Navigating a Job Fair

Here are some helpful tips on how to work a Career Fair! Practice, practice, practice your elevator pitch!

Regardless of major, academic year or future goals, here are benefits of attending a career fair:

- Increase your chances of receiving an interview with an employer.
- Expand your network of contacts.
- Investigate positions, occupations and career fields you could pursue with your major and background.
- Learn more about employers/available positions.
- Receive sound job search advice from seasoned company recruiters.

What to Expect:
Having realistic expectations of a career fair is important in succeeding in your career search. This is a list of common career fair expectations:

- Employers expect you to be prepared (dress professionally, ask thoughtful questions, have a polished resume, etc.).
- Employers expect to interact with students simply researching careers and employers, as well as those seeking employment.
- Your goal should be to land an interview—not a job offer. Most recruiters are not authorized to hire candidates on the day of the fair.
- You should expect to have a relatively short amount of time to sell yourself and make a positive impact on the employer. Employers’ goals are to be exposed to as many job candidates as possible.

Attending a career fair for the first time can be a little overwhelming. However, if you prepare, you will get as much out of the event as you put into it.

- Bring your student ID to expedite the check-in process. Pick up a map of employer locations within the fair. Be confident, display enthusiasm, confidence, sincerity and the ability to communicate clearly. Smile, walk with good posture, and make consistent and direct eye contact. To further exhibit confidence and individuality, visit employers’ tables on your own.
- Chart your course and survey the room to determine where employers are located and in what order you plan to visit them. If possible, avoid standing in long lines. If there is a long line to speak with a representative, keep moving and return later.
- Introduce yourself when it’s your turn to meet the employer. Take a deep breath, smile, shake hands firmly and begin your “elevator pitch.” Make direct eye contact with the employer throughout your conversation, and watch your tempo and tone.
- Avoid speaking too quickly and/or too loudly or softly.

During the Fair
Ask meaningful questions:

- Ask one or two meaningful questions without monopolizing the employer’s time.
- Do not ask about salary at this time.
• If you are an undergraduate, ask about internship, co-op, summer job and scholarship opportunities.

Prepare to follow-up, at the end of your conversation, do the following:
• Thank the employer for his/her time.
• Leave a copy of your resume.
• Ask the employer for a business card, company literature and protocol for follow-up.
• If the employer says they do not have a position in your field, ask for the address of the Personnel Office. Nearly all employers hire all majors. As soon as you walk away from the employer, jot down a few notes about your conversation. You may want to include a few memorable discussion points in your follow-up letter.