

# Connect with Alums



sparc.hampshire.edu

Hampshire **alumni** are one of your best resources when you're thinking about work and life after Hampshire. Talking with alumni can help you gain insight into a particular field, interest, place of work, and more. They can also assist you in building your professional network, potentially leading to internship, job, and business opportunities.

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## SEARCH FOR AN ALUM

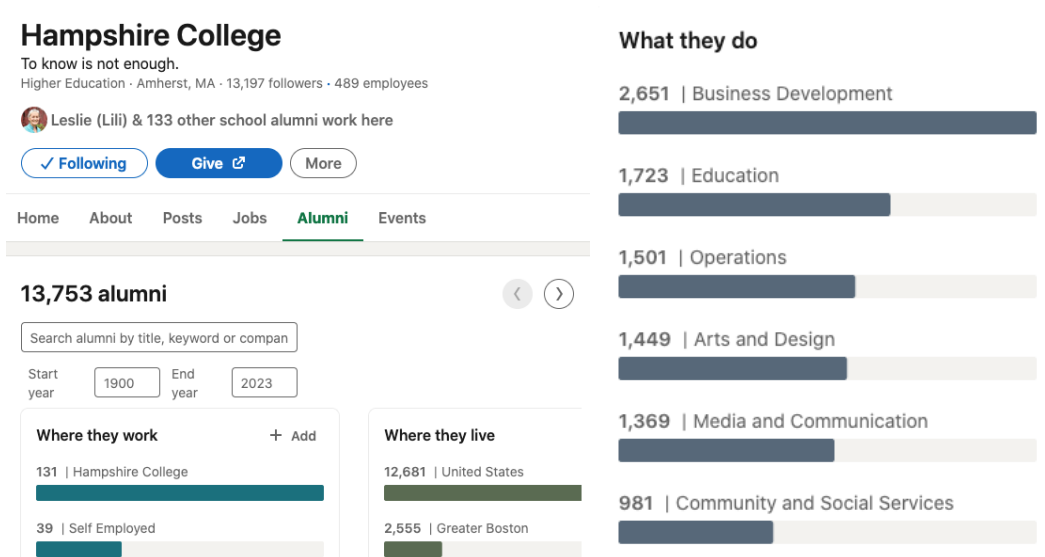
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- Go to the alumni directory at [HampshireNetwork.com](https://HampshireNetwork.com) and log in with your HampNet login (registration may be required).
- Click "Directory" in the left-hand menu bar.

Search for alumni by Year, Location, Vocation, Company Name, Grad School, and more.

- For a list of ALL alumni in the Career Network, leave all of the fields blank and run the search (see image below).
- The "Mentor Expertise" field is a text-based search of any area of interest or expertise that the alum listed in their profile (e.g. reproductive rights, business plans, fundraising).

LinkedIn is a helpful resource for finding jobs, but you can also use it to connect with alumni! After you've made an account, go to [linkedin.com/school/hampshire-college/people](https://www.linkedin.com/school/hampshire-college/people). There, you can sort alumni by location, career type, what they studied, and more.



## MAKE CONTACT

What's the best way to reach out once you've identified alumni you'd like to connect with? Here's some general advice to get you started.

### Do Your Homework First

Before you reach out to alumni, take the time to familiarize yourself with their work, and consider what specific things you hope to learn or gain from your correspondence.

Most alumni prefer that the initial contact be through email, but their preference may be noted in the Career Network section of their Hampshire Network profile. Keep in mind, alumni contact information is confidential and may be used for career information purposes only.

**Your initial email** should be brief, friendly yet professional, and address the following:

- **How you found them** (alumni directory, referral from SPARC, faculty, etc.)
- **A little about yourself:** Area(s) of study, (expected) year of graduation, and where you are on your own career journey (e.g., exploring directions, researching industry, job searching)
- **What you are seeking:** Information about their organization, industry insights, job search and/or grad school advice, etc.

- **How you would like to meet** (in person, by phone, or via Zoom, depending on the alum's preference and availability)
- **Always proofread emails** before sending. Every interaction is an opportunity to make a good impression!

Check out the **sample email** at the end of this handout to see these steps in action.

### Resume or No Resume?

- *Proceed with caution.* It can be off-putting to the alum if you ask them for an internship or job, or even give that impression.
- *Explain yourself.* If you decide to include a resume with your email, it's important to tell them why. A resume can be a nice way to share information about your interests and accomplishments with the alum, but make your intent clear!

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## THE MEETING

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Informational interviews allow you to gain knowledge about a particular field from an "insider's" perspective, as well as to begin building a valuable professional network. Even a brief conversation may help inform your decisions about possible career paths, graduate studies, and strategies for taking your next steps.

### Make a good impression by being prepared.

- **Write down** a list of the questions most important to you. This can be especially helpful if you tend to get nervous.
- **Map directions** and/or have the alum's phone number or Zoom link ready, to avoid last-minute scrambling.
- **Be on time (or early).** If your meeting is in person or even on Zoom, dress appropriately for that business and look your best.
- **Bring materials** such as a pen, notebook, and a copy of your resume.
- **Conduct the interview professionally:** Listen carefully, ask good questions; be aware of the alum's time constraints.
- **DO NOT ask directly for a job or internship.** You can show your enthusiasm and energy for the field or company, but don't put them on the spot. If the moment feels right, you might say something like: *"If you hear of a position that might be a good match for me, could you let me know?"*
- **Ask for recommendations** of other people to contact for further information or different perspectives.
- **Thank them** for their time and willingness to share information with you.

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### FOLLOW UP

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- Always send a well written **thank-you note** within one or two days of your conversation or visit (email is ok). Mention parts of your talk that you enjoyed and advice you found helpful.
- **Write again in a month or two.** Restate how their advice helped you, and update them on how your information gathering/job search is going. If they referred you to another contact, let them know what was helpful from that person. Stay in touch!

**Sample Email: Requesting an Informational Meeting**

Dear *"Almost Famous Alum Filmmaker,"*

I am a DIV II Hampshire College student with a concentration in film and video production. I'm a huge fan of the powerful use of personal narratives in your work and would love to talk with you about getting started in the documentary film industry. Right now, my questions center around using my last three semesters to develop skills, make connections, and secure an internship where I can get more hands-on experience.

I read your profile on the Hampshire Network and noticed you were listed as *"Willing to Help."* If you are available, I will be near your New York studio between March 17th - 23rd, and I would greatly appreciate your professional perspective on the above questions, as well as the opportunity to have a conversation with an industry insider such as yourself.

Thank you for considering this request. Lastly, if that week of the 17th is inconvenient for you, I'd also be grateful if we could meet another time over Zoom. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Spike Lee, Jr.