



## How to prepare to attend a NABA Western Region virtual real talk student session

### What is a NABA Western Region virtual real talk session?

Real Talk sessions are like informal roundtable conversations with business professionals. They provide students with additional opportunities to gain visibility and attention from potential employers, which is crucial to getting internships and job opportunities.

These sessions are a safe space for students to engage in candid, straight-talk and real-world conversations while also getting straight-talk answers to your pressing questions about how to get an internship, how to get a job, how to prepare for the workplace, and how do I prepare for life after college. No matter where you are on your college journey, these sessions can help you.

- Students are strongly encouraged to engage and ask questions. Questions can include:
  - What qualities and skills do you look for in candidates?
  - How do I prepare to get an internship or a job? What makes the strongest candidates?
  - How can I be a unique asset to your company?
  - What mistakes did you make early in your career?
  - What should I do to improve my career opportunities?

### Why should I attend?

We understand that students are busy. There can be a lot to balance between classes, work, homework, family, and other commitments. So why would we suggest you add another thing to that list by attending a real talk session? Because it can impact your student experience, internship/job search, and life after college. This is your opportunity to leverage this experience to market yourself, make yourself findable, and make yourself known to potential employers.

- It's an opportunity to stand out and get noticed in a sea of applicants with similar educational backgrounds and qualifications. This is crucial as you search for internships and jobs.
- It's an opportunity to control your virtual presence. In this digital age, a virtual impression is just as important as a face-to-face one.
- You'll develop knowledge that could have a positive and broad experience as you enter the workplace.
- As the competitive landscape of the workforce shifts, it's vital for students to stay informed of the diverse skill sets that employers seek in the recruiting process. This is where companies reveal what they are looking for in qualified candidates.
- This is researching a company from the best source possible: business professionals.
- It's the easiest way to get in front of potential employers, recruiters, and hiring professionals to gather information about the company you will not find out at a career fair or on the company website.
- It demonstrates that you are proactive and serious about advancing your career.
- Learn about career options you may not have been aware of before.
- Opportunity to make connections with business professionals.
- Opportunity to learn about the people who could be interviewing you for positions.
- Opportunity to find out something about a company that was not on their website that you can use during an interview.
- Get unique insights to prepare for job interviews.

### **Who can attend?**

All students, all majors, are welcome to attend. The sessions are open to all students, from first year to final year, regardless of where they are on their college journey.

### **What should I expect?**

This is an informal, Q&A panel discussion style format. It's purposely designed to be conversational, not someone giving a presentation; it provides the students a platform to ask questions that are important to them. Remember to bring a list of your questions to ask.

### **How do I prepare?**

- Do your research. Yes, these sessions are meant for you to get information about a company, but it's still essential to get a sense of who this company is and what they do so you don't fly blind into the session. Doing some research before the session can help you think of some insightful questions to ask, which will ultimately get you noticed. Speakers remember when someone asks a thoughtful question, proving they've put in some effort and already have a vested interest.
- Determine what is important to you and what you want from the session. What are your pressing questions or concerns you need answers to right now?

### **During the session**

Don't be shy! Business professionals expect to interact with students and share their experiences and knowledge. They are more likely to remember students who are on video, show initiative, ask questions, and engage with them. An excellent, meaningful, relevant question shows that you were prepared, motivated, and engaged throughout the session and can help you stand out for future company opportunities. The most actively engaged students will often gain a competitive edge with employers. Remember, when you ask a question, introduce yourself with a positive and inviting energy. This is your opportunity to display your potential.

### **Virtual online etiquette**

- Log in at least five minutes early – come prepared.
- Stay on mute unless you have a question or something to say. You can also ask questions in the chat.
- Choose a professional screen name and include your school's name.
- Be on camera, so dress appropriately - business casual.
- Keep a clean and quiet environment.
- Don't monopolize a speaker's time; know when to end the conversation.

### **Steps to take after your virtual real talk session**

When your session ends, you may think, "Now what?" How do you keep the momentum going?

You can keep the momentum going by sending a thank you email. If the speakers share their contact information, plan to send a follow-up email within 24-48 hours after your session. Begin your email by thanking them for their time and telling them you enjoyed the session. Include something specific about what interested you during the session or their career path. Proofread before you click send. It's essential to catch any spelling or grammatical errors. A small email can go a long way and increase your chance of getting noticed.