Most of the informational interview questions you will find are not appropriate for our students and for this time of the year. They are more focused on students who have no idea what a job entails and need to find out more about the job in general.

Given that, here are some questions I think might be appropriate for you as you approach graduation. You will first need a short introduction to lead into the questions. For example:

Thank you very much for talking with me. I am very interested in the ______________ field and thought you would be an excellent person to talk to (or, Bill Smith thought you would be an excellent person to talk with) regarding some questions I have. At this time you can start some of the questions or the person might ask you more about your background or the discussion might go another direction. Another way to bring your background and skills up at this point is to say "I have a background in this and some experience with ______________. One thing I would like to ask you is what other skills do you think are important for breaking into this area?"

Here are some other questions you might consider asking (you might want to change the order of these questions):

- What do you like about the work you do?
- What are some challenges facing people in this field?
- Is there anything else you would suggest I do to prepare for this type of career?
- What is your background and how long have you worked for ______________?
- What do the opportunities look like at ____________________ (his or her company)?
- What are your main responsibilities?
- Has there been anything you have done that has been particularly good in preparing you for this job?
- What are some things in this job that are important to you?
- Is there anyone else you think would be good to talk with?
- Are there any other companies you would recommend I look into for opportunities?
- Are there some good conferences that you might suggest I look into?
- If you had it to do all over again, what changes would you make in your career?
- What is the culture like here at ______________?
- You might also consider asking some more technical questions that seem appropriate given the field and the person you are talking to.
- You might also consider asking some questions related to information you have seen on the company or the person on the phone.

You might also consider asking some questions specifically related to the area you are looking at:

- Are there some good professional associations you might recommend in the area?

The key thing is to be aware of the person's time. Have 4-5 important questions to ask and then see how things go. If it seems appropriate to ask more, then ask more.
Make sure you always follow these sessions up with a thank you note. As a result, if you meet with the person, it is important to get the person's business card before you leave. I would also recommend bringing at least five additional resumes during your meeting. The person might want extra resumes to show others. You should also bring some copies of your reference sheet.

**How to Write an Email or Letter to Open the Door to an Information Interview:**

You might just write a letter to someone and say "Bill Smith suggested I contact you. Bill thought you would be an excellent person to talk with about the __________ field." A little background information here would then be good. "I am currently a graduate student in __________." You would then say you will call him/her in the next week to see if she might have some time to answer a few questions. You can then say "I have attached my resume to help facilitate your discussion. I look forward to talking with you."

*If you have not been referred, you can say one of the following:*

"I read your recent article in the __________________________. I was fascinated by the _______ and was wondering if you might have a few minutes to answer some questions I have about your work and this field. Currently I am a graduate student in the _____________."

"I am impressed with your organization and I am specifically interested in finding out more about the Water Division at _________________. In talking to a few people within your organization, I was told that you would be an excellent person to talk with about the ____________ field. Currently I am a graduate student in the _________________."

"As a fellow member of the (professional association) organization, I saw your name in the member directory and thought you would be an excellent person to talk to about careers in the __________ field. Currently I am a graduate student in the _________________."

If anything, these will help spark some additional ideas.

Please contact the Career Development team with any questions or concerns.