

Interview a Professor

Purpose

1. To foster an atmosphere in which communication between University faculty and students can take place.
2. To help the students begin to discover the unique role that University faculty can play in their development.

Directions

1. Select a faculty member to interview with whom you are currently taking a course.
2. Make an appointment to talk to him/her. Do not attend the professor's office hours for the interview without checking with him/her first. Some professors are busy throughout their office hours with class issues and will not be able to talk with you during this time. Explain the purpose of your visit when you make the appointment.
3. Prepare for the interview by selecting from the list of questions below and thinking of others that you would like to ask.
4. Go to the interview.
5. Prepare a brief report of your interview including your impression of the faculty member before the interview, what you learned from the questions asked, your nonverbal observations and your impressions of the faculty member post-interview.

Important Note

Some professors are simply too busy to be responsive to this activity. Make it clear in requesting to meet with them that you understand if their schedule doesn't allow time to be interviewed.

Suggested Questions

1. Where did you go to college? Why did you choose that place?
2. What was your major? How did you decide on it?
3. What is your field of expertise?
4. What kinds of professors were your favorites or least favorite?
5. What other academic subjects interest you? Why?
6. What are some of your hobbies?
7. If you could require me to read one thing before I graduate, what would it be and why?
8. What advice can you offer me as an undergraduate?
9. What is the most beneficial opportunity that the University of Pittsburgh has to offer me as an undergraduate?
10. What is the hardest part of your job as a professor?

Nonverbal Observations

1. How was the office personalized? (i.e., pictures, plants, comics, plaques, etc.)
2. Did she/he sit behind the desk or openly in front of you?
3. Did the situation feel formal or informal? Why?
4. How often was the eye contact made or smiles exchanged?
5. If the phone rang during the interview, did she/he answer it?
6. Were there any other students/staff/faculty waiting to see the professor?
7. Other observations.