CHOOSING A MAJOR IS THE FIRST CHALLENGE for incoming CA&ES freshmen. The next step is to participate in activities that help connect their studies to a rewarding career.

CA&ES freshmen are invited to enroll in Career Discovery Groups that help them explore potential careers. Open to students with declared and undeclared majors, the program links freshmen with graduate-student mentors, provides special career-discovery seminars, and gets students started in meeting graduation requirements.

Undergraduate and graduate students are given opportunities to connect with industry professionals, and develop important skills like team-building, problem-solving, and leadership. These career-development activities include monthly networking events organized by Seed Central and the annual Managerial Economics Student–Alumni Career Day.

PLANTING THE SEED

In 2010, the Seed Biotechnology Center at UC Davis helped create Seed Central, a network of faculty, students, and leaders in the global seed and food industries. Seed Central hosts monthly gatherings where students mingle with professionals from the many seed and food industries that surround UC Davis.

“The three Seed Central events I attended helped me become more comfortable walking up to a complete stranger and making conversation,” said Charlotte Tyler, a newly minted graduate with a master’s degree in food science. “I want to be a food microbiologist in the beer or wine industry, and the networking skills I learned will help me succeed.”

Networking also is good for industry, according to Eric Aasen, a research scientist with Monsanto in Woodland and a regular attendee of Seed Central events. “It’s great meeting prospective employees in an informal setting,” Aasen said. “The attendance of industry, students, faculty, and local government shows me that agriculture is alive and well in this area.”

LEARNING FROM ALUMNI

Every spring, UC Davis managerial economics students can get career advice from a very credible source: UC Davis graduates. At the Managerial Economics Student–Alumni Career Day, alumni working in business and industry return to UC Davis to lead workshops in investment, accounting, marketing, management, and entrepreneurial ventures, and to offer job-hunting advice.

“The graduates shared their experiences, and told us what people are looking for in job applicants,” said Yiran Song, right, speaking with alum Ashkun Zaker (B.S., ’04, managerial economics) at a recent Career Day event.

— Diane Nelson