



Career Development Office Connect Over Coffee Program Guidelines

Purpose

The Career Development Office's (CDO) Connect Over Coffee program supports students' professional relationship-building efforts by encouraging students to identify and meet with alumni-practitioners for career exploration and advice.

Each student is encouraged to identify at least one alum in their preferred geographic area with whom they can conduct an informational interview. The student-participant must initiate the outreach with the alum, identify and suggest locations convenient to the alum's place of business for a meeting, prepare for and conduct the informational interview, and engage in appropriate follow up after the meeting. Then, students may request reimbursement for coffee (or another non-alcoholic beverage, pastries, and/or light snacks) consumed during a meeting with an alum, up to a maximum of \$10 per student per academic year. Students may conduct informational meetings with alumni during fall, winter and spring break, as well as during the academic year.

Identifying and Contacting Alumni

Students who need assistance identifying an alum to meet through the Connect Over Coffee program should schedule an appointment with their career advisor to discuss identifying appropriate alumni for this purpose.

When reaching out to alumni to schedule a meeting, students may attach the electronic program flyer to their message if they wish. A sample informational interview request follows for reference; however, students should rewrite the request using their own words.

Dear Mr. Bauer:

I am a second-year student at the University of Richmond School of Law, and I am interested in pursuing a career in national security law. Given your background and experience, I would appreciate your perspective as I learn about breaking into the practice.

Do you have 15 – 20 minutes to meet with me over coffee to discuss your practice, the legal market in D.C., and any suggestions you have for me as I explore options for the summer? Through an initiative to encourage students to develop relationships with alumni called Connect Over Coffee, the Law School will cover the cost of your beverage.

I will call you next week to see if we might be able to arrange a meeting. While a Wednesday meeting would work best for me, as I do not have classes that day, I can make myself available at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Chloe O'Brien

Students should notify their career advisor when they have set up a meeting with an alum and intend to use their program allocation. The CDO will record the alum's name so that the Law School can monitor which alumni regularly participate in this and other alumni engagement programs.

The Meeting

During the meeting, students may wish to focus their questions on the following:

- alum's practice area and setting;
- alum's career path;
- navigating law school, including course selection and recommendations;
- co-curricular activities such as journals, clinical placements and competitions;
- extra-curricular activities such as clubs, affinity groups and other associations;
- employment search advice;
- employment market trends;
- professional organizations and other community involvement;
- advice on professional behavior and protocols; and
- networking tactics.

In addition to seeking answers to their own prepared questions and engaging in conversation with the alum, students are encouraged to ask each alum for one key piece of career advice ("Just one thing...") to share with fellow students and request permission to take a selfie with the alum that may be used on the law school's social media accounts. Students should submit the advice and photo to the CDO at lawcareerdevelopment@richmond.edu for use on the law school's social media accounts.

Reimbursement

Within 30 days after the meeting, the student should submit the Connect Over Coffee Reimbursement Form along with an itemized receipt (for up to \$10). Requests for reimbursement must identify the alum, the date and location of the meeting, and a statement confirming that the student has sent a thank-you note to the alum.

Questions

Please contact Carole Yeatts at 804.289.8185 or carole.yeatts@richmond.edu with any questions about the program.