GREETING: Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

FIRST PARAGRAPH:
State enthusiasm for finding them, how you did so (Finding their profile? By a colleague?). Show an awareness of their current title and place of work. Suggest 1-2 things about their background on LinkedIn that was interesting to you. Share a bit about how you became interested in their area and then a little about your own background that has prepared you to move in this direction.

SECOND PARAGRAPH:
You’d like to know if they can meet in person (Or Skype video call. Phone call only when necessary; an email interchange is impersonal and unlikely to provide a strong edge). State that you are trying to make important decisions about your career direction after graduation and that hearing their perspectives about what they do and how they got there would be very helpful. Suggest a meeting over coffee or at their office, whichever they prefer. Propose a range of dates (at least one week in advance; this saves at least one step in an email exchange). Provide a phone number and email to reach you.

CLOSING: Reiterate enthusiasm for meeting them and thank them for considering.

Here’s an example!

Dear Ms. Darrow:

I discovered your name from the Emory Career Network through Emory’s Alumni Association and see that you are working at Grey Global here in Atlanta. As a Senior Sociology major, I want to learn more about Advertising, because it’s a field that allows for creative applications of the knowledge I have gained about how people in different demographics act and make decisions! I am also an avid writer, after taking several courses in Emory’s Creative Writing department. While I won’t begin to seriously apply for jobs until January, I am eager to learn more about which industry roles might be a good fit for me when I graduate in May 2019.

I would love to arrange a convenient time to speak with you for (20-30 minutes in person; 15-20 minutes by phone) sometime the week of October 8th (either by phone or perhaps over coffee), when I can learn about your daily work as a senior copywriter and the path you have taken since you graduated from Emory in 2015.

Please contact me at 404.337.9132 or at jbaggsley@emory.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Jacob Baggsley
Dear Ms. Darrow,

It was so good to talk to you over the phone today about your work at Grey Global. I now have a better understanding of how I can utilize my creativity and writing skills in the advertising industry, and I feel much more confident in pursuing similar work.

I plan to stay in touch with you about my progress and look forward to speaking with your former colleague Harold Nelson, once you are able to forward me his contact information.

I truly appreciate your guidance and words of encouragement!

Sincerely,

Jacob Baggsley