

Career Fairs & Networking

Why Attend?

Regardless of major, year in school, or future goals, you can benefit greatly from attending a Career Fair or networking event. Career Fairs can help you:

- Learn about positions and career fields you can pursue with your major and background
- Meet representatives from organizations for whom you are interested in working
- Increase your chances of interviewing with an employer
- Develop your network of professional contacts
- Practice sharing your narrative to industry professionals

Getting The Most Out Of A Career Fair

Career networking events are a great opportunity to build your network and learn about career fields/opportunities. Whether or not you are actively seeking a position, these types of events can be beneficial to your professional journey.

- RESEARCH EMPLOYERS
 - Review the list of organizations that will be attending the fair to get a sense of the opportunities available. Decide which opportunities are interesting to you and do more research about them. By doing prior research, you will be able to approach specific recruiters and talk to them about the positions and opportunities in which you are particularly interested.
- UPDATE AND PREPARE YOUR RESUME
 - You are encouraged to have an updated resume that reflects your most current experiences and skills (you can email your resume to cpe@plu.edu to have it reviewed). After you have polished up your resume, plan on bringing at least ten copies to the Career Fair.
- PREPARE YOUR "PERSONAL PITCH"
 - In order to make the most of your interaction, prepare a short interesting and engaging verbal summary of your background, experiences, and career interests. This is your opportunity to make a good impression. Also, practice answering interview questions and prepare two to five questions you would like to ask the employer.
- DRESS TO IMPRESS
 - You truly have only one chance to make a memorable first impression, so make it a good one. Dressing in business attire is important when engaging with employers (this doesn't mean you can't incorporate personality into your attire!).
- PREPARE A STRATEGY
 - Do not plan to meet with every single employer attending the event. Career fairs only offer brief contact with organizations. Narrow and prioritize your list of employers with whom you would like to speak, and set specific goals you hope to achieve by attending the fair.

TIPS TO REMEMBER

- No gum chewing!
- Listen carefully to what the recruiter has to say
- Avoid using filler words such as "um," "like" and "you know"
- Demonstrate confidence through your body language and voice
- Offer a resume and be able to speak to it
- Employers may not keep your resume. They may encourage you to upload the resume to the company website or to email the recruiter directly as part of their internal process. This does not mean that the employer is not interested.
- Ask for a business card so you can follow up
- Never ask a recruiter what their company does; you should know
- Attend other Career Fairs nearby!
- Have fun!

30-SECOND PERSONAL PITCH

- Hand the recruiter a copy of your resume and be prepared to expand on it quickly. Share basic information about yourself and your career interests like this:
 - Name
 - Major/Emphasis
 - Opportunities you are seeking
 - Relevant experience (student teaching, work, internship, volunteer)
 - What motivates you or what you're passionate about
 - Highlight of skills and strengths



Alumni & Student Connections

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www.plu.edu/alumni-student-connections

For more tips on career fairs, schedule an appointment with a career advisor.

Networking At An Event

What To Bring

Plan to arrive with a notepad and/or padfolio, a pen, and tailored copies of your resume (especially if the event is a Career Fair). Try to leave your backpack or other items at home during the event.

ENGAGING WITH EMPLOYERS: INTRODUCE YOURSELF

- Practice talking to a recruiter who is not at the top of your list to gain confidence, and then move on to recruiters and companies that interest you more.
- Preparing a personal pitch will come in handy during a career fair. It can be very intimidating to approach someone you have never met and introduce/promote yourself. You will want to practice several times before the career fair. Make sure to include: Name, major, relevant work experience, skills, accomplishments, employment goals, and why you are interested in the company. For example:

"Hi. My name is _____, and I am a junior at Pacific Lutheran University majoring in Political Science and Communication. I am interested in pursuing a career in paralegal services. As a legal intern at FlaniganNapatt LLP I enjoyed the experience of assisting and supporting case assignments ranging from civil disputes to human rights violation cases. I have gained valuable experience in legal research, preparing documents, and customer services, while also being the liaison between the attorneys and clients. I am interested in your company because of the work you do with immigrants and undocumented families. Based on my education and experiences I think I would be a great fit for your program. Can you please tell me more about the entry level position and what qualities you look for in top candidates?"

BEST PRACTICES

- Be focused
- Show enthusiasm
- Make eye contact
- Ask about the company before grabbing free stuff
- Bring copies of your resume
- Have a confident handshake
- Do not ask about salary
- Ask questions
- Dress for the event

TALKING TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS YOU MAY ASK

(Research the company first to make sure this information is not readily available online. Dig a little deeper).

INTERNSHIPS

- Does the organization have a formal internship program?
- Do you have an internship coordinator I may contact?
- What courses or majors do you look for in potential interns?

JOBS

- What are typical entry-level positions for someone with my major, skills and experience?
- What skills do you look for in potential candidates?
- What is the best way to apply to your organization, and how long does the process usually take?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS THEY MAY ASK YOU

- Why did you stop at our table today?
- What kind of position are you looking for?

SCREEN EMPLOYERS

- You may be interested in speaking with a number of employers. To make sure that you do not forget what you learned, be sure to jot down notes after leaving each booth. You may also want to include a list of questions you want clarified or any additional notes.

ETIQUETTE

- Be selective and only provide your resume to those employers in which you are truly interested.
- Be concise and get your points across quickly due to having limited time.
- Network with other students while standing in line.
- Ask for a business card before you leave and thank the employer for visiting PLU.

AFTER THE EVENT:

Follow up!

If you said you would send anything to the employer after the event (completed application, resume, etc.) be sure to follow through.

If you spoke extensively with an employer, send a thank-you note/email within 24 hours.

Email any prospective employers you are still interested in whether you talked with them at the event or not.



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