

Tips for Using The Clark University Alumni Online Community

FAQs:

Who has access to the Alumni Online Community?

Clark alumni and undergraduate seniors.

What is the Alumni Online Community and what can it be used for?

The Community offers a place for current seniors and alumni to share interests and experiences, gather and exchange career information and ideas, locate one another and keep informed of upcoming campus and regional alumni community events.

How can the Alumni Online Community be accessed and how can I register for it?

The Alumni Online Community can be accessed by going to the Alumni Online Community website at (www.alumniconnections.com/olc/pub/CLK/)

To register for the Alumni Online Community, scroll down to the link that says “**First time visitors**” This will bring you to a page that asks for your first and last names and class year. Fill in the appropriate information in the required fields and click on “**Find My Record**”. Your name and class year will appear on the next page. Click on your name. You will then be asked to provide the last four digits of your Social Security Number in order to confirm you are the right person. If you receive a message that states “security validation error” you will need to submit a form (link provided) to the Community Administrator asking for assistance. Then you will be asked to choose a user name and password. After you have done so and accepted the security policy you will come to a page that says you are registered. You now will have access to the entire site including tools provided on the site.

Tips for Using the Online Directory Component of the Community:

After clicking on “**Online Directory**” on the right hand side of the screen you will come to a page that says Search the Directory, My Contacts, and View/Update Your Online Directory Listing. Click on **Search the Directory**. In the simple search you can locate people by name or class; however, for networking purposes you will need to perform an advanced search.

- The best criteria to search by are **business city, location, company name, major, and job title**. Occupation and industry are new fields so, although they may prove to be useful, there is not as much information in these fields as in others.
- People with an asterisk next to their names are registered in the system, meaning they know that they are in the system and would be most likely to respond to your inquiries. When contacting alumni it is important to tell them where you got their information. Additionally, although it is noted when the profile was last updated, what specific information was updated is not known; therefore current job information for an alumni may not be accurate.

- Under search filters, it is important to click on “**do not display listings for those who are deceased**” if you do not want such listings to come up.
- For any search, it is a good idea to sort results by **company name or job title**.
- Lastly, just use commonsense searching techniques-if you start broadly and find that there’s too much information narrow your search. Conversely, if you start narrowly and do not find enough information or any at all (this does happen) then broaden your search. You will want to do several searches to get all potential alumni relevant to your search.

Information and Tips on Using Other Areas of the Alumni Online Community:

- The Alumni Communities section of the Community lists all of the regional alumni communities around the country.
- The Events Calendar section of the Community lists upcoming alumni events.

Etiquette:

- When contacting alumni, introduce yourself, tell the person where you obtained the information about him or her, be friendly and polite but not too personal (they do not need to hear your whole life story). Remember to spell check your email or letter.
- Most importantly, **DO NOT ASK FOR A JOB!** The Alumni Online Community is a tool for networking and information gathering rather than a job search method. It should be used to help you explore career options, get job search tips specific to a particular field, and begin networking, rather than a means to ask for a job.
- You should keep in mind that the alumni’s employment status could have changed since the last update (for instance the person could be out of a job). Thus, it is important to be aware of this possibility and to handle the situation sensitively. Additionally, it should not be assumed that the person will be able to talk immediately. It is important to set up a time to talk that is convenient to both you and the alumni.
- You should have relevant questions prepared in advance and if applicable, review the website of the alumni’s company. Additionally, a resume should be prepared ahead of time and perhaps sent before the actual conversation with the alumni occurs.
- A thank you note should be sent after talking with the alumni.
- An email follow up should be sent to the alumni to update him or her (for example, if the person suggests an action plan for the student, you should send an email with an update of your progress).
- It would be polite to inform the Alumni Affairs Office of any revisions/changes from information found in the Alumni Online Community. Alumni Affairs can be reached at (508) 793-7166 or clarkalum@clarku.edu.

Below is a sample email for contacting alumni:

Dear Ms. Smith,

My name is Joseph Jones and I am a senior at Clark University majoring in X. I obtained your name and contact information from the Alumni Online Community, maintained by the Alumni Affairs Office at Clark University. According to the information provided in the Online Directory, you have experience in the field of higher education. I am interested in pursuing a career in this field and would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the educational requirements and types of positions that exist. If you would be willing to speak with me please email me at jjones@clarku.edu so that we can arrange a mutually convenient time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joseph Jones