

Career Fair Preparation

Career Fairs

Whether you are looking for an internship/job opportunity or simply looking to network, Career Fairs are an excellent avenue for connecting with employers. The Office of Career Services at Southeast provides two (2) Career & Internship Fairs each year (one during the Fall & Spring semesters). This resource will assist in making sure your fair experiences are a success!

Why & Who should go?

Attending Career Fairs allows you to complete the three Cs: **Communicate, Collect, & Connect.**

Communicate:

Showcase and further develop your communication skills; arguably one of the top skills most employers look for in a candidate.

Collect:

Collect important information regarding employers, potential positions, and the field for which the employers are in.

Connect:

Build relationships and your “network” by interacting with employers/representatives and leaving a positive lasting impression.

The Office of Career Services advocates for all students (Freshmen to Seniors) to attend the fairs. Even if you are not seeking an internship or job opportunity that semester, it provides the opportunity to complete the three “Cs” and be further prepared for when you are seeking an opportunity.

Networking is an invaluable skill and more and more research indicates individuals are finding employment through the personal connections they have made in previous years.

While your actions on the day of the fair are important, the most important aspect of a successful fair experience rests with the actions you take in preparing.

Prior to the Fair

First, you will need to gain a heightened sense of awareness regarding yourself and the employers attending the fair, to see if you match well. For yourself, you need to know what your skill sets, career interests, and values (both work and lifestyle) are. For employers, you will want to research the following:

- Mission, Values, & Culture
- Services/Products & Customers Served
- Work Location, Development Opportunities, & Benefits

Second, you will need to develop your **Pitch, Plan, & Questions.**

Pitch

Your pitch or “Elevator Speech” should contain the following items:

- Name, Year in School, & Major
- Knowledge of & reason for interest in the employer
- Your skills, experience, etc. as it relates to the employer’s position

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Pitch Example

“Hello, my name is Rowdy Redhawk and I’m a senior majoring in mascot arts. I observed that you are currently looking for a mascot and wanted to tell you a little about my experience. During the fall semester, I was an intern with the Southeast Athletic Department and after seeing my performance and an increase in attendance/enthusiasm at all fall events, the administration asked for me to return this spring. This has reaffirmed and strengthened my desire to be a mascot at a public university. I was hoping you would tell me more about your university and its success with continued attendance growth and athletic department expansion.”

Plan

Your plan should be comprised of the following elements:

- **Ranked employer targets**, broken down with a primary list & a secondary list
Primary = Meets all values and really want to work for
Secondary = Meets majority of values and would be interested in working for
- **Mapped employer locations**, so you know exactly where your targets are and so you can map out your route and timing to get to each employer.

Questions

Here are some sample questions you can ask employers:

1. Please describe the work environment.
2. What training and/or development program is provided by your company?
3. What personality traits are important for success in your company?
4. What made you choose to work for this company?

DO NOT ask about salary or “What do you have for my major?”

Finally, in addition to making sure you have your resume polished and ready, you will need to see to some personal preparations.

Sleep

Make sure to get an appropriate amount of sleep the night before, keeping in mind you are adding this fair experience to your normal schedule for that day.

Nutrition

You will want to properly fuel and hydrate yourself the night before and the day of the fair. Do not eat or drink items which will have a negative effect on you during the fair.

Appearance

Make sure you are dressed professionally for the field you are looking to go into and that you are properly groomed. Also, bring a pad folio or folder to hold copies of your resume. Do not bring a large distracting bag or purse.

At the Fair

There will be a lot going on around you. Make sure to maintain your focus and implement your plan. Do a warm-up lap to make sure your target employers are in their locations.

When interacting with employers, make sure to provide a firm initial handshake and then good eye contact and body posture throughout your conversation. You will have approximately 2-5 minutes to speak to them. Be careful not to monopolize their time and make sure to ask for or pick up their business card. If they are collecting resumes at the fair, be sure to provide them with one.

After the Fair

You will want to follow up with each employer you spoke with (by letter or e-mail). Be sure to thank them for their time and reiterate your interest in working for their company.