

Cooke Scholar Alumni

Career Pathways Connections

Conversation Guide: Creating Career Goals

OBJECTIVE

This activity will help you and your partner create career goal statements. Through creating short-term and long-term career goals by thinking S.M.A.R.T. with a partner, these goals will serve as purposeful reminders of your common interests. The discussion component will challenge you to think deeply about your career goals and aspirations. In addition, this activity will assist you in creating action plans and steps to furthering your career.

AGENDA

1. Write Your Career Goals

Either during the beginning or before your connection, write two short-term goals and one long-term goal. For this activity, short-term goals could be accomplished within 1 – 3 years while a long-term goal could take between 3 – 7 years. Think S.M.A.R.T. when writing your goals,

- **Specific** – A goal should be concise; however, you must provide detail.
- **Measurable** – A goal should be measured numerically to help you track progress and measure the outcome.
- **Achievable** – Be realistic with your goal considering your personal circumstances.
- **Relevant** – Make sure the goal is worthwhile and it will meet your needs.
- **Timely** – A goal should be time sensitive. Consider questions like how much time do you have to put in to accomplish this goal and how long from now do you plan to achieve this goal?

Career Goal Examples:

Short-Term: I will gain admission to at least three T14 (Top 14) law degree programs by spring 2022. For the next six months, I will spend every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evening from 8pm – 10pm to study for the LSAT to score above the 85 percentile and apply to six T14 law schools. I have exceptional analytical and public speaking traits that would make me a great law student.

Long-Term: I will become a director for an education nonprofit based in New York City. The education nonprofit that I will work for will provide college access services and student leadership development to high school students in the public school system. Over the next four years, I will complete my Masters in Public Administration from New York University and join two professional college access nonprofit networks and serve on a committee within each. Ultimately, these experiences will position me strategically to apply to and secure various director roles at college access nonprofits. A college education changed my life and I am a firm believer that a higher education can positively change the lives of others. Since this is a long-term goal, I will adjust it as I go along and create short-term goals for support.

2. Discuss Your Career Goals

Your career goals do not have to be perfect; however, review the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines to help you reflect on the clarity and conciseness of your goals. The discussion part of this activity will serve as a stage for refining your career goal statements and exchanging thoughts and ideas.

After you share your goals with each other, consider some of the questions below for deeper discussion with your partner:

- Why do these goals matter to you?
- What are some of the sacrifices you will be making as you pursue these goals?
- When will you start pursuing these goals?
- What barriers or challenges do you foresee in pursuit of these goals? What barriers or challenges exist now?
- Who are the key people that will help you achieve your goals? Who are the people that may hinder you from accomplishing these goals?
- Where do you find hope in pursuit of these goals? Where do you find doubt?
- How will your goals change over the course of time?

These goals do not necessarily have to serve as your “North Star” as you further your career; however, this activity aims to help you focus your goals and provide an opportunity for you to share your aspirations in detail with your partner.