Discussion: “What is important to employers and prospective employees?”

Employers’ comments:

- Communication – how to adapt for audience
- The importance of higher education
- Leadership
- More than a GPA – employers interest in life balance
- New hires – students need direction – employers should provide direction – employees be prepared and have a solution when mess up
- Company fit
- Decision ability
- Broad experience – universities increase awareness of opportunities early so students can participate
- Treated as an investment not place holder
- Expose to broader scope of company
- Like idea of mentor program first 1-3 years
- Sense of purpose see importance of what they are doing
- Students who have completed research prior to the Career Fair - know something about the company - do a resume specific to company
- Students asked about skills employers look for - communication and professional communication emails - taking meeting notes - don’t use text messaging language – be brief – employers get 120 emails a day
- Looks for strong work ethic in students and it is easy to pick up on during a campus interview
- Students can do one thing to set themselves apart from others – if they interact with an employer at an event or the career fair it sets them apart if they get the person’s name and follow-up with thank you note or email. It is impressive when they apply for a job if they reference in their cover letter how they interacted with a company representative and mentioned the reps name
- Push standardized resume
- More advertisement on extracurricular – only few not a ton (too many extracurricular activities - how focused on work will you be)
- Students have a plan
- Mismatched between students expectations and employers or “paying your dues” entry level expectations, etc.
- Reputation, corporate responsibility
- Good for employers to have flexibility – self-starter
- Agree 100% with results of what S&T employers want
- Company fit is very important
- Decision-making ability should be higher
- Make survey results available to other companies – very useful results
- Messing up is fine, but how will you fix it?
Opportunity for advancement might be perceived as development rather than true advancement.

Soft skills, more than GPA, internships after freshman year, access to younger workers to build pipeline of workers to replace retiring work force.

Work-like balance – important to maintain.

Not all students can be a leader in a senior design - a comment to often shared in interviews.

Focus on specific campus groups, don’t try to be a part of all of them.

It is ok to honestly answer “I don’t know” when you do not - versus fabricate what they think they want to hear.

Results (good or bad with demonstrated learning) an example not just the short answer.

Leadership and followership is important – participate as a followership so they can focus on learning versus establishing themselves as a leader before learning leadership skills can be detrimental or get in the way of learning the job.

How long they believe an employee will stay if hired, need at least 5 years to recoup investment if hired.

Career versus building a resume - is a question for potential employees to consider when building their resume and interviewing.

Student activities have more to do with what did you accomplish as part of the organization versus which organization.

Extracurricular activities can give hint to the type of engineer they maybe and demonstrate loyalty.

Athletics may hold students back from real world experience opportunity (co-op, etc.) but being on a “team” and keeping grades strong is still important.

Broad experience, not just technical.

- Internships/co-op are important.
- Miner Challenge
  - Awareness of these opportunities early enough to take advantage of them.

Social media getting stricter even to specific guidelines for employment that may result in termination.

**Students’ Comments:**

- New hires – students need direction – employers should provide direction – employees be prepared and have a solution when mess up.
- Company fit is very important.
- Know employers will get information from NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) on S&T students.
- Looking for flexibility in growth and development paths.
- Adjustment factor – mini-based bonus pay – equal pay – flexible hours.
- Adjustment factor.
- Opportunities for advancement; balancing work and life.
- Need direction.
- Teamwork, communication.
• Equal pay
• Like to be given responsibility
• Co-op/internship in different cultures varies
• Gaining skill sets is very crucial
• Internship - possible rotational program
• Importance of higher/advanced degrees is a common question among undergrads
• Prospective employees something passionate about similar age groups – good public perception – meaningful – location – balance between personal/professional life
• If a company appears to want “me” then the student listens harder
• Resources that help with lifelong success - like retirement
• Seeks job that would be enjoyable - not just experienced
• 5-10 years expectation for job
• Recognizes learning curves as part of job
• Fit – personal level (getting to know someone) helps to improve the job experience
• Merit based bonus and pay
• Gym/Health area
• Childcare
• Equal pay for men/women
• Mentor programs
• Health plans
• Flexibility with working hours
• Normal working hours
• Helping move
• International work

Faculty Comment:
• Personal responsibility