

Different employers, and even different managers in the same company, want different things.  
This is from the point of a recruiter (initials SP) for an R&D science & engineering company.

### Career Fair attendance.

- Students should start attending Career Fairs as freshmen, even if they're not looking for internships. They will be able to observe "how to do" a Career Fair, how people dress and act, etc. It will also give them a great exposure to a wide range of options that may well affect their future plans for classes, etc. As a freshman or sophomore, it's okay not to know anything about the companies, because they're just fact-finding at that point.
- Students who find companies they're interested in should talk to the recruiters and learn more. Even if they're not currently looking for jobs, the information they collect now will reflect well on them in the future. One role that recruiters have is selling the company to prospects, and it's much more enjoyable to sell it to an exploring freshman than to a clueless senior who waited until the graduating semester before even thinking about job hunting.
- Talking to the recruiters early is even more beneficial if the company tends to send the same recruiters. Believe it or not, even after talking to hundreds of people throughout the course of a day, when we come back five months later, I still sometimes recognize people. I probably won't remember your name or anything about you, but I'll recognize your face, and when you mention that we talked last time, I'll be happy not to have to rack my brain to remember why you look familiar. After a couple of times, I'll remember more about you. (I probably talked to my Sandia recruiter 4 or more times before I was really looking for employment.) Another role that recruiters have is selling the prospects to the company, and if I can tell a manager that you've talked to me every semester for two years, that stands out.
- Freshmen and sophomores can explore without knowing much or anything about the companies. But once you start seriously looking for jobs, whether internships or full-time, you should definitely know at least the basics of a company before approaching the booth. I'd much rather hear, "I was reading about your such-and-such work on your website; what kind of things would a mechanical engineering intern do?" than "so, what do you guys do?". Be prepared with some knowledge, and have some good questions to ask.

### Appearance

- Personally, I'm not as hung up about Career Fair dress as others. I'm okay with shorts and a t-shirt as long as they're clean and in good shape, and in good taste; however, you run the risk of your shirt being distracting, so unless it's distracting in a good way (clever engineering joke, etc.), think twice. It seems like some companies *prefer* the t-shirt because of their culture.
- But since many recruiters *do* care about what you're wearing, I recommend at least a polo shirt and khakis or nice jeans. If you're looking for a full-time job, especially with a graduate degree, then a button-up shirt is good. Suit and tie may be needed for business jobs, but is probably overkill for most engineering jobs.
- Here's another benefit to attending Career Fairs early – when you identify companies you're interested in, see how the recruiters dress, and dress like them.
- Whatever you wear, make sure that your clothes (and you) are clean.
- Deodorant and breath mints are your friends. Use them.

### Resumes

- Short & easy answer – have a counselor at Career Services review your resume first.
- Longer answer – based on past experiences, I've compiled some resume tips and anti-tips (attached), plus some bonus examples I haven't incorporated into the other documents. Because these are *my* tips, and not official Sandia information (no R&A), please don't attribute them to me or Sandia.
- Besides your name and contact info, the first thing I want to see is what you're studying and how far along you are in school. Maybe an area of interest, and what you're looking for (internship, full-time, etc.).
- Generally, don't list courses that everybody in your major/year will have taken, unless it's specifically relevant to the job/position you're applying for.

- Even though we no longer have hard GPA requirements for full-time positions (internships are now 3.0), I still want to see them.
- Then I look for work or research experience, volunteering & leadership, etc. If you don't have relevant work experience, show me how your other work experience made you better (e.g., "attention to detail in a stressful environment"; "lead a team of six employees." List activities and hobbies only if they're relevant, show leadership, etc.
- You sell yourself to the recruiter with your resume and talking to them; but your resume is the first tool the recruiter has to sell you to the company. Make it good.

### **Talking to recruiters**

- See other comments above about asking questions.
- Be prepared to talk about a project or class that is relevant, but briefly, and relate it to the internship you're looking for.
- Please be respectful of our time. If there's nobody else waiting, sure, we'll chat longer, but if there's a line of people waiting to talk to us, don't tell us your life story (PhD students in particular are prone to going into too much detail about their research). If we want to know more, we'll ask.
  - We also see the opposite problem – very short answers and a lot of silence. I don't know which is worse.
- Of course, besides asking about the company itself, feel free to ask relevant questions about the recruiters – why do you like working there, what do you do there, etc.

### **My personal soapboxes**

- This is my least favorite conversation: "Where are you located?" "[Here and here]." "Nothing in Utah? Bye."
  - I understand that there are sometimes situations where you just can't leave the state or the area. But I talk to a lot of people who won't consider it because they just don't want to. There's a wonderful world out there – be open to checking it out. This is particularly true for internships – try life out of the state for a couple of months, and if you can't stand it, then it will be over soon and you'll have something good on your resume.. But who knows, you must might like it.
  - A few years ago, I could point out that Utah churns out more great engineering graduates than there were engineering jobs for, which resulted in salaries being lower than they should be due to an oversupply of talent, and salaries are better elsewhere (even with adjustments for cost of living in some places). Silicon Slopes is changing this, but you should still be willing to look outward.
- During most of my recruiting trips, we've had far fewer ME students visit us than we would like. We can't recruit you if you don't come!
- Most of our full-time jobs require at least an MS, and I highly recommend an MS anyway – it will open up a lot more job opportunities (and more interesting job opportunities). If you're not already doing so, please seriously consider grad school.