



# Cooke Scholars Career Pathways Exchange

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## Date

AUGUST 3, 2019

## Location

Lansdowne, VA

## The Program Experience

The Career Pathways Exchange gives undergraduate Cooke Scholars a dynamic opportunity to network with over 150 Cooke Scholar alumni, human resources professionals, and other mentors about industry-specific information and skills development. Whether just entering college or preparing for senior year, the Career Pathways Exchange makes the link between academic and career goals.

Mentors come ready to share relevant and specific tips to help scholars prepare for their next steps toward a fulfilling career. Representing a wide array of professional roles and industries, mentors interact one-on-one and in small groups with participants. The focus is on targeted guidance, industry insights, and personal reflections from their own career journeys. There is plenty of opportunity for meaningful dialogue and powerful networking.

Resume reviews, mock interviews, headshots, career spotlight sessions, elevator pitch practice, goal setting, and much more all enhance the Career Pathways Exchange. The experience is a highlight of the Foundation's annual Scholars Weekend.



## Participants include:

- New Cooke Scholars entering their first year at college
- New Cooke Scholars transferring from community college to a four-year college as a junior
- Returning Cooke Scholars entering their final year of college
- Recent Cooke Scholar alumni and Grad Scholars starting on their career path
- Cooke Scholar Alumni and Grad Scholars serving as career mentors
- Human Resources professionals and other career mentors

## The Career Pathways Exchange includes the following activities:

### CAREER ROUNDTABLES

Explore where your field can take you at a Career Roundtable! Organized by industry sector, scholars flow through tables to have one-on-one and small group mentoring conversations with alumni. Mentors discuss internships, and share insights regarding available career paths, roles and organizations, as well as their own personal journeys and lessons learned. Find out about relevant professional organizations, graduate school advice, and careers you've never considered.



### CAREER SKILLS TABLES

Polish your resume, perfect your elevator pitch, and position yourself well on LinkedIn. Organized by industry sector, alumni mentors provide guidance and feedback on important career tools. Scholars learn how to articulate experiences, skills, and accomplishments unique to their industries. Alumni share ways to strengthen scholars' messages, how to pursue opportunities that may be missing from scholars' professional development, and offer tips they wished someone had shared with them when they were going through application processes. Quick networking introductions and elevator pitches are roll-played between scholars and alumni to make memorable first impressions.



## SPOTLIGHTS

Engage with alumni during presentations and panels on special career-related topics, which include:

- Ever wonder what it's like to work in a non-profit?
- Find out how to break into federal careers.
- Learn the ins and outs of fellowship funding.
- Discover the best methods to securing top research opportunities.
- Explore if a career in academia is for you.
- Get advice on bootstrap funding a start-up.



## ALUMNI CAREER STORIES

Dig into alumni stories as you explore possibilities for post-school career experiences. Each Alumni Career Stories session will feature a trio of alumni exploring triumphs and need-to-know skills and uncovering the behind-the-scenes struggles and efforts which built up their early and middle career successes. Attention will also be given to facing unexpected and sudden changes in the work environment.

## ALUMNI-LED SESSIONS

In addition to the Career Pathways Exchange, selected alumni lead an array of focused, interactive presentations on topics relevant to college, career, and life success as a Cooke Scholar. Learn how to crack case study style interviewing, workshop a fundraising plan for your non-profit, navigate the fine line between civics and politics, and much, much more!



## JOB TALKS

Get inspired from powerful alumni soapbox-style presentations. In 15 minutes alumni give us the scoop on their organizations, roles, and industries, sharing their college and career steps that made a difference along the way. Alumni tell their personal story, including the highs and lows, and leave the audience with a clear picture of where they work and what they do. Fifteen minutes goes fast; conversations continue between and alumni and scholars away from the presentation stage.



## PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS

Make recruiters, potential employers, and important contacts take a closer look with a quality headshot. A professional photographer is on hand to take headshots for scholars to utilize on LinkedIn, webpages, and other professional communication.

## MOCK INTERVIEWS

Employ the inside edge for your interview prep. Get one-on-one feedback after conducting a mock interview with human resources personnel. Refine your communication skills and practice professionalism in these 20-minute sessions.



All Cooke Scholars aspire to make the most of their undergraduate experience and enter the workforce or graduate school to lead fulfilling professional lives. Alumni mentorship supports our scholar community to live our motto:

**Think Big. Work Hard. Achieve.**