Prof. Fallik comments:

Karen had a good time talking to you. Her comments were fairly reserved but positive!  
“We had a lovely conversation; Brooke did a very nice job; she was very comfortable talking to me and asking questions. She's a good conversationalist.”  
  
OMG the answer about the guy with the child porn!  
  
Email: 10/10  
  
Basics – 5/ 5  
  
Background reporting – 15/15 points  
Really nice job with a variety of professional questions. I would have liked a little more personal questions. We don't really get to know her too much as a person.  
  
Follow-up questions – 10 points  
  
Open-ended questions -10 points  
- I really liked the question about trends. Those are always good for more thoughtful answers!  
  
Your answers - 35/ 40 points - Does your first response sound like any of the stories we've read over the semester? The idea is to write a sentence that would be the beginning of a story.  
Don't worry about talking with your hands! It is really hard to respond while moving the conversation forward.  
  
Alumni response – 10/ 10 points

95/100   
~~~~~~~  
Name: Karen Williams Miller  
Age: 65  
Location: Bethesda, Maryland   
Year of Graduation: 1977  
Major: Business   
Current Occupation: Mentor/volunteer at SCORE, retired  
Past Occupation: VP of Corporate Contracts, Pricing & Supply Chain at Northrop Grumman

1. While attending the University of Delaware, you majored in Business and graduated with a BS in Business. Plans and ideas of what you would like to do after graduation fluctuate frequently when you’re in an environment like college.

(Follow up) Did you always know what you wanted to do for your career or did you have multiple ideas in mind?

2. On Linkedin, I saw that you are currently working on the National Advisory Council at SCORE mentors, this is fairly different from your positions at the Northrop Grumman Corporation. How do those compare for you? Do you prefer one over the other?

3. While working at SCORE for over 5 years, you’ve definitely seen your fair share of ideas for business development while mentoring. What is something that you believe is instrumental in the success of a small business?

4. Do you notice a trend between what types of businesses are usually successful and which ones are not?

5. What is your favorite type of small business to help/which type of businesses excite you to mentor and learn about?

6. Is there a type of business that when you are mentoring, is your least favorite?

7. At Northrop Grumman you had a few positions including VP, VP Corporate Contracts, Pricing & Supply Chain, and VP and General Manager. Which position was most rewarding for you? Which position did you enjoy the most?

8. In your Vice President position, you were in charge of providing integrated air, space and missile defense solutions to the Missile Defense Agency and the U.S. Army for the national security of the United States and its allies, which sounds very interesting but also like a lot of pressure. How did you deal with that pressure while in this position and did the pressure make the position more exciting for you?

9. Do you have any exciting or crazy stories about anything that happened while working for a company like Northrop Grumman?

10. You attended American University- Kogod School of Business for grad school and graduated in a MS Procurement and Acquisition Management. How did you decide that was the right field for you and that was what you wanted to do in the future?

Answer:   
1. “Having a Plan. Karen Williams Miller discusses how instrumental knowing your market is in the success of a small business”.   
2. My question about how Karen got involved at SCORE, mentoring clients worked the best out of the questions that I asked. She got involved through her last job before she retired, working in the corporate office at Northrop Grumman. Ms. Williams told me that she had been doing counseling on the side for a while, but she wanted to dive deeper into the business/federal world because that is what her focus is on, like helping small businesses get established and grow. This worked the best because after answering this question, I was able to ask a few more questions having to do with business trends she has seen, what businesses she has found work the best vs. which ones that do not.

She stressed the importance of having a plan and making sure you know your market before starting a business. I also found that she was really passionate about volunteering with SCORE, so I think she enjoyed this question also. I was able to write my first sentence of her profile with this question.

3. The best story that Ms. Williams told me was about a man that worked in her office who was “not too far down the food chain” from her, who she also knew personally was arrested for having child pornography on his computer. This happened when she was working in Washington D.C., so the Virginia police and FBI were involved. She said it was just an ordinary day until this happened. She also told me a story about how a woman who worked in their office who had a mental health disorder was accused of bringing a gun to work and again, the police had to get involved. The woman did not end   
up having a gun, but the police came and had to take her away.

4. Something that surprised me that Karen said was that she didn’t love her last job at the corporate office at Northrop Grumman. She said that even though it was a promotion it wasn’t necessarily better for her. She talked about how much she liked her position before her last position due to the team she was able to work with, which really stood out to me. She said that they were very mission focussed and that made her position so   
worthwhile. It was surprising to me because even though she was promoted, it wasn’t better for her and she really enjoyed team work especially with her prior team.

5. Going into the interview I was nervous because I haven’t ever interviewed anyone in this format before. The only people I’ve interviewed are my friends for high school assignments. However, I was also excited to speak with Ms. Williams because in the background research I conducted I had many questions I was looking forward to hearing the answers to.

6. After the interview I thought I did well with the questions I asked and the way I asked them. Ms. Williams was very easy to talk to and we ended up talking for a half hour instead of 15 minutes. She seemed interested in what I was asking her and there were not any awkward silences. It was just like having an easy conversation learning about someone.

7. Next time, I will try to be more professional in my responses. I didn’t always know what to say after she answered a question where there weren’t any questions that could stem from her answer. I also was talking with my hands quite a bit I noticed, so I will practice hearing my own voice and conducting myself in a more calm manner because when I get nervous I tend to move around a lot. I also will practice trying to switch up my answers rather than just saying “that’s interesting” or giving one word answers. When asking my   
questions, I got very focussed especially in the beginning of listening to Ms. Williams and not giving her great responses because I wanted to make sure I wasn’t talking over her.

I think that Ms. Williams will give me a B on the assignment. I think she was engaged by my questions, but will probably say I was a little overly excited to ask her questions and used my hands to talk a lot. I also stumbled over my words sometimes because I hadn’t practiced enough on asking my questions.