Tips for Career Fair Success

*Preparation is the key to career fair success!*

**Why You Should Attend**
- Learn first-hand from representatives about a company/organization/school.
- Make a positive and lasting impression with employers and admission representatives.
- Begin to establish your professional image and build your network of colleagues.
- Refine your professional communication skills with recruiters.

**How to Prepare for the Fair**

**Research Employers**
Create a list of employers you plan to visit at the fair; under each company name note: company mission, history, recent developments, and competitors.
*Resources:* Company websites; *search engines*; professional associations; trade journals and other periodicals

**Build your Resume(s)**
Prepare a well-written resume 3-5 days in advance; make multiple copies.
*Resources:* Open Hour Resume Critique at UCS (11:00AM-5:00PM at UCS, 55 Whitney Ave., 3rd Floor)

**Wardrobe: Make a Great First Impression**
*Wardrobe Do’s:* cut tags from new garments; dress in conservatively-colored garments with subtle stripes or detailing; color-coordinate your garments, dress in comfortable shoes and wear breathable clothing.
- *Men:* wear a tie with a sports coat (business suites are not necessary).
- *Women:* if you choose to wear a skirt make sure it is an appropriate length (knee-length or longer); make sure to wear basic, solid colored nylons.

*Wardrobe Don’ts:* avoid large jingling jewelry, strong perfumes or colognes, jeans or tight-fitting clothing, sandals or flip flops, mini skirts and skirts cut above the knee with large slits, belly shirts and shirts showing cleavage, white-colored athletic socks, large and bulky sacks or back packs.

**Fair Etiquette**
- *Turn off your cell phone* or mute the ringer.
- *Avoid drinking coffee* prior to the fair.
- If you drink coffee or eat heavily seasoned foods then you should *carry mints.*
- *Be mindful* of your habits: don’t chew gum, fidget, eat or drink while meeting with employers.
- Periodically during the day make restroom stops to *check your overall appearance,* especially after lunch (nothing makes a first impression quite like food lodged between your teeth).
Eat before the fair and drink enough water to *keep yourself hydrated* during the fair.

**Bring your Fair Essentials**

*Resources: Career Fair Checklist (PDF)*

**During the Fair**

**Communicating with Employers**

- Present a *real image* of yourself, not the type of employee you think the employer wants to hire.
- Approach employers on the top of your priority list when you feel *most confident*.
- Meet with employers *on your own* and not in a group.
- Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, smile and speak confidently when you meet and speak with employers.

**Nurture your Conversations**

- Offer a 20 to 30 second biographical sketch to employers. Introduce yourself by telling him/her your *name*, your *academic profile*, and your *professional interests and experiences*.
- Finish your introduction with a statement about *your interest* in the company/organization/school and the *specific position* that you are seeking.
- Allow the employer to lead the direction of conversation.
- Ask *well-thought out questions* about the company/organization/school (e.g. mission, current developments, style of management). DO NOT ask about salary.
- Ask *well-thought out questions* about the employee (e.g., his/her length of employment or the nature of his/her job within the company).

**Collect Information**

- *Effectively utilize your time* at the career fair by learning more about those organizations you are most interested in from their own employees.
- *Collect business cards* or company brochures from employers you made contact with, as well as those you could not speak to, at the fair.
- *Take notes* to help recall conversations with individual employers if he/she contacts you at a later time.
- Track the resumes you distribute to employers.

**After the Fair**

**Communicating with Employers**

- *Write a “thank you” email or letter* to the representatives you spoke with; *include details* about your conversation at the fair.
- *Initiate contact* with those employers you were unable to speak with at the fair by writing an email or letter. Include your biographical sketch, reasons for contacting this person, interests in the company, and your resume.
- Keep your *list of distributed resumes* and conversation notes handy for when an employer contacts you.