Provide informational interviews

Sharing information about your work or educational experience through an informational interview is one of the easiest, most effective ways to give back to the Macalester community. Even a short e-mail can help a student clarify his/her career path.

Many of the most natural in-person informational interviews don’t resemble interviews at all. Instead, they take the form of fluid conversations about your career and experiences, as well as how the student’s background could lead to a position in your field. Though he/she should have questions prepared, a conversational style makes the exchange more relaxed for both parties.

Why are students contacting me?
Students will contact you based on their interest in:

- Your work, organization, field, or educational experience
- Applying for a position at your organization or others similar to it

Provide information that you feel comfortable sharing, knowing that students are looking for candid advice to guide their career exploration and application process.

How should I conduct the interview?
In general, students will send informational interview requests via e-mail, and you should feel free to provide an e-mail response. If you agree to meet with a student in-person, you should propose a date, time, and location that will be comfortable for you. One excellent option is your workplace, because it should be both convenient for you and informative for the student.

How can I help?
When connecting with a student, your only responsibility is to provide information on your personal experiences. If you would like to provide further assistance, consider the following:

- Encourage him/her to use your name in a cover letter or interview
- Pass along the contact information of others who work in your field
- Connect the student to other organizations with openings
- Advise the student on his/her job search skills, including:
  - Resume and/or cover letter, which can often be field-specific
  - Interviewing tips, including advice on personal presentation and business language
  - Additional experience or skills that would strengthen their application