Today's topic: Interviewing. Sometimes we get so focused on the resume/cover letter part of the application process, we forget about the rest of the steps. The purpose of the resume is really just to get you an interview; make sure you're prepared to answer the interviewer’s questions and speak to why you are a strong candidate.

Depending on the company’s hiring schedule, you might not have a lot of advance notice for an interview. It’s easier to start thinking about how to answer common questions now, as opposed to last minute.

To do this week:

1. Submit at least three job applications
2. Take one of the practice interviews on StandOut
3. Familiarize yourself with the interview tips and tricks listed below

Missed a week? Previous emails can be found HERE.

Interviewing Tips and Tricks

For Every Interview

- **Practice** – Do a mock interview with your career advisor, a roommate, etc. For video interviews, practice with StandOut (available at career.oregonstate.edu).
- **Dress to impress** – Typically a little nicer/more formal than people dress at the company on a daily basis. This is industry specific, so do research or ask advice from someone in the field or a professor. A three-piece suit? Khakis?
- **Research the organization**. Be able to speak to why you are interested in the work they do and the position you applied for.
- **Practice common questions**. (Including the ones listed below!)
- **Elevator Pitch**. Prepare a one-minute answer with your degree and 2-3 points about why you are a great fit for the job. Relate what you do to their mission and needs. This can be used in the “tell me about yourself” or “why are you interested in this job” questions.
- **Rambling?** Consider rehearsing a structure for your questions, e.g., you may answer a question with: “Yes, I feel comfortable doing XX. For example…” or “I’d like to mention two things regarding my attention to detail, #1… and #2….”
- **Body Language**. Smile, sit up straight, pay attention to your tone of voice and the words you use (um...) It’s o.k. to pause and breathe. It’s o.k. to take time to think about your answer. Most people speak too quickly out of nerves. Breathe!
- **Tell Stories**. Connect your skills and experiences back to the job description. Rehearse 2-3 specific stories that show how you’ve worked well with someone or solved a problem and the good outcome you achieved. Then adapt the story to the real question.
- **Ask Them**. Prepare 2-3 of your own questions to ask the interviewers. Always. Asking questions shows genuine interest.
- **Thank You**. Send a thank you email within 24 hours; reiterate your interest and why you are a good fit.
In-Person

- Arrive promptly; aim for 10 minutes before the scheduled time. Drive the route beforehand to anticipate traffic and parking.
- Smile! Maintain good eye contact. Use a firm handshake.

Phone

- Have your resume and a cheat sheet handy with very short bullet points to jog your memory. No rustling of papers or clicking of keys!
- Find a quiet spot with good cell phone signal where you won’t be interrupted.
- Smile – it will come through in how your voice sounds on the phone.
- Even if they are calling you, have the contact name and phone number handy in case something goes wrong.

Video

- Do a test-run with your equipment beforehand. Do the camera and microphone work?
- Camera should face straight-on. (No selfie angles)
- Focus on the camera, not the video.

PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Big Picture Questions:

1. Why do you think you’d be a good fit for this position?

2. Why do you want to work at XX company?

3. What are your short-range and long-range career objectives?

Specific Qualifications Questions:

4. Tell me a little bit about your ________ experience (e.g. following procedures/running experiments/working with specific software).

5. What do you consider to be your greatest strength and weakness for this job?

Tell-a-Story Questions:

6. Tell me about a work or school accomplishment that you are particularly proud of.

7. Tell me about a time when you worked effectively with a team to accomplish a goal.
8. Tell me about a time when you faced a problem or challenge and how you resolved it.

9. Give an example of an interpersonal conflict you experienced and how you responded to it.

**Ask Them Back:**

10. Do you have any questions for me? (Have 3 ready to go)