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Assignment #3: Job Fair Experience Report

I attended the Business/Retail/Government Job & Internship Fair for a little over an hour. At the fair, I interacted with Youth Villages, a non-profit that I am very interested in working with. I also observed my classmates' interactions with different employers as we travelled in a group for a while. I learned a lot about how job fairs worked, but left with mixed feeling about their efficacy. In the end, there are some changes I would have made for myself, but also some changes I would like to see in the fair itself.

For one, I learned that the employers themselves had elevator speeches. When I spoke with a representative from Youth Villages, she began by asking my major and my year, and then with that information, she tailored a short spiel about her organization to me in terms of what I qualified for as far as internships and employment. I never exactly got a chance to give a speech about myself as we went straight from her spiel into questions about the organization and the nature of the internships. When I told her my major and minor, I spoke very briefly about their correlation, as Geography and Child and Family Studies seem to not correlate at all, but that was the most I was able to talk about myself. It seemed like she really just wanted to answer my questions and then get my email for her mailing list.

Something else that I learned is that the employers I observed did not seem all that interested in physical copies of resumes. The representative from Youth Villages, for one, only wanted my email for her mailing list. I also overheard a representative from the FBI say that he had a whole stack of resumes that he had not even touched. I would think, especially in this day and age, that a digital resume would be more useful. I spoke with an employer at TNGIC, per

Camponovo's instruction, and was given his card so that I could email him my resume. I was not sure if that was because I obviously had no physical copies on me at the time or if that was the method he preferred, but it certainly seems more convenient for both parties.

As a whole, my experience was mixed. Positively, I enjoyed being at the fair with my classmates, discussing our futures and panicking about them in solidarity. It was useful to see how they presented themselves in comparison to my own presentation. Negatively, however, the fair was very crowded and very large. It also seemed like we all looked and dressed exactly alike. It made me doubt whether even the most memorable elevator speeches could be remembered in that sort of environment. In addition, most of the information I was given I had already found online when researching the organizations. I find that I also prefer corresponding with employers online or over the phone as I have a history of being profiled based on my appearance. Something else I felt would have been more helpful was if the fairs were separated by public, private, and non-profit sectors. There were a lot of business majors and a lot of for-profit, private companies at the fair that I had to wade through in order to find the non-profit organizations that I am actually interested in.

Altogether, I did not have the most positive experience at the fair, but I believe there are some changes I can make to improve my experience at the next fair I attend. For one, I would attend a smaller fair with fewer people and fewer lines. I would like more time and opportunity to speak one-on-one with employers than this fair provided. I would also plan on creating a website for my resume and portfolio so that I can hand out a QR code or a link rather than a physical resume. This could be especially useful as I learn more of the Python programming language as I could showcase my coding skills in the creation of the website. Overall, it was a great learning experience and I will definitely be attending another.