



## **Navigating Career Fairs**

Career fairs are a great way to meet employers in person or virtually, but give you limited time to sell your skills and experiences. The following steps describe what to do during that first encounter with a potential employer.

### **Learn About Yourself and Career Options**

Career Fairs allow you to explore what experiences are available to you in real time. You can use career fairs to research companies and organizations that could be interesting to you. Talking to employers can help gather information and insight on your career options.

#### **BEFORE THE FAIR**

##### **Determine your goals**

- Ask yourself, what do I want to accomplish at the career fair? What goals do I have for attending?

##### **Reflect on your experiences**

- Consider the things that make you who you are. Your past experiences, strengths, successes, values, and motivations are unique to you. Focus on how those things relate to the abilities and skills that employers are seeking.

##### **Prepare and revise your resume**

- Be sure your resume is updated and reflects any recent accomplishments.
- Tailor your resume so it reflects the skills and competencies employers want to see
  - Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Teamwork, Sense of Self
- Prepare multiple versions of your resume if you are applying to positions in different disciplines or industries.
- Print out several copies of your resume.
- Visit the Career Connections Center for information on creating a resume or a resume review.

##### **Research organizations**

- Find out which organizations will be coming to the career fair by checking the “Events” section of Gator CareerLink.
- Research organizations hiring for positions you are interested in to see if it might be a good match for your strengths and interests.
- Make a list of companies you want to see- while you may not be able to see all of them, you will know which ones should be your priority.
- Download the Career Fair Plus App for easy access to employer and event information.

#### **DURING THE FAIR**

##### **Use your time strategically**

- Arrive early to maximize your interaction with employers.
- Make a plan of your priority companies/organizations. Be prepared to wait in lines!



- Ask employers about the next step in the hiring process. Be sure to get the contact information of the employer.

### **Present your best self**

- Dress in business professional clothing. Visit the Gator Career Closet if you need to borrow professional clothing items.
- Take breaks and rest when you need to collect your thoughts. It's okay to feel nervous!
- Confidently communicate with employers- give a strong handshake, use eye contact, and warm body language. Be thankful, friendly and polite!

### **Share Your “Elevator Pitch”**

An elevator pitch is typically a one-minute response to the “Tell me about yourself” question during an interview, but it is also a helpful way to introduce yourself when networking and during career fairs. Your elevator pitch will allow you to demonstrate confidence, knowledge, interest, and enthusiasm while outlining:

- Your degree, why you chose this area of study, and when you are graduating.
- Highlights of your experiences and how the skills used or gained relate to the position.
- Your strengths and why you're qualified for the position/industry.
- Your career path and how this position fits with your career goals.
- Why you are interested in the company/organization (show that you've done your research).

### **AFTER THE FAIR**

- Always send thank you notes or emails to the recruiters that you met
- Attend information sessions or additional on-campus recruitment events to get a better idea of each organization's recruiting plan and have more time to network with employers
- Apply for positions in Gator CareerLink
- Remember, a career fair is not the only way to find a job or internship! There are many additional strategies to use!

### **OTHER TIPS**

- Attend the Career Connections Center's pre-fair/event workshops. For an up-to-date list of events at the Center, check the Events tab in Gator CareerLink.
- Let us help!
  - Express Drop-In (Monday-Friday 11am-4pm)
  - Career Conversations (Schedule in Gator CareerLink)
  - Career Planning Appointments (Schedule in Gator CareerLink)
  - Online Mock Interview Module (inside Gator CareerLink)

### **MY NEXT STEPS**