

## CAREER FAIR PREPARATION TIPS

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### **Before the Fair**

- Find out what employers/organizations are attending and determine which ones you are most interested. Research these organizations through their websites.
- Polish up your resume and pack an appropriate amount of copies (at least 2 per organization).
- Prepare and practice your 1-2 minute “commercial” to pitch to employers – that is, *Introduce yourself, demonstrate that you know something about the company, the work it does, express why you are interested in that organization or industry, relate your background to what you may know about the employer’s needs.*
- Prepare some questions to ask the representatives, such as:
  - *What internship/career opportunities are available in your organization for my major?*
  - *What are the key skills and experiences most desirable by your agency?*
  - *What are the most important qualities that a successful person in this position should possess?*
  - *What makes the ideal employee for this position?*
  - *What are some of the typical job assignments?*
  - *Can you describe the company’s management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?*
  - *What is the application process for this position?*
  - *What is your agency’s policy on additional training and workshops?*
  - *What is the future employment outlook in this field?*
  - *Do you have any tips or suggestions to help me better market myself while in school?*
  - *What are your organization’s goals for the next 5, 10 years?*

**Note: Do not ask about salary or benefits at this point, unless the employer brings this topic up.**

### **During the Fair**

- Arrive early. Be there when recruiters are fresh and attentive. Arrive before the majority of other students get there.
- Take time to target organizations that interest you. Also, keep an open mind and consider organizations you are not familiar with – there may be great hidden opportunities. If a booth table is less crowded, you will have more time to converse with the representative.
- Be patient and anticipate crowds and lines. Try visiting the tables with fewer crowds first.
- Scan employer handouts, Instead of just getting in line, approach the table from the side to quickly pick up materials to review. Step back far enough to be able to listen to and observe recruiters speaking to other students. Determine if your two-minute commercial needs to be adjusted.
- Take initiative and introduce yourself with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Give your 1-2 minute commercial. Give your resume to the representative. Ask questions from the list you prepared. Ask about the application and any follow up procedures.
- Get a business card or contact information from every person you meet. Write any interesting facts, notes, or additional contact names on the back of the card. Use this information to follow up after the fair.
- Many companies may have “freebies”, such as pens, candy, and toys. Be courteous and cautious when taking these items. If you take any candy or gum, save it for later.
- Don’t play with stress balls or other toys during the fair. Avoid taking every free item you see. It is noticeable by recruiters and staff when a student seems to be attending the fair just for the free items.
- If you are an international student, don’t say that you need a job to stay in the US. Address the employer professionally and connect your skills to the needs of the company.
- Complete and return any student surveys. Your comments are useful for improving future events.

### **After the Fair**

- Write a thank you note to the representative you met. Include a more targeted résumé, and if requested, any additional information (i.e. transcripts, references).
- Continue to research the organizations that you met at the fair.
- Use a variety of job search strategies in addition to job fairs to round out your job search.
- Inform your Career Services Office of any employment offers and any follow up that may be needed by the employer.