

# HOW TO MAKE A CAREER FAIR WORK FOR YOU

## HOW TO PREPARE

- Clarify your goals. What do you hope to get out of the career fair? Possible goals might include:
  - Learn about employers who hire your major—whether or not you’re actually looking for a job right now
  - Pick up information and business cards of potential employers so you could contact them later
  - Give your resume to recruiters
  - Ask if they will be interviewing the next day, and if so, to schedule an interview.
- Be sure to access the list of employers who will attend. You will find a list of companies in attendance via Handshake. Review the list of employers; check the chart showing what majors they hire; on the day of the fair, highlight the floor plan so you can easily find the employers that interest you. Think about why you are interested in them and how you might connect your background to their needs.
- Prepare a 30 second introduction that expresses why you are interested in that organization or industry, and briefly relates your background to what you know of the employer’s needs. Practice your introduction. Think about two or three questions you might ask.
- If you have a resume, bring copies. If not, do not skip the event! Ask for business card from the employers which interest you and send a letter and your resume later.
- Dress and act professionally. You don’t always need to wear a suit—business casual is usually fine—but for business occasions, it’s best to dress more conservatively than you might normally dress. The top eighteen inches of your body are the most noticeable, not only for neatness and style, but also for anything distracting, like jewelry, heavy makeup, unusual hairstyles, or multiple piercings.

## DURING THE EVENT

- Take 5 minutes after you check in to review the list of attending companies. A big career fair can be confusing! If you have not already done so, highlight those which interest you on the floor plan so you can organize your time efficiently.
- Show interest and enthusiasm by smiling and speaking clearly. Walk confidently, with good posture. Make direct eye contact and shake hands firmly. Have a positive greeting: “Hello, I’m Andy Lee. I’m a mechanical engineering major and will graduate -----. I’m interested in talking with you about.....(co-op, intern, or career opportunities).” Prepare a short statement (a sentence or two) about something that interests you about their industry and/or specific company.
- Answer questions clearly and concisely, especially if there’s a line behind you.
- Ask about opportunities and hiring needs. (Don’t ask about pay!) Ask if they are accepting resumes. Request a business card, and thank them for their time. Pick up company information too, not just the giveaways.
- Note your impressions right away. (Since you will talk with several company representatives, it is easy to forget or mix up the information you received.) Take note of where/when you met the person on the back of their business card and include what you discussed.

## AFTER THE FAIR

- Write individualized emails (include a resume with each) to those employers which interest you.
- Remember that many employers will interview on campus through Engineering Career Services later in the semester. Be sure you are registered with ECS so you can be one of those interviewed!

