Shravani Samala

17 September 2020

Career Fair Reflection

On September 14th, I attended my first career fair. After to going to some information session and talking to my mentor, I decided that I wanted to talk to Highmark, Prudential about their ASAP program, Buck, and Transamerica. So, on the days leading up to the fair, I took notes on the companies’ CEOs, their values, skills they are looking for, and other things the companies are involved in such as sustainability or diversity projects. However, when I got to the fair, I only saw Highmark, Prudential, and Buck. I quickly decided to do some quick research on three more companies, Mercer, United Health and Independence Blue Cross and talk with their recruiters as well.

The three companies that I connected the best with were Highmark, Prudential, and Mercer. When I met with the recruiters, the conversation flowed naturally, and they answered my questions really well. I also felt like it just was not awkward with them. With Buck and IBC, the recruiters did not seem as enthusiastic, so it was hard for me to keep staying enthusiastic. However, I still tried my best and they encouraged me to apply.

The first company I talked with and really liked was Highmark. Ms. Price had some technical difficulties at first, but I made sure to tell her that it was no problem and that we are all dealing with this new situation the best that we can. She then asked me to tell her a little about myself and I told her my year, my major and how I learned some great career skills such as communication and teamwork and Kumon. She also told me that she was upset that she could not be on campus to meet everyone and that she could not go to the creamery! I asked her what her favorite flavor was and also shared mine. I then asked her questions about her the Volunteer Day Off program because that was something that I was really interested in learning more about. We then talked a little about the company’s culture and what she liked about Highmark. After have some more casual conversation, she encouraged me to apply.

Another company that really stood out for me was Mercer. I spoke with Mr. Grabowski who recently graduated from Penn State and wanted to go into the more consulting side of being an actuary. I told him about myself and then I asked him more about his company’s take on diversity because I saw that they held a day long racial-bias training in many of their offices. He told me that their company was very involved in being as diverse as possible and how their company has a book club. Their website brings up a different book year that the company recommends and then they discuss this book in a meeting. That really interested me because I love reading and he saw that on my resume. I emailed Mr. Grabowski about not being able to find internship listings online. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 situation, he explained that Mercer does not know how their internships are going to work this year; so, I was not able to apply immediately.

I though the career fair went okay overall but I think I need to work on not getting overwhelmed. I have never been to a career fair before and the fact that it was online was better and worse for me at the same time. It was better in the sense that I did not have the nervousness of going up to people. However, it was bad in the sense that for most of the companies I visited it was back to back because Brazen would taken me out of one conversation and ask me if I was ready for the next. I think I could have waited, but I was not sure. So, I always ended up just heading straight to the next company. I wish I would have taken some time in between companies to take a deep breath and read up on the notes that I took for each of them because I remember in a few cases I got confused and may have said something wrong.