**Networking Essentials**

* **It’s about building a professional relationship**, so they know you. You are *building* a *conversations first.*
* **Ask your professors, colleagues, and others for people to contact. Also: who else do you know?** Your classmates who have transitioned, faculty/staff, friends, people at conferences, and others (family and friends may know people you could talk to).
* **Find alumni and others** on **LinkedIn**, for every institution you have attended.
* **Request a brief conversation** (20-30 mins), about *them* and their department. (So they always know that interacting with you will be easy and light-touch, and that you are *not* asking them for a job—at this point.)
* **Make the conversation primarily about learning from them**, while also informing them during the dialogue about *your* interests and accomplishments too.
* **Some possible question ideas for them:** “What was your path to your current position?” “What do you enjoy most about your job?” “What do you find challenging about work in this environment (academia, company, government agency, academic department, etc.)?”
* **Send a thank-you message within 24-48 hours, mentioning what you found particularly valuable/interesting.** Say that you “look forward to being in touch**.”**
* **Message them periodically**, maybe within several weeks, with any update, or perhaps an article or something else that may interest them. If you feel comfortable asking another question or two, let them know.
* **Remember: you are building a professional relationship!** Nurture it. (In the future, when you are in your career, they may be ready for a change and contact you.)  
  When you are ready to transition, then you can ask something like, “If you hear of opportunities in x, y, or z, I hope you will let me know. Thanks again for sharing your valuable insights!”