

Making the Most of the CPEC Job & Internship Fair

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HOW TO PREPARE:

Being Professional:

- Many recruiters comment that students can enhance their employment opportunities by the quality of their initial impression. The image that you present is very important, so keep that in mind when planning what to wear and when putting together your résumé.
- Do not bring your cell phone with you. If you must, turn it off while meeting with employers.

Résumés:

- Prepare a professional, error-free résumé printed on high quality paper. It is recommended that you let your Career Center staff member review it prior to the fair. Bring your résumés with you in a professional portfolio/folder.
- To ensure that you bring an adequate number of résumés, take a look at the companies registered, count the number you are even slightly interested in, and bring that number of résumés plus an additional 5-10.
 - An approximate number of résumés should generally be around 25-30.
 - Don't forget that you will need to provide one copy of your résumé at the registration area to gain entrance to the fair.
- Do not bring cover letters to the fair.

Company Research:

- Narrow down your specific career goals, interests, and needs. However, try to be open to other options.
- Be familiar with the companies and organizations that are going to be represented by utilizing the *List of Employers* link on the Information for Candidates page of the website. This list is updated regularly as more employers register.
- It is strongly recommended that you do additional research by visiting the company's individual web site. Being knowledgeable of a company will demonstrate your interest in working there and help you form questions to ask the recruiter.

DRESS TO IMPRESS:

- Candidates for full-time positions are strongly advised to arrive in professional interview attire (a conservative business suit is your best option).
- Candidates seeking an internship are advised to dress in interview attire or, at the very least, business casual attire.
 - Business casual attire for men: dress pants, collared shirt and tie, dress-shoes.
 - Business casual attire for women: dress pants or skirt, modest blouse/professional top, hose and dress-shoes
- If it is raining or cold outside, be sure your coat is professional or don't take it into the employer area.
- NO JEANS!
- If you have ANY questions on what is appropriate to wear, consult your Career Services staff.

WHAT TO EXPECT:

When you Arrive:

- You will not have access to the employer area until the designated start time of the fair (10:00am). Though you are not required to arrive right when the doors open, it is recommended that you be there fairly early. Recruiters are generally more alert and enthusiastic at the beginning of the fair. Also, even though we discourage them from leaving before the end of the fair, some recruiters may choose to do so. You don't want to miss speaking with any recruiters you're interested in or feel rushed because you see people leaving. So, the earlier you get there, the better.
- When you get to the fair, you will need to check in at the registration desk. You will be asked to fill out a registration card and nametag and then provide us with a copy of your résumé. Even if your Career Center provided you with a nametag and registration card in advance, you must still check in at the registration desk.

Employer Area:

- In the main job fair area, each recruiter is assigned a booth with a table and chairs. Most companies send one or two representatives, so there may be one or two lines at each table. If a recruiter's line is long, consider coming back later and speaking to another recruiter/company in the meantime.
- You can certainly take breaks in between talking with recruiters. This will allow you to jot down notes and evaluate your responses and questions before moving on to the next booth.

Before you Leave:

- Please fill out the entire evaluation form before leaving with honest feedback. Organizers look at this information very seriously when coordinating next year's fair.
 - A common comment is: "have or invite more companies in my major." Please know that over 500 invitations are sent out to a diverse range of organizations each year in an attempt to do just that.

HOW TO APPROACH A RECRUITER:

Have a Plan:

- Before going into the employer area, take some time to make a plan of action. Either before you get to the fair or once you get your employer guidebook at registration, decide which recruiters you'd definitely like to speak with.
- Keep your options open! This is not the proper economic time to hold out for one position and avoid applying for any others. You never know what you'll learn about a company if you don't explore it.
- Don't get discouraged if one company's mini-interview didn't go well. On the other hand, don't get overly excited if one goes extremely well. See what to do after the fair to follow up with companies you're most interested in.
- Don't be too disappointed if a company doesn't show up that you wanted to speak with. It happens quite often to have a 5% "no show" rate. You are still welcome to send a cover letter and résumé to the person listed in your guidebook.

Approaching a Recruiter:

- Introduce yourself in a positive and confident manner. Smile, make eye contact, project enthusiasm and offer a firm handshake. Practice your 30 second commercial.
- Give the representative your résumé and be ready to discuss your background, qualifications, and career goals.
- Show that you have done research by tailoring your responses and asking questions.

- Ask knowledgeable questions about the company and their career opportunities. The first thing you say should not be "Are you hiring?" or "How much do you pay?"
- Collect business cards and literature before you leave. Jot down notes on anything important that was discussed so that you can remember to reference it in a thank you note.
- Keep in mind that companies are here for different reasons. Not every company will have immediate job openings in your area of interest. Some will spend 2 minutes, others a half-hour with you. Some will spend the entire interaction asking you questions, others might just give out information and direct you to their online application process. Be prepared for anything.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS:

Many job seekers view career fairs as being the same as job interviews, an approach that often leads to disappointment. Candidates can get frustrated when they learn that many companies require candidates to submit an online résumé or apply through their website. Since career fairs exist to provide candidates with an opportunity to ask questions and gather information about organizations, here are some suggestions to help you make the most of your face time with a recruiter to then assist you in their online requirements:

- Engage the recruiter in professional dialogue so that you are memorable. Nothing takes the place of face-to-face conversation.
- Ask questions about the online application and what would help yours stand out from others. Take notes.
- Find out what "key words" you should use in your online application.
- Remember that the same rules still apply with online applications. Your application materials must be well organized and error-free.
- Enter data in the correct fields and complete all fields or assessments, even if they are not required.
- Use the "comments" section to highlight items left off your résumé.
- Be sure your resume will upload or convert electronically while maintaining the format – bullets, bolding, etc.
- Ask the recruiter how, when, and who you should follow up with.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE FAIR:

- Write thank you notes! Follow up with all leads and reiterate your interest in a company. Don't just wait for the phone to ring, take the initiative!
- Consult Career Services staff members for additional job search assistance.
 - Take advantage of On-Campus Recruiting, other Job Fairs and Career Services programs and services.