Networking messages

Wisr informational interview request messages:

Hi [Alumni’s First Name],

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program at UChicago. I’m reaching out because I’m exploring my next steps after graduation and would love to learn about your career journey. I noticed that you’re working in [their current role/field or company name], which aligns closely with my own interests. I’ve worked on data science and analytics projects during internships with companies like the Arizona Diamondbacks and Lumentum, and as I explore my next steps after graduation, I’m especially interested in roles that combine data with business strategy. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d be grateful for any advice on navigating early career decisions and finding a good fit. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Marc Gerdin:  
Hi Marc,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program at UChicago, reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I’m very interested in product analytics roles like yours at Walmart, especially as my previous internships at the Arizona Diamondbacks and Lumentum, while data-focused, weren’t product-specific. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d be grateful for any advice on breaking into product analytics and finding a strong fit in this field. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
[wdeforest@uchicago.edu](mailto:wdeforest@uchicago.edu) | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Marc,

I graduate this December, so I would be available to start anytime after the New Year. If that timeline works I’d love to chat about next steps. Really appreciate you taking the time to check out my resume!

Best,

Will

Hi Jacklyn,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in Applied Data Science at UChicago, reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I noticed you’ve been working as a data scientist at Facebook for the past few years, following your experience in product management. I’m particularly interested in roles that combine data with business strategy, so I’d love to learn more about your career journey and the skills that helped you succeed. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d be grateful for any advice on finding the right path early on. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
[wdeforest@uchicago.edu](mailto:wdeforest@uchicago.edu) | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Jacklyn, I’m a UChicago Data Science student exploring roles that combine data and business strategy. Your move from product management to data science caught my eye—I'd love to connect!

Hi Philip,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in Applied Data Science at UChicago, reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I saw you’re leading Data Education at Airbnb, and with your extensive experience across data science, analytics, and consulting, I’d love to learn more about your journey. My past internships have focused on data science, and I’m particularly interested in roles that blend data with strategic impact. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d appreciate any advice on navigating this field early on. Thanks, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
[wdeforest@uchicago.edu](mailto:wdeforest@uchicago.edu) | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Philip, I’m a UChicago Data Science student exploring roles that blend data with strategic impact. Your work leading Data Education at Airbnb caught my eye—I'd love to connect!

Hi Stephen,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program (formerly MScA) at UChicago, exploring my next steps after graduation. I’d love to hear about your journey from the MScA program to YETI and learn more about your work as a data scientist at such a product-focused company. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d appreciate any advice on navigating early career decisions in data science. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Stephen, I’m a UChicago Data Science student and I’d love to hear about your journey from the MScA program to YETI. I’d be very grateful for any advice on navigating early career decisions!

Hi Stephen,

Great to meet you as well, and thanks so much for connecting—I really appreciate it! If you have a few minutes, I’d love to hear more about your journey from consulting to UChicago and then to YETI, and how you found your path into data science and advanced analytics. My previous internships with the Arizona Diamondbacks and Lumentum were data-focused but not product-specific, so I’d be especially interested in your perspective on working in a data-driven role at a product-focused company like YETI.

If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d be grateful for any insights and advice on navigating early career decisions in data science.

Thanks again, and I look forward to your thoughts!

Best,  
Will  
(206) 678-6215

Hi Andy,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in Applied Data Science at UChicago, reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I saw you’re working as a Decision Scientist at Opendoor, and I’d love to hear more about your career journey. My internships have focused on data science and real estate, and I’m particularly interested in roles that connect data with business impact. Since I grew up in Seattle, I’m hoping to end up back there full-time, and I’d be grateful for any advice on navigating this field early on. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Andy, I’m a UChicago Data Science student interested in data science and Seattle real estate. I’d love to hear about your role at Opendoor and get any advice on early career decisions!

Hi Andy,

Thanks so much for offering to help—I really appreciate it! I’m particularly interested in hearing about your career journey and how you transitioned into real estate at Opendoor. Given your experience in both data science and decision science roles across different industries, I’d love to know how those roles compare in terms of impact and day-to-day responsibilities.

Additionally, as someone just starting out, I'd appreciate any advice you have on breaking into similar roles and applying my skills in data science to industries like real estate. If you’re open to a brief chat or know of anyone else I should connect with, please let me know!

Best regards,

William

**Hi Andy,**

I hope you’re doing well! It’s been a while since I reached out, and I wanted to follow up now that I’m living in Seattle. I really appreciated your willingness to share insights about your journey into real estate and decision science at Opendoor, even though we didn’t connect last time.

If your schedule allows, I’d love to treat you to coffee sometime soon and hear about how things have been going for you at Opendoor. I’d also love any advice you might have as I continue navigating my next career steps in data science and real estate.

Let me know if there’s a time that works for you in the coming weeks. I’d really appreciate the chance to reconnect!

Best regards,

William

Hi Jon,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in Applied Data Science at UChicago, reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I saw that you’ve had a dynamic career in product management, now with LiveRamp after Habu’s acquisition, and I’d love to learn more about your journey into product roles within data-focused companies. I’m also a UChicago baseball alum and have worked on data science projects with a strong analytical focus. I’m now hoping to transition into roles that combine data with strategic product impact. If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d really appreciate any advice on finding the right path in this field. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Jon, I’m a UChicago Data Science student and fellow baseball alum. I’d love to connect and hear about your journey into product roles, and get advice on combining data with product strategy!

Hi Jon,

Thanks for connecting! I’m a graduate student in Applied Data Science at UChicago, and I’m exploring my next steps post-graduation. I noticed that you’ve had a dynamic career in product management, including your recent transition to LiveRamp after Habu’s acquisition. Given your experience in product roles at data-focused companies, I’d love to hear any advice you have on transitioning into similar roles that combine data science and product strategy.

I’m also a UChicago baseball alum, and would appreciate any insights you could share. If you’re open to a brief chat, that would be fantastic!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215

Hi Jon,

Thanks for getting back to me—I really appreciate it, especially with how busy things must be after the acquisition! I’m currently exploring which roles align best with my background and interests. My experience has primarily been in data science with a consulting and reporting focus, but I’m drawn to more product-focused roles where I can help drive strategy and impact.

I’d love to hear about your transition into product management, especially how you’ve combined data science and product strategy. What key skills or experiences helped you make that shift, and how do you see data science influencing product strategy at companies like LiveRamp?

Lastly, as someone with an econ and data science background, what areas should I focus on developing, or what should I emphasize in interviews, to position myself as a strong candidate for product roles and to be an effective product manager/analyst in the future?

Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Best,

William

Hi Jon,  
Thank you so much for your incredibly thoughtful response—I really appreciate you taking the time to share your insights. Your points about transitioning from consulting to product management, especially the focus on ownership, really resonated with me. I hadn’t thought about it in those terms before, but reflecting on my prior internships, I do realize that I was missing that sense of ownership. Being able to articulate that more coherently during interviews will definitely be helpful.

I also found your breakdown of the key skills to emphasize—data-driven decision-making, system thinking, and understanding commercial models—extremely useful in shaping my own approach. I hadn’t considered the parallels between system thinking in economics and product management decisions, but that connection makes a lot of sense. I’m excited to focus on developing and highlighting those areas as I move forward with interviews and explore product roles.

Thanks again for your advice—it’s truly appreciated, and I’m sure I’ll revisit it throughout my job search.

Best regards,  
William

Hi JC,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program at UChicago. I’m reaching out because I’m exploring my next steps after graduation and I'm particularly interested in product management roles that integrate data science and analytics. Your work on the Google Store and how you leverage ML-driven decision-making for growth and optimization. If you’re open to a brief chat, I would love to hear more about your journey into product management and would be very grateful for any advice on navigating early career decisions and finding a good fit. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi JC, I'm a UChicago Applied Data Science student interested in product management roles that integrate data science and analytics. I’d love to connect!

Hi Allison,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program at UChicago, and I’m reaching out as I explore my next steps after graduation. I’m particularly interested in product management roles that integrate data science and analytics, and your role at YouTube really stood out to me. I’d love to hear more about how you’ve applied your technical background to manage high-impact projects like video recommendations for kids and teens.

If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d be grateful for any advice on navigating career transitions and finding the right fit in product management. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Allison, I’m a UChicago Data Science student interested in product roles that integrate data science and analytics. I’d love to hear about your career at YouTube and connect!

Hi Geoffrey,

I’m William DeForest, a graduate student in the Applied Data Science program at UChicago, and I’m reaching out as I explore product management roles that integrate data science and analytics. Your transition from data science to product management at companies like Meta, YouTube, and now Netflix really stood out to me—especially your work in games personalization and augmented reality.

If you’re open to a brief chat, I’d love to hear more about your journey and any advice you have for someone navigating early career decisions and finding a good fit. Thanks so much, and I hope to connect soon!

Best,  
William DeForest  
wdeforest@uchicago.edu | (206) 678-6215 | LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/william-deforest/>

Hi Geoffrey, I’m Will, a current UChicago Data Science student. Your path from econ in undergrad to data sci. and then product management resonates with my own career aspirations—I'd love to connect!

Hi Ian,

I appreciated your thoughtful responses to my questions regarding how to incentivize end users to make more env. conscious decisions and how Google balances the urgency to innovate with the commitment to reducing env. Impacts.

Dear Mr. Nakasone,

I hope this email finds you well! I had the privilege of sitting next to you at a wonderful lunch at the CMC Ath lunch on Graduation Day in May 2023. I want to thank you again for your warmth and encouragement, and thought I'd reach out and share an update.

Since we last met, I graduated from U Chicago with a Master’s in Applied Data Science last month. This past year and a half has been a whirlwind—challenging, deeply rewarding, and full of growth. As AI continues to reshape the world, I’m excited to explore ways to use data and technology to make a positive impact—whether through full-stack data analysis or building AI applications.

I’d be interested to hear how you’re doing these days and catch up more if you’re available.

Wishing you and your family all the best in the new year!

Warm regards,

Will

Dear Mr. Nakasone,

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. Your advice and reassurance about staying confident and positive as I navigate these first steps in my career were exactly what I needed. Your insights about persistence, being open to opportunities, and finding a starting point to build from were incredibly helpful.

As you suggested, I’ve attached my resume in case someone in your network is looking for an eager, data-driven, and team-oriented new hire. I really appreciate you keeping an eye out on my behalf.

Thank you again for your encouragement and support. I’m truly grateful for your generosity, and I hope we can stay in touch. Please don’t hesitate to reach out if there’s ever anything I can do for you or your family.

Fingers crossed for Ichiro this afternoon!

Wishing you all the best,  
Will

Hi Tyler, it was great running into you at UVillage over the holidays! Made me realize how long it’s been since we were carpooling to Lakeside baseball games haha.

I recently finished my Master’s in Applied Data Science at UChicago last month and have moved back to Seattle while figuring out my next steps. I spoke with Crystal Chong recently, and she mentioned you’re working as a Product Manager at Microsoft. With my background in economics and data science, I’m really intrigued by product management—it seems like a role where I could apply my skills while still being a part of a team everyday. As I don’t have direct PM experience, I’d love to hear your perspective on the role and see if it might be a good fit for me.

Any chance you’d be free for a brief call, or, if your schedule allows, a coffee in the next few weeks? I’d love to catch up, learn about what your day-to-day looks like, and what skills you find important for the role.

Best,

DeFo

Hi Miles and Josh,

I hope this message finds you both doing well. It’s been a while, but I had a great experience as a member of the StoryHouse Ventures Fintech Practicum team back in Fall 2021. Our project, which focused on identifying founder attributes correlated with startup success, was my first real exposure to the complexities and power of data. That experience helped spur me to pursue data science further, and I’m happy to say that last month I graduated with an MS in Applied Data Science from the University of Chicago.

I’m now beginning my full-time job search and am primarily looking for product-focused data science/analyst and AI engineering roles. I’ve been following the work you do at StoryHouse and the startups you support. The Claremont startup ecosystem and the innovative teams in your portfolio are really exciting.

Would you be willing to get on a short call to reconnect? I’d appreciate the opportunity to update you on my background in data science and my enthusiasm for building impactful AI applications. Your perspectives and advice on how best to position myself in this competitive job market would be welcome, as well as to hear the latest at StoryHouse. Thanks for considering!

All the best,

William DeForest, CMC ‘23

One company that caught my eye while reading a recent issue of StoryHouse Review was Parakeet Health. I’m excited by their AI-driven patient engagement platform, and their innovative approach using conversational AI and AI agents resonates strongly with my areas of interest. While their current opening for a Senior Software Engineer may not align with my level of experience, I’d love to explore any opportunities they might have for someone with my background in data science and enthusiasm for building impactful AI applications. If you’re comfortable and it’s not too much trouble, I’d appreciate an introduction to Jung, Eric, Aaron, or anyone else at Parakeet who might be open to a conversation.

More broadly, I’d be very grateful if you could keep me in mind for roles within your network where my skills might be a good fit. If you have any advice on how to position myself for startups in your portfolio or elsewhere, I’d love to hear it.

Hi Josh,

Thank you very much for taking the time to chat with me yesterday. Your advice and perspective on navigating the early stages of my career were incredibly helpful, especially as I’ve been feeling a bit overwhelmed by the many career paths to explore. Your suggestions about focusing on Series B+ companies, finding a strong manager to learn from, and leveraging alumni networks really stood out, and I’m already planning how to put them into action.

If there’s anyone in your network you’d recommend I connect with, I’d be grateful for an introduction. I’ve also attached my resume in case anything crosses your desk that makes you think of me.

Thanks again for your time and insights, and I look forward to staying in touch!

Best regards,  
William DeForest

Hi Cindy,

I hope you’re doing well! I just saw a LinkedIn post about the recent CMC Seattle meet-up, and there you were front and center. I didn't realize you were in the Seattle area, and it's amazing to see you thriving at Microsoft!

I recently finished my Master’s in Applied Data Science at UChicago and have moved back to Seattle while figuring out my next steps. I’ve been exploring career paths and have become really interested in product management—it seems like a great mix of strategy, teamwork, and problem-solving.

You’ve always been such a thoughtful and kind mentor (our Muguboos WOA trip still stands out as one of my favorite experiences at CMC!), and I’d really value the chance to hear about your journey as a PM and what the role looks like day-to-day. Would you have time for a quick chat or coffee in the next couple of weeks? I’d love to catch up and hear your advice.

Best,

William

Hi Hillary,  
  
I hope you're doing well! Cindy Lay very kindly reached out to you recently on my behalf, so I wanted to follow up and introduce myself as a fellow CMC alum.  
  
I recently graduated with a master's in Applied Data Science from UChicago and am currently in the early stages of my job search, with Microsoft at the top of my list. I'm a Seattle native and Microsoft has always been a company I've admired for both its innovation and reputation as a great place to work.  
  
My background blends business and data analytics and I've found I most enjoy roles where I can be a bridge between the technical and business strategy sides. I've also become increasingly passionate about AI and spend a lot of my free time keeping up with the trends and working on personal AI projects.  
  
From my research and talking with friends at Microsoft, I'm especially interested in product management, data science, and solution architect roles, but I'd really value your perspective on which roles at Microsoft might be a good fit for my background and interests.  
  
Would you be open to a short call or grabbing a quick coffee sometime in the next week or two? I'd really appreciate any advice or guidance.  
  
Thanks so much and have a great weekend!  
  
Best,  
William

Hi Grant,   
  
I had a great chat with your dad this morning about starting a career in tech in Seattle, and I just wanted to follow up to say thanks for taking the time to review my resume and LinkedIn. Your advice was really helpful, and much appreciated!  
  
Thanks,  
William

Hi Ilana,  
  
Andy kindly suggested I reach out. I have a background in Econ and Data Science and am interested in Meta's RPM program. Would you be open to a quick chat in the next couple of weeks? I’d love to hear about your career and any insights you might have on the program.  
  
Best,  
William

Hi Brian,  
Andy Moore suggested I reach out. I recently finished my Master’s in Applied DS at UChicago and am exploring early career roles that bridge DS and strategy. I'd love to connect and, if you're open to it, schedule a quick call to learn about your career and data at Instagram.  
Best,  
William

Hi Jennifer,  
  
I hope you're doing well! We connected during the UChicago visit to Google last year, and I really appreciated the insights you shared about the Cloud Technical Residency program.  
  
I’m seriously considering applying when the next cycle opens and would love to get your perspective on what I can do now to make myself a strong candidate. If you’re open to it, I’d love to schedule a quick 15-minute call at your convenience to hear your thoughts on preparing for the application and interview process.  
  
I know you have a lot on your plate, so no worries if a call isn’t possible—any quick advice over chat would still be greatly appreciated!  
  
Thanks again, and I hope you're having a great start to 2025!  
  
Best,  
Will

Hi Boaz, this is William DeForest. Just following up on Larry’s intro—I’d love to connect and hear your insights on AI solutions and the Seattle tech space. If you’re open to a quick chat, I’d really appreciate the opportunity to talk AI and get any advice on navigating early career roles in the field. Totally understand if now is a busy time—I’ll plan to follow up in a month if that works better. Thanks, and hope all is well!

Hi Cindy, hope you had a great week/weekend with Natasha! Glad we had a couple good weather days in there. Just wanted to follow up and see if you might be able to connect me with Hillary. Thanks again!

Hi Mr. Maffei,

I hope you’re doing well! I wanted to follow up as we discussed and share a quick update on my job search. Over the past month, I’ve had 20+ informational interviews and two formal interviews—one for a data analyst role and another for management consulting. These conversations have helped me refine my focus, and I’m continuing to explore opportunities at the intersection of data, business strategy, and AI.

For the next month, I plan to double down on networking, target specific roles more intentionally, and sharpen my technical skills in AI and analytics. I’d love to hear any thoughts you have on my approach or any additional advice as I keep pushing forward.

Thanks again for your time and guidance—I really appreciate it. Looking forward to staying in touch!

Was awesome seeing you and catching up this weekend Willy! Super fun to talk Gen AI and data with you, too. Wanna call this weekend?

Hey Cindy, hope you had a good week and a fun weekend! If you’re still down to grab coffee and catch up this week, I’m pretty wide open Wed, Thurs, Sat, Sun this week. Super happy to meet you whenever and wherever is most convenient whether it’s in cap hill or elsewhere :)

Hey Dietz,

Really appreciate you taking the time to chat the other day - it was awesome to catch up and hear a bit about what you’ve been up to. Your perspective on the different roles at Amazon was super helpful. Would love to talk again soon and do some more catching up! Maybe sometime next weekend if you’re free?

Hey Larry, hope you’re having a good week. Just following up on our chat last week - really enjoyed learning more about AI consulting and your role as a Solution Architect. If possible, I’d still love an intro to Boaz, but totally understand if things are busy. I’ll check back in a couple weeks.

Hi Uncle Jon, hope you’re having a good week! I just wanted to follow up and say thanks again for taking the time to chat with me last week—it was really helpful, and I appreciate all your insights.

I also had the chance to catch up with Caroline, and she was super helpful in giving me a better understanding of Palantir.

I’d still love to chat with your friend from Adobe if you think he’d be open to it. If there’s anything I can do to make it easier to connect just let me know. Thanks!

Hi Andrew,  
  
I hope you’re doing well! This is William DeForest—I’m a friend of Kellen Sundin’s, and you very kindly connected me with Peter Overman a few years ago.  
  
I recently graduated from the University of Chicago with an MS in Applied Data Science (and got to play a 5th year of baseball) and am now back in Seattle figuring out my next steps. With my background in econ and data science, I’m exploring roles in data analytics, product management, and consulting. I’d love to hear more about your experience as a Product Analyst and Manager at PitchBook.  
  
Would you be open to a quick call or grabbing coffee in the next few weeks? Any insights or advice would be super appreciated!  
  
Best,  
William

Hi Lisa,

I hope you're doing well! My name is William DeForest—Angele Hunskor kindly passed along your contact information and mentioned that you might be open to connecting. I really appreciate you taking the time to read this note.

I recently graduated from the University of Chicago with an MS in Applied Data Science and am excited to be back home in Seattle, looking for the right opportunity to apply my skills in a meaningful way. I’m eager to contribute to a mission-driven organization, and when I learned about Truveta—and specifically the Genome Project—I was immediately drawn to the impact and scale of the work.

Given my background in data science and analytics, I’m particularly interested in learning more about how Truveta’s data teams are structured and how entry-level hires typically integrate into the organization. If possible, I’d greatly appreciate any insights you might be able to share, and if there’s someone on the data science or analytics teams you think would be helpful to connect with, I would be incredibly grateful for an introduction.

I’ve attached my resume for reference, and I’d love the opportunity to chat if you’re open to it. Either way, I really appreciate your time and any guidance you can offer.

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best,

William DeForest

206-678-6215

Hi Lisa,

I hope you're having a great week! I wanted to follow up on my note from last week. I’d still love the opportunity to connect and hear any insights you might have on Truveta’s data teams and how entry-level hires integrate into the organization.

If you have any availability in the coming weeks, I’d really appreciate the chance to chat. Of course, if there’s someone else you’d recommend connecting with, I’d be grateful for the introduction as well.

I really appreciate your time!

Best,  
William

Hi Lisa,

I hope you're doing well! I wanted to follow up on my previous emails regarding Truveta. I’m still very interested in learning more about the data teams and how entry-level hires integrate into the organization, and I’d love the opportunity to connect if you have any availability in the coming weeks.

If there’s someone else you think might be helpful for me to speak with, I’d be incredibly grateful for an introduction as well.

I completely understand how busy things can get, so if now isn’t a good time, no worries at all—I’ll plan to follow up again in a month when things may have settled down.

Looking forward to hearing from you, and I really appreciate your time.

Best,  
William