3 Steps to Speed Networking
Make the most of those minutes with the alumni!

**Step 1: Breaking the Ice**

*Share your 60-second career story:* Begin the conversation by telling the alum about you and your career goals. Have your “elevator speech” ready to succinctly tell the alum about key elements of your work and educational history as well as what you’re thinking about regarding your future career path.

**Step 2: Engaging with the Alum**

*Gather Information:* Ask one or two questions about the professional’s career path, position, employer, or the industry.

- Could you tell me about your career path, and what lead you to a career in this industry with this company?
- What does a “typical” day or week look like in your position at your company?
- What skills are most critical to success in the work you are currently doing?
- What is the most rewarding/challenging aspect of your current job?
- What did it take to be successful in your first job in this industry?
- What would be a typical entry-level position at your company?
- What would make someone the ideal employee for your company?
- What do you see as the coming trends in this industry?

*Obtain Advice:* Ask one or two questions about preparing for a career in the industry and tips for success.

- Based on what I’ve told you about my interests and skills, what roles do you feel I might be best suited for in this industry?
- What steps would you suggest I take now to prepare to enter into this industry?
- How can I become a more competitive candidate for positions with your company?
- What advice would you give someone just starting out in the Journalism program here and/or this industry?
- Are you involved in any industry-related organizations that you would recommend I become involved with?
- What areas of the industry do you feel will offer the greatest opportunity in the coming years, and how can I best position myself for those areas?

**Step 3: Ending the Conversation**

- *Say THANKS and mean it:* When it’s time to end your meeting and move along, shake hands and genuinely thank the professional for his/her time.
- *Maintain the connection:* Ask if it would be possible for you to meet for a more extensive informational interview at a later date to learn more about his/her work.
- *Ask for a business card, and follow up with all those you met:* Make the effort to send all your contacts a brief email to tell them how good it was to have met them, and (if you have not already done so) ask to coordinate a specific time to meet for the follow-up informational interview.