

MALONE CENTER FOR CAREER ENGAGEMENT

LINKEDIN NETWORKING GUIDE

ALUMNI TOOL

LinkedIn has a fantastic built-in way to search for and connect with Furman Alumni. By visiting the Furman University page, you can click on the Alumni tab and find a group of every user on LinkedIn that lists Furman in their profile's education section. From this page you can then search for alumni by geographic location, company, industry, major, skill, and how you're connected. This type of search can help you identify people for informational interviews, companies to potentially work for, and ways to expand your personal professional network.

SEEKING CONNECTIONS AT COMPANIES

Much like the alumni tool, LinkedIn also organizes people based on their employer. If there is a specific company or organization that catches your attention, find their profile and select the "People" tab. This will show you a database where you can search for people by location, where they studied, occupation, major, skill, and how you're connected. Searching this way can help you address a cover letter or find informational interviews to learn more about the company. You can also pay attention to how the company is labelling its positions and industry which can help filter results when searching for jobs on LinkedIn.

SENDING CONNECTION REQUESTS

LinkedIn is designed to help people identify and build their professional networks. This is done through sending and receiving connection requests from other users. There are two ways that you can send requests.

- **Blanket Connection Requests:** When using the tools above, the results will show snippets of peoples' profiles that will have a "Connect" button depending on security settings and network distance. If you click this button, LinkedIn will notify the person you wish to connect with them. This method of connecting should really only be used when you know the owner of the profile well (i.e. a friend, classmate, coworker, etc.) and you are working to quickly build your network.
- **Personalized Connection Request:** The preferred method for connecting with people on LinkedIn is to visit their profile and click "Connect" so that you are able to "Add a note" to your connection request. LinkedIn usually only allows users with premium to message when not connected, but when requesting a connection, they do permit you to send a short message to explain why you're seeking to connect. The message does need to be concise since you only have 300 characters to work with.

Sample Connection Request:

"Dear [name],

I see that you graduated from my current institution, Furman University—go Paladins! I'm a physics major and would be excited to hear more about your work with NASA. I was hoping to ask a few questions and learn more about your career path. Please let me know if this is a possibility.

Thanks so much,
James Paladin"

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WHO TO FOLLOW

Another way LinkedIn engages its users outside of the more traditional networking aspects of the platform, is allowing users to follow companies, influencers, and even hashtags that will help populate the feed found on your home screen. Utilizing this type of function on LinkedIn can keep you up to date on what topics are being discussed in your industry or even who is hiring. You may choose to follow pages that relate to companies of interest, target locations, professional development insight, inspirational leaders or individuals, non-profits, etc.

GROUPS

LinkedIn groups is an additional way in which professionals can network based on shared interests, professions, or whatever shared characteristic the groups agree upon. Groups can provide a place for professionals to share their insight and experience through discussion forums and connecting with members of the group that would be outside your direct professional network. Even as a student, you should request to join the “Furman Alumni Group.” Check to see if your academic major or department has created a group for current students and alumni.