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‘MOCKTAILS & MINGLING’ EVENT HELPS STUDENTS PREPARE FOR CAREERS

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<https://www.presby.edu/about/2019/02/25/mocktails-mingling-event-helps-students-prepare-for-careers/>

Megan Petralia '18 eagerly anticipated meeting students on Thursday, Feb. 21, for the [fourth annual Mocktails & Mingling event sponsored by Career Development & Student Success](#). She remembered being in their shoes only a year ago.

“I went two years in a row — my junior and senior year — and it’s a really good time to make connections, meet new people and figure out what other people do,” she said.

Before students began filing into the Smith Administration lobby, Petralia and Lindsay Wentz Caulder '98, of World Acceptance Corporation, explained the event was a great opportunity for students to talk to professionals about their career and build relationships.



Nine industries or sectors (33 organizations) from a variety of professions were represented at the annual networking reception. Nearly 25 of the professionals who attended are PC alumni from a variety of majors, from business to history, political science, biology and physics.

Kim Lane, director of Career Development and Student Success, said the purpose of Mocktails & Mingling is “allowing students to practice their networking skills and build their confidence to talk to strangers, while learning about potential careers.

“Everyone needs to have some social capital,” Lane said. “What we’re trying to do is help all students make and leverage those connections.”

In Petralia’s case, she was able to secure an internship after graduation which turned into a full-time opportunity with the company. She applied after learning about the opportunity from a friend. She now works with coding, sequencing and data as a marketing analyst.

While not all internships turn into jobs, they can be a great start to career-building, according to professionals from Career Development and Student Success.

For senior Breana Brown, who spends a lot of time with peers at PC, being a little uncomfortable at the event was okay.

“It’s best I get out of my shell. ... It’s a different environment with different individuals, and can help me mark my future,” Brown said.

Along with networking, Lori Bassett and Dr. Leta Tribble '76, of Greenwood Genetic Center, said the event might also help students narrow their focus by seeing how their major at PC can translate into a profession.



Mocktails & Mingling has grown, doubling its guest numbers from 2018, Lane said. More than 50 students attended again this year. Many students also participated in networking preparation sessions with staff and student volunteers ahead of the event.

This year, several organizations co-sponsored the event: [Enterprise Holdings](#), [HERC Rentals](#) and [World Acceptance Corporation](#).

An [etiquette dinner](#) served as a precursor to Mocktails & Mingling. Cindy Grosso, owner of [Charleston School of Protocol & Etiquette](#), facilitated the dinner for 30 students.

