

Excellence in Leadership Program (ELP)

Envisioning Your Professional Path

At our August retreat, we will work on envisioning your professional path. You are being asked to do this pre-work in advance to better prepare for the upcoming session on the afternoon of August 10. This page provides the overview. More details about each assignment are provided in the following pages.

INTERVIEW

Select a person in your organization or in another organization that has a position that you would aspire to or are intrigued by.

Conduct a 30-60 minute informational interview. Check out the list of potential interview questions which you may consider to use. You may add questions of your own.

You will probably be able to ask 10 questions at most, so thoughtfully select the questions in advance. Take notes during the interview to use in writing your reflection, and to refer to at the retreat.

REFLECT

After completing the interview, please take some time to reflect on what you have learned about your current professional path and where you want to go from here. A guided reflection handout is attached for you to complete.

Informational Interview

These questions are not listed in any particular order. Choose the questions you would like to ask the person you are interviewing. Feel free to ask questions of your own.

1. How did you decide on this occupation? How did you prepare for it?
2. What skills do you need for this work? If you were hiring a person for your job, what qualifications would you look for?
3. What are your major responsibilities in the job? How are you evaluated?
4. What do you enjoy about your occupation? What personal rewards are there?
5. What are the most interesting/challenging/frustrating aspects of your job?
6. What part of your work do you consider dull or repetitious? What percentage of your time do you devote to those activities?
7. What were the jobs that led you to this one? Was this a “typical” career path?
8. What are the working conditions like in your job?
9. Is this position structured best to work alone or in a team?
10. When you chose this profession what kind of support did you have from your family?
11. What are the highlights of the past 20 years in your career and personal life?
12. What was your most important accomplishment in the last 20 years?
13. What are your career goals for the next 20 years?
14. What are the personal qualities that have been developed from your career?
15. What kind of future do you see for this occupation?
16. What other occupations are closely related to this one?
17. What work experiences could help me get acquainted with this occupation?
18. How do you see jobs changing in this field over the next five years? How can I prepare myself for these changes?
19. What other opportunities would experience in this occupation prepare me for?
20. What else would you want me to know about this occupation/profession/career that I may not have thought to ask?

Guided Reflection

Time for reflection! Please take some time to evaluate and synthesize what you have learned. Consider your current professional path and where you want to go from here.

Complete the following questions*. Your responses are personal and will not be shared during the ELP retreat unless you choose to do so.

1. What is the typical path in my profession? That is, what are the positions in my career ladder and in what order are they usually held?
2. What education credentials, work experiences, skill sets, are typically required in my area?
3. What work experience must be gained to advance in my profession?
4. Is it important to change institutions/campuses/units to advance in my profession?
5. What are the barriers to advancement in my profession?
6. Do I know others who are like me who have advanced in my career area?
7. Now that you have completed the interview and reflection, describe any “aha” moments you have had.

(*These questions were adapted from the Higher Educational Resources Services Career Path Exercise)