantage of sending an email is that the person you are contacting can learn something about your needs and interests before the conversation.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
Your goal in these conversations is to generate lasting professional relationships that will benefit you and your contact throughout your careers. Here are some tips for the beginning of your relationship with new contacts:

● Always act professionally and with integrity; always respect others and treat them fairly
● Show up early for meetings and complete your action items
● Ask a lot of questions about them and their experience and listen carefully to their responses
● Send a thank you email/note whenever a person donates time or provides you with helpful resources
● Follow up with your contacts and let them know the outcome of your current search
● Remember that you become a networking contact for the other person, and they may call on you in the future for assistance
● If someone provides you with contact information for one of their colleagues, be sure to follow through with that person and make an effort to reach out to them

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING
Skillfully used, an informational interview is one of the most valuable of all sources of occupational information. It presents opportunities for an intimate and flexible inspection of the job field or major unmatched by written sources. The great majority of people are very willing to help others learn about their careers; it is important to them and they usually like to talk about it. When you ask for an appointment, make clear your status as a college student and the explicit purpose of your interview. When calling business people, DO NOT ask for a job/internship. These meetings are solely for informational purposes.