Making the Most of A Career Fair

Morrisville State College
Career Services
Objectives of this workshop

- help you understand the purpose, benefits, and mechanics of a career fair or similar event
- offer tips on how to prepare for and conduct yourself at the event
- outline steps for following up after the event
- remind you how Career Services can assist you with before, during, and after the fair
What is a career fair?

- platform for employers to connect in person with a specific population or the general public
  - may also be called an expo, recruiting event, career day, etc.
  - generally include both jobs and internships, even if not reflected in name
  - some events are exclusive to student population of specific school(s)

- opportunity where the basic purpose is to share information
  - not all employers will have jobs or internships; not all attendees will be looking for them

- examples: CNYRC Job Fair Extraordinaire (fall), Morrisville State College Job & Internship Expo (spring), New Jersey Collegiate Career Day (January)
Why do employers participate?

- increase organization’s visibility

- provide career information about their organization
  - types of internships/jobs, desired skills, hiring process, hiring timelines, etc.

- identify potential internship or job prospects for current or future needs
Why should you participate?

- increase your knowledge about the breadth of types of employers and career possibilities
- practice your interviewing (employment and/or informational) skills
- find an internship, job, or volunteer opportunity
- make contacts with organizations for future career development
Before the fair

- pre-register, if recommended or required
- define what you want to achieve at the fair
  - general career information, specific organization information, secure a formal interview, etc.
- identify target employers and research them
- create a list of questions for employers
- develop and practice your “30-second pitch”
- polish your resume
  - create multiple targeted resumes for different career goals
  - print copies to share with employers
- assemble your wardrobe and accessories
At the fair

logistics:

- arrive early, if possible
- check your appearance when you arrive
  - remove your hat and coat; check your backpack, if coat check available
- check in at registration desk and get directory, map, and other information
- review materials to learn layout of the facility, location of target employers, and services offered
- use your time wisely. If a booth has a long line at it, move to your next employer, then go back
At the fair

engaging with employers:

- make a strong, positive first impression
  - firm handshake, good eye contact, confident self-introduction
  - observe recruiter interaction with other attendees for a few minutes to get comfortable, if desired
  - you generally only have two or three minutes with an employer, so stay on point
- speak clearly and listen carefully
- use your list of questions to guide your conversation
- inquire about next steps and how to best follow up
- secure a business card (and leave yours if you have one)
  - make notes on back of card about your conversation
After the fair

- send a thank you note to each employer representative you spoke with the following day

- indicate in your note that you will follow up within the appropriate timeframe and in the manner you discussed

- continue to keep in touch with the employer representative periodically
  - “keep them in the loop” - let the recruiter know if you take any action steps he/she recommended (e.g. completing on-line application, contacting colleague in different department or office)
Partnering with Career Services

before the fair

- creating and polishing your resume, 30-second pitch, questions for employers
- identifying target employers
- connecting with MSC alumni at target employers
- using employer and industry research resources
- interviewing prep and mock interviews
- getting input on your wardrobe
- brainstorming on other strategies or opportunities to engage with employers of interest
Partnering with Career Services after the fair

- writing your thank you note
- creating your follow-up strategy and timeline
- evaluating your interaction with employers
- connecting with MSC alumni at target or newly-identified employers
- interviewing prep and mock interviews
- brainstorming on other strategies or opportunities to engage with employers of interest
How to connect with Career Services

30-minute individual advising appointments daily:
 call 315.684.6615 to schedule an appointment

Advising Express (10 – 15 minute sessions):
 see Career Services calendar on website

Campus-wide workshops and events:
 www.morrisville.edu/careerplanning

308 Whipple Administration Building (next to the Registrar)
 315.684.6615  careerservices@morrisville.edu