

# SPHTM NETWORKING GUIDE TABLE OF CONTENTS

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# 2020 SPHTM Networking Guide



## What is networking?

Networking is very simply building relationships with people by talking and sharing experiences. It is the process of making connections to gather or provide information. Networking can allow you to meet new people, refine communication skills, and put yourself in the right place to hear about job opportunities.

Having more people in your network is always valuable. Your connections can provide referrals, inform you about unadvertised positions, give industry advice, and review your resume. The possibilities are endless.

## Who is in your network already?



### Connection Categories

1. **Personal** (Family, Friends, Medical Professionals)
2. **Professional** (Coworkers, Supervisors)
3. **Community** (Contacts from Extracurricular Activities or Volunteer Organization)

## Who should be added to your network?

Your network should include anyone who can assist you with a job search or career move. This could include any University Alumni currently working somewhere you might like to work. Establish priorities and make a list of organizations where you would like to have connections. Add anyone who can give you insight into your industry and/or career opportunities, but don't limit yourself to connections just inside your field.

These initial conversations should be low stakes. You are not asking for an internship or job opportunity right away but instead building a relationship with someone who may be able to give you inside information or help you in the job hunt later.

## How to Make Connections and Network



Industry  
Conferences  
(APHA, NIH)



Career Fairs  
(Tulane Expo,  
SPHTM Fair)



Social Media  
(LinkedIn, Tulane  
Connect, Alumni FB)



References from  
your current  
Network



Networking Events  
(Industry Happy  
Hours, TU Networking)

1

**Develop a List of Possible Contacts.** From your current or prospective connections, develop a list of contacts from both personal and professional circles. You can find contacts from organization websites, professional social media and by attending networking events, industry conferences, and career fairs. Throughout COVID-19, events and conferences are likely to be virtual.

2

**Request an Informational Interview.** Once you have developed your list, you can request an informational interview. You can request an informational interview via phone or email. It can be held over the phone or in a casual setting like a coffee shop.

## What is an informational interview?

An informational interview is an easy and effective way to meet people in your industry. It is simply an informal talk with someone about their work and experiences. It is **not** a job interview although it will allow you to gain invaluable knowledge about a particular organization or your career trajectory.

The information you gain may help you to narrow down your area of interest or gain a more realistic view of your industry. Your connection here may give you some insight into open positions or areas of interest at their company. It is important to remember, though, that you are not asking for a job. Your goals are to learn about your industry, gain connections, and open yourself up to additional references. **Plant the seed for future job prospects.**

3

**Prepare for your Informational Interview.** Read about your contact's position and organization on the website or LinkedIn. Set personal goals for your meeting, whether that be career guidance or obtaining referrals. Prepare a list of questions you would like to ask (see next page for details).

4

**Conduct an Effective Informational Interview.** Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, all networking should take place virtually. Ask your prepared questions but be open to flexibility and casual conversation as well. Do not ask for a job or tape the interview. Make sure to obtain contact information from the person you interview and ask for additional contacts.

5

**Follow Up.** After the Informational Interview, send a thank you note. Express your appreciation for their time and information. Handwritten or email thank you is acceptable.



# Sample Informational Interview Questions

- How would you describe the overall mission and goals of your organization?
- What are the challenges facing the department?
- What are the core activities, and services of this department?
- How would you describe internal or external clients? What is important to them?
- Where do you see growth or change occurring in the organization?
- What skills and knowledge are most critical in this organization?
- What personal characteristics do you feel contribute most to success in this department?
- What are some typical job roles in this department? Entry? Mid-Level? Senior roles?
- What job roles would utilize skills in (e.g. marketing, presentation, data analysis, negotiating)?
- What do you see the opportunities for growth and development?
- How are decisions made? Do people feel included in the process?
- What is a typical day like?
- What are normal work hours? Do people work long hours? Is there flexibility? Do people take vacations?
- How does your use of time vary? Are there busy and slow times or is the work activity fairly constant? How would you describe the pace and cycle of work in this area?
- Are the time demands of your job specific to this department, or would anyone in this career be expected to work similar hours?
- What are typical job roles available in this profession? Entry? Mid-Career? Late Career?
- What are typical career paths in this field?
- What experiences, paid or unpaid, would you encourage for anybody pursuing a career in this field?
- What did you do to make yourself marketable?
- What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
- Is the field growing? If so, in what areas? What are the biggest challenges facing this field?
- What trends would likely to affect someone just entering this profession?
- How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
- What changes in demand have you seen in the profession?
- Where do you see the growth opportunities for the profession?
- How does this career affect your lifestyle and work/family balance?
- How can I learn more about the field (e.g., journal, publications, professional associations, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc.)?

## Digital Networking Platforms

The Internet is a huge platform which nearly every job seeker is using in their search. Just as we are using professional/social platforms to network and make connections, employers are similarly using social media to recruit new talent. Make sure that your online history is appropriate and clean! Do a quick Google search of yourself to see what comes up, and be sure to remove anything from your social media accounts that you wouldn't want an employer to see.

Social networking is an opportunity for you to build virtual connections that may lead to in person connections or an employment opportunity. LinkedIn, Tulane Connect, and Facebook Alumni or Organization Groups are great ways to start making connections.



LinkedIn allows you to keep a social but professional profile that you want employers and connections to see as it relates to the job search. LinkedIn is open to anyone and currently has over 575+ million users.

Capabilities include:

1. Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Page
2. Searchable filters to help you find alumni in your area or industry
3. Connection Building
4. Comparable Salary Measures
5. Job Search Platform



Facebook is an application that we all know but rarely use for professional networking. Check alumni groups to find connections with shared interests.

Capabilities include:

1. Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine Page (@TUSPHTM)
2. Tulane SPHTM Alumni Association Pages (DC and NOLA)
3. Alumni and Organization Groups
4. Networking or Professional Event Pages



Tulane Connect is a social/professional platform that is only available for Tulane affiliates (students, faculty, staff, and alumni).

Capabilities include:

1. Alumni Directory and filters to help you find potential connections.
2. Messaging features.
3. Job Directory
4. Event Postings

## Business Cards

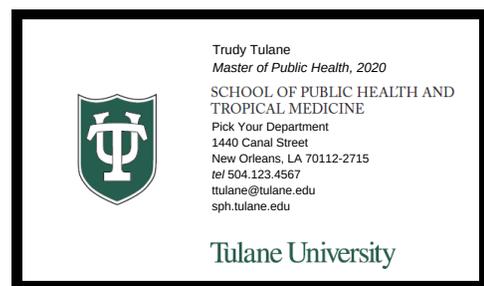
Students are not expected to have business cards but some choose to. Your full name, degree (don't use "candidate" unless Doctoral Candidate), email (TU or personal), phone numbers, and your school's address or personal mailing address should all be included in your business card.

### Quick Tips

- Keep the formatting and design simple and easy to read.
- If you want to show your creative side, make sure your information is still the focus.
- VistaPrint or other online vendors will be the quickest and cheapest option.

To order Tulane business cards (modeled like TU Faculty and Staff) you can order through the vendor.

<https://www.meleprinting.com/tulane-items.html>





# Sample Communications

## Email Request for Informational Interview

Date: August 5th, 2019

Subject: Inquiry from Public Health Student at Tulane University

Dear Mr. Hodgins:

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director at the United Nations Population Fund, suggested that I contact you to find out about John Snow's Healthy Family Initiative in Nigeria. I am interested in maternal and child health issues and would appreciate the opportunity to introduce myself further and request a brief moment of your time to speak about your work in the field.

Would you be willing to speak with me briefly by phone or Skype? I am enclosing my resume to provide information on my background. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my interests and skills in further detail.

I look forward to communicating with you and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Michelle Johnson B.S. Public Health, 2022 | Tulane University SPHTM

Mjohnson@tulane.edu | 214-555-5555

## Email LinkedIn Connection Request

Always add a personalized note on LinkedIn when connecting to give context of who you are and any shared interest or connection.

Hi Mr. Hodgins,

I am a current Tulane B.S. in Public Health student. I found your profile through the SPHTM Alumni network and would love to connect about your work at John Snow!

Michelle Johnson B.S. Public Health, 2022



# Sample Communications

## Networking Follow Up Letter

### **Michelle Johnson**

1245 Oak Street  
Arlington, TX 76018  
214-555-5555  
mjohnson@tulane.edu

August 8, 2019

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin  
Executive Director  
United Nations Population Fund  
605 Third Avenue  
New York, New York 10158

Dear Dr. Osotimehin:

I would like to thank you for taking time to speak with me during your recent visit to the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at Tulane University. I enjoyed hearing about your experiences in Nigeria's Ministry of Health and the United Nations Population Fund. Your advice on work experiences and specific areas of study that most benefited you in building your career has helped direct my summer internship plans to those areas where I need further development.

I found your insights into future trends in the health and health services industries to be most interesting and have begun to research the articles and publications you recommended. Also, per your suggestion, I have arranged an informational interview with Steve Hodgins at John Snow, Inc. and will be speaking with him next week. Thank you again for that connection and I will follow up with you afterwards to let you know of the outcome.

Sincerely,

Michelle Johnson