Preparing for HACC’s 16th Annual Spring Job Fair

The HACC-Lancaster Campus Career Services office is **preparing to host its 16th annual spring Job Fair on Wednesday, March 16th and Thursday, March 17th from 10:00am to 1:00pm both days in East 203.** This event is open to the student body, HACC alumni as well as the community.

The job fair is an excellent place to learn, network and land a job. Since job fairs, including HACC’s can be overly crowded, competitive and often intimidating, it is good to know how best to prepare. These tips will improve your odds of not being screened out and instead increase your chances of obtaining an onsite interview.

- **Be Prepared**- Do some research ahead of time. Plan to log onto [www.hacc.edu/lancasterjobfair](http://www.hacc.edu/lancasterjobfair) prior to the event to learn what types of fields and organizations will be represented. Make a list of those that interest you and visit the company web sites to gather additional information.

- **Present a Professional Image**- First impressions make an impact. Dress for a job fair as you would for a job interview. Remember, the recruiters are evaluating you and making mental notes about your appearance as well as presentation. It is always better to be overdressed than underdressed.

- **Bring Resumes**- Make sure you have plenty of copies of your resume to give out to employers. Your resume is an important marketing tool, so be sure that the one you are using highlights your strengths.

- **Interviewing**- You may only have two to five minutes to market yourself and protect yourself from being screened out, thus you need to make the most of your time. Many experts suggest that you develop a one-minute “commercial” that highlights the key benefits that you can offer the organization-and then use it at the beginning of the interview. Also, remember the three keys to all interviews: make eye contact, offer a firm handshake, and show enthusiasm. You should also prepare answers to interview questions just as you would any employment interview. The most common question you will face is something along the lines of “What are you here for today?” Seems like an easy question to answer, especially if you’ve done your homework and can tailor your answer to your interests and the company’s interests, thereby marketing yourself. Make sure you also have some questions ready to ask the interviewer. A great concluding question for you to ask is, “What do I need to do to obtain a second interview?”

- **Networking**- Career/job fairs are all about networking. Of course, you are building a network with the recruiters. This task is most vital. However, you can also network with your fellow job-seekers in terms of sharing information about job leads, companies, and their recruiting strategies and styles.

- **Follow Up** - After the job fair is over make sure that you take the extra effort to follow up with the employers that interested you. Remember, these people may have received well over 100 resumes just from one job fair. In order to stand out from the crowd, send a personal thank you to the recruiters that you spoke with. Use this opportunity to remind them of your skills and the contribution you could make. Let them know that you would appreciate the time to speak with them further (expressing an interest in an onsite interview) and explain that you will call them next week. You probably should also enclose another copy of your resume with the thank you letter.

Remember even if you are not actively seeking employment right now, attending a job fair is a great way to research companies that are hiring in the area. You can also learn about internship opportunities that may exist. Later on when you are ready to actively begin your search, you can research the company by going directly to the career section of their website and see all of their job openings. If you wrote down the names of those representing that company at the job fair, you can call into the company and ask to talk directly to that person or have a name to which you can address your cover letter when mailing in your resume.

Finally, job offers may not be made at the job fair itself but if you perform at your very best and follow through on these simple guidelines, you may be well on your way toward the final interview at the company site and achieving success in this important strategic tool of job-hunting. Good Luck!