



All Career Guide

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HOKIE CAREER FAIRS: making connections



by **Lane Burgess**
Staff Writer

Virginia Tech career fairs will begin at the end of this month, with all students welcome at each one.

Career fairs are a way for students to distribute resumes and make contacts, whether searching for full-time employment, co-ops or internships.

"It's important for students to start their job search early," said Debbie Wilson, career coordinator for the College of Science. "This can be an opportunity for them to network with corporate representatives."

The first fair, the Engineering Exposition, will take place from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sept. 23 and from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 24 in Squires Student Center and Owens Banquet Hall.

Each year approximately 200 companies take part in this fair, including General Motors, Dupont, IBM and Microsoft.

"Anyone who wants to have a successful future should participate in the Engineering Expo," said Andrew Miller,

Expo Chairperson for the Student Engineers' Council and a senior material science and engineering major.

"It's about making contacts, and this is the place to do it."

The Business Horizons career fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 25.

Put on by Pamplin College of Business, the fair has approximately 115 companies registered, including Bank of America, Capitol One, Carmax, Suncom and Pepsi Bottling Group.

Students can also participate in the Business Horizons Virtual Resume Book, where employers can read student resumes online.

Another fall career fair is Career Spectrum, held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 26 in Squires Commonwealth Ballroom.

Members of the Dean's Student Advisory Council

volunteer to help plan Career Spectrum, now in its fourth year.

Students will be able to meet and talk with hundreds of recruiters from many companies, such as Echostar Communications, the Central Intelligence Agency and Target stores.

Career Spectrum is open to all university students, but primarily focuses on arts and sciences majors.

Associate Director of Career Services Donna Cassell Ratcliffe said these career fairs are a privilege for Tech students.

"Numbers of companies attending job fairs on other campuses are

declining, but employers are still investing in career fairs at Virginia Tech," Ratcliffe said.

For more information and a complete listing of all companies attending each job fair, visit <www.career.vt.edu>.

"It's about making contacts, and this is the place to do it."

Andrew Miller
Engineering Expo chairman

Upcoming Career Fairs

Engineering Exposition

Tuesday, September 23, 2003
10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday, September 24, 2003
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Squires Student Center &
Owens Banquet Hall

Business Horizons

Thursday, September 25, 2003
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Squires Student Center

Career Spectrum

Friday, September 26, 2003
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Squires Commonwealth Ballroom

BUSINESS HORIZONS:

—thinking ahead

by Ashley Crockett
Associate Features Editor

The 21st Annual Business Horizons Career Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 25 in Squires Commonwealth Ballroom.

Sponsored by Pamplin College of Business, the fair will have approximately 120 employers represented, an increase from the 105 present last year.

According to Gary Kinder, Director of Undergraduate Career Services, 30 to 40 percent less employers visited colleges nationwide this time last year.

"Things are starting to rebound in employment, especially in college employers," Kinder said.

With so many employers coming, there will be many opportunities for students to meet a wide range of companies, said Kinder.

"There will be a good diversity of employers and the types of students they are looking for," he said.

The purpose for bringing in the businesses is to bring the career recruitment process.

"It gives employers exposure to students. Absolutely the best reason to come is to connect with the employers and make first impressions," Kinder said.

Project Leader Mark Edwards also said that the fair is a great way for students to get exposure.

"Students gain the experience they need in a professional setting," Edwards said.

"People think that the fair is limited to upperclassmen ... but it's a great way for everyone to get (his or her) foot in the door."

Mark Edwards
Business Horizon chairman

Edwards added that Business Horizons is a good stepping stone to get students in the right direction toward career placement.

"The fair is probably the best place (students) will find a job in this region," said the senior finance major.

Although the fair is sponsored by Pamplin, all students are encouraged to attend.

"The opportunity is there for everyone to take advantage of," Kinder said.

Edwards said many students are deterred from attending the fair each year because they do not realize it is open to all students.

"People think that the fair is limited to upperclassmen or students with high (grade point averages)," said Edwards.

"But it's a great way for everyone to get (his or her) foot in the door," he said.

Another way students can get involved with Business Horizons is by volunteering.

"Business Horizons is a student-run operation, completely voluntary," Kinder said.

Interested students should go by the Business Horizons office in Pamplin to sign up for a training session and shift to work, Edwards said.

"The students are competitively selected back in November and have been planning this event since spring semester," Kinder said.

"We run it like a business," Edwards said.

For more information, visit www.businesshorizons.org.



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minding your manners: DINING ETIQUETTE

► **Samantha Meyer**

Most college students have an idea of basic table manners, but when faced with a formal dinner setting, many students may be left in the dark.

Most restaurants are too casual to require or encourage such skills, especially those in a typical college community.

For some, the opportunities to experience fine dining may fall few and far between. It's important for students to learn the basics of preparing for formal dining interviews.

The idea of dining with a future employer may have never crossed the minds of those who are about to enter the work force. However, fine dining can be a critical part of the interviewing process.

How one copes with this situation can determine his or her possible position within a company. A well-adapted response to this opportunity will leave a lasting impression with the employer.

In order to prepare for this situation, it is necessary to remember a few critical points.

First impressions are everything, so proper attire is always highly recommended. Gentlemen can't go wrong with a full suit and tie. If the employer is dressed a little more casually, do not feel out of place.

It is typical for an interviewee to be dressed nicer than the representative conducting the interview. Only remove a dress coat if the employer has done so, but do so discretionally. Says who?

Never assume too comfortable a setting.

For the ladies, pant and skirt

suits are ideal. Avoid heavy makeup, flashy jewelry and strong perfume.

It is also suggested the hair be worn back. When worn down, most females tend to comb through or fidget with it. Not only is this distracting, but it may cause a fly-away to land on the table, or even worse, on a plate. A hair in a meal can be an uncomfortable situation for anyone at the table.

Another important reminder: leave large bags or purses at home. A bag under the table may be kicked, and one to the side of the table may become a tricky obstacle for other guests or servers.

Once past the initial greeting, the rest can be an entirely downhill battle. Napkins always go in the lap, be it immediately after seating or prior to eating the first course. This is a small act of din-

ing etiquette that if overlooked, will exude poor knowledge of proper manners. When removing oneself from the table at any point during the meal, the napkin should be folded and placed either in or on the arm of the seat. It is rude to leave a dirty napkin lying on the table for others to see.

If faced with multiple sets of silverware, dinnerware or drinking glasses, just remember the table is set up with convenience in mind. Obviously, the small fork above your plate is not for eating steak. Nor is the large soup spoon for stirring sugar into iced tea.

A simple tip is to watch people around you, and let them make the first move.

The silverware will also be used in proper order, as the meal progresses. A rule of thumb is to start off with the outer utensils and gradually use the utensils closer to the plate.

The largest glass to the right is for water, since it will be served throughout every course. The mouth should always be gently wiped free of crumbs prior to sipping any beverage. No one wants to see food particles floating in anyone's glass.

Also, when tipping the glass into your mouth, it is best to keep your eyes focused on the glass instead of the person across from you. It is much easier to spill when looking across the table.

Most formal restaurants have a limited selection of meals, since they might consist of three to twelve courses. If the restaurant is less formal with

more options, a always remember food choice is absolutely critical in expressing proper etiquette.

Finger foods should be avoided at all costs. Awkward foods, such as ribs, wings or spaghetti should never be ordered either. It is best to stick with something familiar and easy to eat.

Senior marketing major Taryn Shannon attended a dining etiquette course with Don Rieley's marketing skills class in the fall of 2002.

She advises students to "order simple entrees. Try not to make any changes to the menu items. Too many specific requests may portray a bad image to the employer. Also, if at all possible, allow them to order first. This will give you an idea of what type of food to order."

If multiple courses are served, remember to eat at a moderate pace, so as not to drag behind the others at the table.

When it comes to conversation, it is important to remain



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See **ETIQUETTE**, page 8

— students widening their focus: CAREER SERVICES

by Megan Rowe
Staff Writer

The school year is just starting, but it's not too soon for seniors to be thinking about where they'll be working after graduation and what kind of job market they're facing.

According to Career Services Assistant Director Claire Childress, there is the most demand for students in technical fields, such as engineering.

"Going to work for a consulting firm has been popular in the past. However, in the past few years, with the way the economy has changed, it's kind of gone down a bit," Childress said.

Based on information from the career services website, the United States Air Force hired the second-highest number of 2002 Tech bachelor's degree graduates.

U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant Craig Freier said the Air Force mostly hired students with degrees in engineering, math, physics and chemistry, although some students with non-technical degrees were hired.

"We have a lot of retirees at Tech, and they've been very successful in recruiting for us," said Freier. "We also do a lot of recruiting in the medical fields."

There are other opportunities available for students majoring in non-technical fields.

Eighty-three percent of employed 2002 graduates reported their jobs were related to their career interests.

"If people are willing to not be really narrow in their focus about what kind of position they're going to go after, I think there's a job out there," said Childress.

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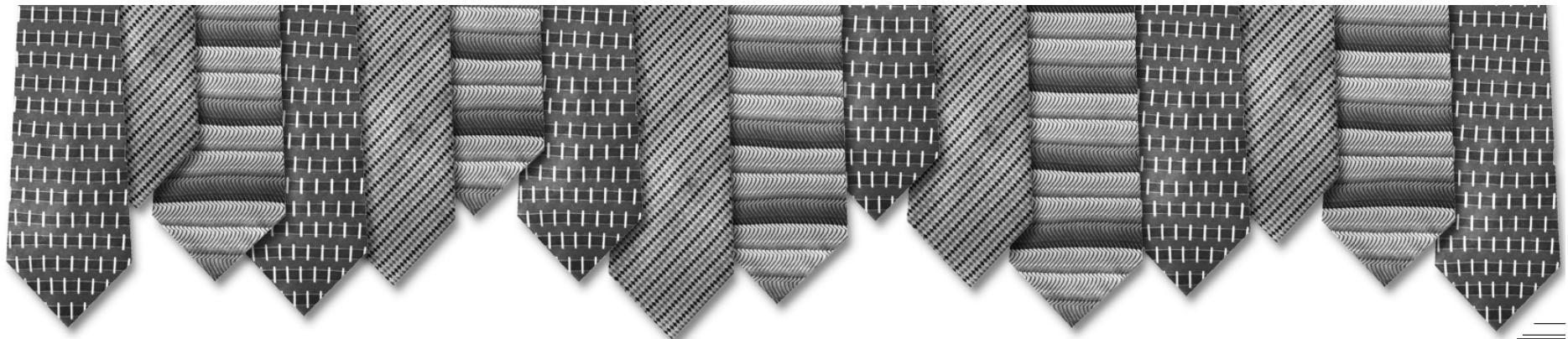
Larger sales territories
Area Sales Managers
Product Managers
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Qualifications

Consideration will be given to candidates who have the following minimum qualifications:

- BA or BS (preferably in a business related field.)
- Excellent time management, organization and communication skills
- A desire to travel and/or relocate
- Must have a valid driver's license

Visit our booth at the upcoming VA Tech Business Horizons fall career fair, Thursday, September 25, 2003



— how to — INTERVIEW

Alison Cordell

Whether you may be graduating soon, in several years, or might get an internship in the next semester or so, you will have to sit through an interview. This part of the hiring process is one of the most important steps in getting the job or internship you want. The interview is your chance to leave a lasting impression on a potential employer so they will not forget you when they place new employees.

First, you need to prepare for the interview. An employer is not going to want to hire you if you know nothing about the company or what it does. Do some research about the organization

online, ask them to send you some pamphlets, or ask current employees about the business. Write down some questions you still have about the company to ask during the interview that was not answered from your own research. Virginia Tech's Career Services office says you should, "Always prepare questions to ask. Having no questions prepared sends the message that you have no independent thought process." Simply asking questions can show your interest

in the job.
Asking questions and interacting with the interviewer can help you make a good impression.

"Eagerness is sometimes more important than ability."

John Warner

Tech communications instructor

of the process, that "Eagerness is sometimes more important than ability." He said when people asked him questions about the company, he felt they seemed eager about the job and would be looked at closer than someone with a good amount of experience but lack of interest in the job.

Another important component of the interview is your clothes. "Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously and understands the nature of the industry in which you are trying to become employed," states the Career Services website. Because your attire makes such a big statement about you, you should always dress professionally and like those who already work in the company dress. John Warner suggests "scoping out the company beforehand to see how the employees dress." Most importantly, you want to make sure you look like you could work for them at the interview.

For the actual interview, there are many things you should remember to do. Career Services has an extensive list of do's and

don'ts on their website, but here are a few. First, make sure you arrive on time or, even better, early. Add extra time to get there to allow for unexpected traffic or other inconveniences. Treat all people you encounter in the office with courtesy, especially your interviewer. No one will want to work with someone who is rude or disrespectful. Stay interested in the interview, answer questions honestly and use specific examples whenever possible. Maintain a positive attitude so that you will seem like someone the interviewer would like to work with in the future.

There are also things you should avoid during the interview. Don't forget to turn off your cell phone. Also, avoid chewing gum or smelling like smoke. It is not good to seem only interested in a company's benefits, the salary, or geographic location. If these topics are all you talk about, the interviewer probably will not think you are interested in the company or the job. Finally, don't act desperate to get the job. This could make the interviewer think you are not wanted elsewhere.

The final step in the process is to write your interviewer a thank-you letter for taking the time to see you. This letter shows you respect the company and are interested in hearing from them again soon. Also, the letter gives you a chance to tell the company anything you forgot to tell them during the interview. For a guideline on how to set up this letter, check out Career Service's website.

After taking all of these factors into consideration, you are on your way to a successful interview. Be yourself, have fun, and make an impression that your interviewer will not be able to forget.

Alison Cordell is a staff writer for the Collegiate Times.

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ENGINEERING EXPO:

—a thousand jobs up for grabs

by Brandon Morgan
Associate Features Editor

Engineering students will have the opportunity to increase their chances of landing a job or internship later this month at the Engineering Exposition.

With almost 200 companies at the Expo and an average of five jobs per company, you're looking at about 1000 jobs available, said Andrew Miller, Expo chair and a senior material science and engineering major.

Sponsored by the Student Engineers' Council, Virginia Tech's annual Engineering Expo will take place in Squires Student Center and Owens Banquet Hall on Sept. 23 and 24, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., respectively.

The Expo, one of the largest career fairs on campus, gives students opportunities to get a job or internship.

"I think it's real beneficial," Miller said. "These companies come with the intent to hire people."

The companies at the Expo are not just looking to hire college graduates, but to talk to undergraduate students as well.

"It definitely gives a wide genre of engineering opportunities from about every kind of engineering . . . it's basically the best place to find a job upon graduation because so many companies participate," said Brad Covner, a senior engineering major.

Miller especially encourages freshmen and sophomores to attend the Expo.

"Companies like to see that initiative and it does nothing but help you professionally to come," he said.

Meeting and speaking with potential employers provides

good professional experience — even if you aren't asked for an interview or offered a job.

"I think it's a great way for engineering students to meet prospective employers, get a good idea of what kinds of jobs are out there for their particular type of engineering and to get a new potato chip clip to keep your chips fresh," said Paul Ferlis, a senior mining and minerals engineering major.

Companies will often take resumes and add them to their database. Students can increase their chances of building a relationship with a company by just getting their name out there and exposing themselves to more people.

The Expo not only provides valuable opportunities for students, but for the College of Engineering itself.

"Some of the companies sponsor the Student Engineers' Council, which is closely tied with the College of Engineering," Miller said. "It maintains industry relations."

Information about companies scheduled for the Expo is posted on the Student Engineers' Council website at www.sec.vt.edu. The list also includes hiring preferences. Students can find out which companies are looking for what type of engineering majors and whether there are full-time or internship positions available.

"It gives the students an opportunity to see the various types of companies and an exposure to interviewing," said Jenny Mason, a senior mechanical engineering major. "They all offer you something different because they usually develop different things."

The Expo is open to the entire university, but the companies there are primarily interested in engineering majors.

Business Horizons Career Fair 2003

Is Just  Around the Corner

BH Career Fair To Do List

Mark your calendars

- Thursday, September 25th

Get your resume ready

- post copy on career services
- attend resume workshop
- print plenty of copies

Know which employers are attending

- get a company profile book in Pamplin 1046
- go to *Business Horizons website* to search companies by your major

Thursday- September 25th

10AM – 4PM

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Etiquette:
Gratuity increases opportunity

Continued from page 4

neutral. Refrain from talking about yourself. The employer will ask what he or she wants to know. Also, steer clear of touchy or controversial subjects.

Virginia Tech alum Susan Bartko recommends "researching the company ahead of time."

"It's a good idea to look up any current events that may be going on with the corporation. Be able to explain your previous work experiences thoroughly, since they'll probably bring these up in conversation."

Bartko recently attended an interview dinner with an admissions advisor from Cambridge University in England.

"I was so nervous about what we'd talk about, but knowing a lot about the University and its programs really helped out," she said. "I was able to hold extensive and interesting conversations with the advisor, who ended up accepting me into the University's graduate program."

When wrapping up the interview, always seem grateful for the opportunity. It is acceptable to offer to pay, although most companies will cover these expenses.

In a case where the company is paying, you may offer to leave the gratuity. If so, leave a reasonable amount, anywhere from 15-25 percent. Too little will look unappreciative, but too much will look either wasteful or may prove you are trying too hard to impress the other(s) at the table.

Solid business relationships can be built and nurtured through the art of mastering table etiquette and simple social graces.

Samantha Meyer is a staff writer for the Collegiate Times.