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The Flyer Connection

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Wednesday November 9, 2022

By Eric F. Spina

If I'm wearing a Dayton Flyers baseball cap in Santa Fe, New Mexico, or Pittsburgh or even Bryce Canyon National Park, someone invariably will smile and yell, "Go, Flyers!"

A University of Dayton alumni pin has the same effect on Flyers.

When alumni participate in a career fair or interview students for internships, co-ops and jobs, Jason Eckert and his team give them a UD pin to wear. It does more than signal an affinity to their alma mater. It opens the door for deeper conversations with students about their hopes and dreams.

"It's rare, in my experience, for a Flyer to turn their back on another Flyer," said Eckert, executive director of the Office of Career Services. "Flyers are very giving of their time and advice."

Take Joe Maimone '87, vice president of sales and publisher at *Billboard*, who's helping Flyers break into the music business. For the past decade, he's flown into Dayton to talk to marketing students about life after UD. Whenever students and young alumni reach out for career advice, he readily picks up his cell phone. "I'm happy," he said, "to connect with any Flyer." He does more than connect — he's helped to launch careers.

Rick Schieltz '72, a retired engineer and volunteer at Carillon Historical Park in Dayton, is also opening doors.

As an alumni mentor, Rick introduced Sarah Herr '23, an electrical engineering major who aspires to be an "imagineer" for Disney, to executives at Carillon Park. She got to help design a tail for an animatronic horse in one of the park's new exhibits, then went on to two internships that are bringing her closer to her Disney dream.

Research shows that up to 80% of jobs are found through networking such as that done by Joe and Rick. At UD, where the Marianists model how to cultivate and build personal relationships, our students and alumni are prepared to create meaningful connections through such avenues as:

- LinkedIn, with its active presence of 86,000 alumni and the ability of Flyers to sort by career or geographic region.
- Flyer Connection, an online networking and mentoring system with 3,100 — and growing — alumni volunteers.
- Career fairs on campus that attract thousands of students and alumni annually and have a waitlist of companies wanting to participate.
- Virtual career panels with alumni across the country. Last spring's event in Chicago drew nearly 900 students.
- "Flash mentoring" for students and alumni with quick questions.
- On-campus interviews in UD's new Employer Engagement Center, as well as professional development workshops, information sessions and résumé review days. Last year, companies posted nearly 33,000 job listings, nearly double from 2020.

It's this high level of engagement from alumni that contributes to UD's outstanding success rate. According to the annual Flyer First Destination survey, 97% of graduating seniors land a good-paying job in their chosen field, a service opportunity or a spot in graduate or a professional school within six months of graduation.

That's the power of the Flyer connection.

(This piece appears in the autumn issue of the University of Dayton Magazine. View the digital publication here.)