

Career Connections: Tip Sheet

Being prepared will give you the confidence you need!

Career Connections is an opportunity to meet with a number of employers and gain knowledge about practicum sites, volunteer opportunities, employment prospects, and a wide range of organizations. Employers will be accepting resumes from participating students and alumni as well as providing information about their organization.

Before the Career Connections Fair

The Preparation

- ❖ Research the employers with whom you want to speak. Gather as much information on their organization as you can. Access employer profiles on PepPro to see if your interests align with theirs.
- ❖ Prepare a resume that represents the professional brand you want to market. Be prepared with custom resumes for specific organizations you would like to target during the event. We recommend having your resume reviewed by one of GSEP's Career Counselors or one of the Career Development Specialists prior to the fair.
- ❖ Prepare a one-minute "Elevator Speech" highlighting your relevant skills and interest in each organization you are targeting.
- ❖ Prepare some questions for the employers in advance (See "Sample Questions to Ask" for examples).

During the Career Connections Fair

Dress Professionally

- ❖ For men, this typically means an ironed shirt, tie, and polished shoes. For women, this typically means a skirt or pant suit, and polished, closed-toed shoes. No excessive cologne or jewelry.

Act Professionally

- ❖ If you need to wait to speak with an employer, wait and listen to the conversations currently taking place. In this way, you can build from what you learned by listening and avoid asking the same questions.
- ❖ Organize a list of employers with whom you wish to speak, and rank them according to your top choices.
- ❖ Get comfortable before approaching your targeted organizations. Walk around and get your bearings so you know where certain organizations are, and start at booths that would provide good practice.

Explore Your Options

- ❖ You may not be sure of what opportunities you are interested in pursuing. That's okay! Use this as an opportunity to explore.
- ❖ Examine how your strengths and interests match with various opportunities presented by the employers.

Speaking with an Employer

- ❖ Approach organization representatives with confidence and a firm handshake. Maintain eye contact and be aware of your body language.
- ❖ Keep your answers concise to avoid losing the employer's interest and appearing rude to other students.
- ❖ When stating skills that you possess, provide examples from experience.
- ❖ Ask how they prefer you follow up with them, and obtain a business card. Always thank the employer for his or her time.
- ❖ We also encourage jotting down brief notes from your conversation that you can later reference.

Sample Questions to Ask

- ❖ What skills or qualifications does your organization look for in an employee?
- ❖ How would you describe the organization's culture?
- ❖ What population will I be working with at your site (if this is not already provided on the organization's web site)?
- ❖ What interested you (the employer) in this organization and why?
- ❖ May I volunteer at your site before applying for a position?
- ❖ Can you please tell me more about...? (Reference something specific that you learned from your prior research.)

After The Career Connections Fair

Follow-up

- ❖ Check to see if the employer representative has a profile on LinkedIn. If so, request to connect.
- ❖ Send a follow-up note within two days of the fair to employers of interest. Thank employers for their time and information.
- ❖ Apply to your preferred positions. Follow the application procedures that the employer provided.
- ❖ Keep in mind that obtaining employment can take time. Be patient, yet conscientious; Follow up with the employer.

Remember: Success is where preparation and opportunity meet!