Assignment: Virtual Event Report 1

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As I approach graduation in December of 2023, it is crucial for me to understand my options regarding transitioning from academia to a career. With this in mind, I have spent a great deal of time browsing my options through various resources such as online postings, company websites, and filtering through an array of job postings to find a position that fits me best. The most notable options I explored were through an in-person career fair at the University of South Florida's fall semester Computer Science, Information Technology, & Engineering Career Fair. This event took place on September 21st and showcased numerous available positions from a variety of industries, professions, and employers. While many of the employers that attended the event were seeking non-software engineering candidates, there were still many other employers looking for software/web developers which is the field I plan on entering.

One thing that I noticed while attending the event that I have also noticed in online job postings for entry level software development positions is that there are a large pool of highly qualified candidates entering the field and a relatively small number of employers that are currently looking to fill those positions. The booths at the event that were seeking software developers were significantly busier than any other booths which resembles the high number of applicants for online software development postings. I believe this is a testament to the current state of the industry and the general oversaturation of entry level candidates in the field. While the abundance of learning resources that exist online and through academic institutions has many positives and are an overall positive force, the ease of access to information has created a new, wide-reaching generation of developers that outnumber the roles they hope to fill (myself included).

In general, most of the recruiters had similar pitches to tell candidates about the company and what they are looking for. This makes sense considering how many candidates they had to

talk to and how much information they had to convey in about 1-2 minutes. Something I noticed was that the recruiters from the larger companies tended to have more rigid conversations with candidates, sticking mostly to their pitch and pointing candidates to find more information through their websites. I think something that I really appreciated when speaking with recruiters from smaller companies was the more personal approach they took when speaking with candidates like myself. While bigger companies would take my resume and give me a link to learn more, some smaller companies took the time to look over my resume in front of me and even provide critiques for my resume or ask me questions about my experience. I think that is something I would like to find in my first position and I will likely be looking more favorably on positions with smaller companies. These companies also had developers come out for the events as well as traditional recruiters, meaning I got some very useful insights from professionals in my field from these less massive organizations.

This event also reinforced a concern I had previously held regarding the state of the industry. Many of the recruiters were looking for interns (which was to be expected) but fewer of them were looking for full-time, entry-level candidates. When I spoke to a few of the recruiters about their full-time positions, they said that their positions start with a minimum of 3 to 5 years of professional experience. This is a trend among employers in the software development field that I had read about previously but had not seen firsthand so clearly. Since the industry is so oversaturated right now, I am concerned that the bar for junior level positions is being raised past a reasonable point without having previous experience. There were still other employers that did not have this prior experience as a requirement for their positions, but the fact that several of them did is something I was sure to take note of. Hopefully this will not be the standard for long as the industry corrects itself.

Overall, I found this event to be very informative and useful. While I am not sure what kinds of results it will yield, I am sure that it was an overall helpful and exciting chance to explore the options I will have in the future. I gained useful insights into what hiring teams are looking for in candidates as well as some resume advice that will help my applications stand out in the future. I also handed out my resume to several employers that I hope to hear back from as positions become available within their respective companies.