How to Get the Most Out of a Career Fair

CSUN Career Fairs are a valuable resource for seeking employment and exploring careers. They offer you a great opportunity to:

- Practice your interview skills
- Learn the questions to ask of employers as well as the questions they will ask you
- Increase your knowledge of different industries and what kind of job opportunities they have
- Increase your network of contacts and gain the advice of professionals

How to Prepare for a Fair

1. As you would for any job interview, do the research; check our website to see which companies and organizations will be attending the fair. Go to the websites to learn more about the companies and decide which you would be interested in meeting. It doesn't often happen, but be prepared for on-the-spot interviews.
2. How's your resume and interview skills? Plan to attend a workshop, go to our online workshops, see a career counselor during 'walk-in' hours (check our schedule) and/or attend our Resumania event.
3. Dress for success. Be sure that you have the proper attire and that it is cleaned and pressed. Remember, you will be doing a lot of walking and standing so try to have an outfit that is comfortable (collar not too tight, skirt doesn't hike up...) and wear comfortable shoes. Don't wait until the last minute to pick out an outfit! "You only have one chance to make a first impression." Treat this as you would an interview.
4. Practice you pitch. Prepare a very brief intro of yourself that includes what makes you more special than the guy standing next to you in line. Include your skills and special talents. The more your practice, the more confident you will be when you are faced with the situation.
5. Remember eye contact and a good firm handshake!!

How to Work a Fair

1. Allow yourself plenty of time in order to see all of the companies you want without feeling rushed. Then, if time permits, check out employers you had not considered. There may very well be something interesting that you otherwise would have missed.
2. Bring 25-30 resumes in a folder in which they will stay crisp. The folder should have compartments for storing business cards you will collect from the
companies. Write notes on the back of the cards, such as: "I am very interested", and anything that you discussed with the recruiter.

3. When you arrive at the fair, be sure to check the floor plan and note where the companies you are most interested in will be situated. Keep an open mind!! Don't just approach the Disneys and IBMs. If there are any goody bags being give out, take one; you will need it for all of the literature and promotional items that you will gather.

4. Take initiative, ask employers about their procedures: "What is the next step?"

After the Fair

1. Send thank you notes to companies that interviewed you and to any "attractive" organizations with whom you spoke. This is a good time to briefly give any additional information that would enhance your chances of gaining their interest that you did not mention at the career fair

2. Organize the business cards you collected, write notes on them, determine which companies you want to contact

3. Keep a log of all of your actions.