

Career Connections Participant Interview Guide

Thank you for taking time to speak with me today. My name is _____, and I am a researcher on the Career Connections Program evaluation.

The Evaluation Division in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), in coordination with the Office of Alumni Affairs, is currently undertaking an evaluation of the Career Connections program. The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the professional development programming for U.S. citizen alumni of government sponsored exchange programs. This is an opportunity for you to share your experiences and let ECA know what you are looking for from professional development opportunities.

The interview should take 60 minutes (average) to complete.

Please note that your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you are free to end the survey at any time. By clicking the “Consent and enter survey” button below, you are consenting to the following terms:

- Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary. We do not anticipate that participating in this evaluation will result in any risks or direct benefit to you. However, your inputs may lead to recommendations that benefit the Career Connections Program—and, thereby, the general public. You may skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.
- The information that you provide in the survey will be used to write a report. This report will be shared with the U.S. Department of State and other stakeholders for comment and will eventually be made public. Any responses you provide may be reported in the final report as part of the anonymized aggregated quantitative analysis or the qualitative analysis from open-ended responses, with all personal identifying information removed.
- The U.S. government will take reasonable measures to protect privacy data, personally identifiable information, and other sensitive data obtained from the survey. Responses to questions may be reported by demographic category (i.e., field of study, employment status), country, or cohort year. The only identifying information used will be the demographic information collected in the beginning of the survey.
- As this evaluation requires us to speak with a broad range of program alumni, we may ask you to share contact information for the connections that you mention, in the cases where we do not already have updated or valid contact information for these parties. As with all other questions, you may skip or decline to answer any questions you are not comfortable answering. Updated contact information may be shared with the U.S. Department of State upon completion of this survey.
- The data you provide may be reanalyzed at a later date for a follow-up study or other purpose approved by the U.S. Department of State. The data may be made available to third parties as required by law.
- You may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting ECAEvaluation@state.gov.

OMB Control Number: 1405-XXXX

Burden Estimate: 60 minutes

Expiration Date: XX-XX-XXXX

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including time required for searching existing data sources, gathering the necessary documentation, providing the information and/or documents required, and reviewing the final collection. You do not have to supply this information unless this collection displays a currently valid OMB control number. If you have comments on the accuracy of this burden estimate and/or recommendations for reducing it, please send them to: ecaevaluation@state.gov

Do you have any questions about this survey or the Career Connection Program evaluation more broadly? *[If the respondent asks questions, answer them.]*

If you have any questions about the interview, please contact Mary Ann Aabye at AabyeMA@state.gov. If you have any questions about the Career Connections program, please contact Paul Garr at GarrPS@state.gov.

Do you consent to participate in this evaluation? *[If the respondent says yes, record their consent and proceed with question 1 (or consent to record – see below). If the respondent says no, thank the respondent and end the interview.]*

With your permission, we would also like to record the interview for reference purposes. Do you consent to be recorded? *[If the respondent says yes, record their consent and proceed with question 1. If the respondent/any respondent says no, do not record the interview.]*

I. Warm-up and Introduction (approx. 5 minutes)

- First of all, which Career Connections seminar did you participate in?
- What have you been up to since you completed the program? *(probe for: current job, academic program, internship/fellowship, etc.)*

II. Experience with the Career Connections Seminar (approx. 20 minutes)

Now I want to ask you a few questions about your experience with the Career Connections seminar you attended:

- Would you say it was a positive experience or negative experience for you overall? Why?
- What did you learn about while you were there? *(probe for: cover letter and resume writing, networking, job search skills, U.S. Government career paths, etc.)*
- What was the best part of your Career Connections experience? *(probe for: most useful session (why?), connections made, skills learned, etc.)*
- What was the worst part, or the most difficult part, of your Career Connections experience? *(probe for: issues with registration, session topics, session length/type etc.)*
- Do you think there was a good mix of sessions? *(probe for: panel sessions, interactive workshops, etc.)*

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- o Were there topics you wish you had been able to cover?
- o Anything you wished there was less of during the seminar?

III. Impact of Career Connections Seminar (approx. 20 minutes)

- Did participating in the Career Connections seminar have an impact on your career or academic goals? If so, how?
- What skills did you gain during the seminar that you've been able to apply? (*probe for: cover letter and resume writing, networking, job search skills, U.S. Government career paths, etc.*)
 - o Can you provide specific examples of how you have been able to apply these skills?
 - o Are there skills that would have been useful that you did not learn as part of the program?
 - o If not, why not?
- Beyond just the skills you learned, did you experience any personal growth as a result of your Career Connections experience? Can you describe that change? (*probe: growth in self-confidence or inter-personal skills*)
- Are there any follow-up activities or resources you would like to see? (*probe for: session materials, presenter contacts, etc.*)
- Would you recommend Career Connections to others? If so, how would you describe it to them?

IV. Wrap-up (approx. 1 minute)

Is there anything I missed that you would like to tell me about, either positive or negative? Any other final comments?

Thank you so much for your participation!

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