Okay so, welcome to our interviewing workshop here in the Chico State Career Center. Thank you for coming. We're going to have a fairly informal, sort of, venue today. So, we're just going to ask questions as we go along or make comments. It just makes the presentation richer and more informative when we have input. So, feel free to do that.
A little bit about what we're going to talk about today; I'm going to give you a little bit of an introduction, basics about interviewing. We're going to talk about researching. We're going to talk about, you know, in general what qualities and skills employers look for in a new employee. We're going to go over some common interview questions, what you should bring to the interview, what you should wear to the interview, how to make a good first impression. You've probably heard how important a good impression is, a good first impression. So, we're going to talk about that. We're going to talk about questions to ask during the interview, how to follow up, and then, once you get to that job offer stage, how you evaluate different offers, things to consider, and how to report them to our office.
So, when starting with our introductions, a couple of premises I'd like to present, the students often, sort of confuse, or, I find that this perspective is helpful. And one is that it's important to remember that the company is interviewing you, but, you are also interviewing the company. Some students have the perception that, you know, if you go to the interview that means you want the job. It means you're interested in the job. And, the best way to find out if a job is good for you is a good fit, is to go through an interview process because you meet people whose values you might share, you learn a lot about the culture of an organization. So, just remember that it's kind of a shopping experience for you as well. The more you interview, the more offers you'll have. And this seems pretty basic. But, time and time again, as advisors in the career center, we meet with students that come in and they say, well, I'm really interested in this one key company. I'm going for this company And sometimes for whatever reason the fit isn't there Either they don't think you're a fit for their company or you don't, there's something you find out about the organization that isn't right for you. And then, at the end of the semester, we don't have any offers. So, our advice is, the more interviewing you do, it's just going to mean more offers in the end. And, the best case scenario is to have multiple offers to choose from. Students, sometimes when I'm working with students, I'll encourage them, you know, oh why don't you just give this company a try. Maybe they're hesitant for some reason. They sometimes, I think, accuse me of trying to convince them to do something that isn't up to their standard or is, you know, something like that. And, my goal is, I want you to be a choosy as possible. And, I want you to have all the choices available to you. So, I feel that, by having choices at the end, you're actually going to be able to be choosier about your job. Third one down; there's no such thing as a perfect interview performance. Interviewers are looking for an overall performance. Probably, you're going to botch one or two questions. Or, you're going to come out of that interview and go oh. Why didn't I say this? Why didn't I say that? That, no one ever comes out of an interview and says yep I pretty much nailed every question; perfect performance. So, don't beat yourself up over one question that maybe wasn't perfect. They're going for the overall performance in the interview. And then, above all else, we want to have a positive attitude. Being a positive person is the number one thing that is important to convey in the interview. It's the number one thing that employers appreciate. So, we want to put a positive spin on every question that we answer. And, we'll talk more about that as we go through the interview questions. Any questions on this?
What's the first step to preparing for an interview? Researching the company, absolutely. You're going to research the organization and the job, if you know of the job. Sometimes we're interviewing with an organization just because we're interested in that organization and maybe we really don't know, specifically, what the job title is. But, there's several places you can get that information; obviously the company website. You can look at news articles that are often housed on that website, information sessions. Information sessions are talks that employers give here on campus about their organization; usually the night before their on campus interview. Former or current employees are often sources of information because they're going to be able to give you the bottom line as to the culture, you know, how to perform with the interviewer, what's great about the organization, what's not so great, as well as just others who know the organization. Maybe you know someone who's a customer of the company or someone who volunteers for the organization if it's a nonprofit; that type of thing. So, make sure you do your networking in order to get information about the company. What types of things should you know as you're doing this research? What kind of things do you want to find out?
We want to know what type of organization is it. Is it a nonprofit organization? Is it a for-profit organization, products or services that they provide, the overall mission statement, qualities the organization looks for in an employee. Usually you can find that pretty readily. The organization will talk about values and what they, what's important to them in their work. Locations; some organizations are going to have one location, maybe Chico. Some are going to have, maybe, locations throughout the state. Some are going to have nationwide locations or worldwide locations. The reason, one of the reasons it's important to know that is one; it gives you information for you to decide if you want to work there. And two; a lot of times the topic of location will come up in the interview and they'll say, where would you like to work, what area are you interested in. If you say San Diego and they don't have a location in San Diego, it kind of goes downhill from there. So, be aware of, kind of, what the options are. We can talk more about later, keeping your options open in regards to location. The basic job description, if you have it, what you would be doing on the job if you're apply to a specific position; now, I want to remind you that you don't have to know how to do that job in order to be hired because all companies train. So, don't be, shy away from the job description if there's something on there that you're thinking I'm not sure how to do that, I've never done that. The qualifications, you want to know what they're looking for, okay, what type of degree. I always like to advice students to really pay, when they're looking at job announcements, to really pay close attention to what they say is preferred versus required because preferred just means it would be icing on the cake, something like being bilingual or maybe knowing certain software. Don't shy away from applying for jobs where you don't meet the preferred. Another way to help us prepare and in doing research is just to gain an understanding of what all employers look for across all disciplines. Okay, there are surveys; many of them out there that tell us that have surveyed employers that say what do you look for in an employee. What do you think, across all types of organizations and all industries, what do you think employers look for? What are some qualities and skills? I'm going to write a few of them up here. Okay, being outgoing. I think that's probably on my list. Interpersonal, I'm going to add communication. And, there's a slew of other ones. But, that'll give us a start. Professionalism, which could be, you know, thought as of integrity or other things like that.
This is from the National Association of Colleges and Employers. This is our professional association as career centered advisors. And, in this association we also have employers, employers. So, it's our chance to network with them. This is the survey of employers, the most recent one in 2009. And they've rated specific qualities and skills. Now, this is all employers across the country. They're saying five being extremely important, one being not important. Communication skills tops the list, okay, which we have up there; a strong work ethic, initiative, interpersonal skills, which one of you mentioned, problem solving, teamwork, and so on. You can see the list. You notice computer skills, you know, is here. Obviously that's going to be more important for some fields than others. So, this is a generalization. But, I think, when we're doing our research, if we're preparing to answer interview questions, we can guess that, if we're able to prove, if we're able to validate that we have good communication skills and we work hard, you know, strong work ethic and we have initiative, we're going to put ourselves ahead just by that very fact because we know that all organizations look for that. So, in addition to researching the specific organization we're interviewing for and what's important to them, keep in mind this list of what's important to all organizations.

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5= extremely important, 4=very important, 3=somewhat important, 2=not very important, 1= not important

National Association of Colleges and Employers (Annual Survey 2009)
Okay, now I'm going to start a practice and sort of brainstorm some common interview questions. This is a list that I came up with, okay. And, we can certainly add to that list if you all want to throw out questions you've had that are, you've found difficult in the past. In my nine years working here with students, prior to that I worked in the corporate environment doing recruiting for corporations as a corporate recruiter, so, I've had a lot of experience both interviewing as an interviewer and on this side advising students. These are kind of, the ones that I found that students have, students and job applicants in general have the most problem with. They sometimes are stumped by these. What do you guys think about this list? Are there any on here that you faced as an interviewee that were challenging? Greatest weakness, alright, we'll go over that one for sure. How about the first one, tell me about yourself? What do you think about that one? What's the challenge with that question? It's broad, right, you don't know where to start, where to stop, right. Do you want to know the date and time that I was born and what hospital? You know, that kind of thing. In general, we want to keep in mind this list, which, this pretty much, you know, not the exact words but pretty much summarized that list that we saw before. So, we want to think, say things about ourselves that are going to sell us to the employer, things they care about knowing. We don't want them going so what after we've said something. So, should we talk about where we grew up and our upbringing? Who says yes that would be important? One person. Who says no we wouldn't want to bring up where we grew up? Who says it depends? Because, a lot of people will usually say, oh know; never bring up your childhood. But, there might be things about your childhood that help us convey these things like work ethic, which isn't up there, but it was on the other list, okay. I had a student that grew up in an agricultural setting. And, they liked to bring up that they grew up on a ranch because they talk, they weave that into work ethic. And they say, well, you know, I grew up in an agricultural setting and that really established my work ethic early in life. You know, I was up at 6am milking the cows every day and had chores every summer. And that stayed with me, my work ethic, my initiative. And, those are the kind of, if I'm hired by your organization, those are the kind of qualities I'm going to ring to you, to your company.
I've had a student talk about growing up in the military and that he was faced with moving to a new location every couple of years and what that meant to him; that it taught him to be resourceful and that he had to be outgoing and develop exceptional interpersonal skills because he was faced with gaining a new social circle every time his family moved and what that meant for him and how that shaped him as a person. So, those are really powerful types of examples. Throughout the interview process, we always want to try to validate. And we're going to get into that more when we talk about behavioral interviewing. But, we always want to try to validate everything we're saying about ourselves with an example, if we can, or something concrete. So, to just say I am resourceful or I'm outgoing is an okay answer, but to give a reason why is really believable. So, someone brought up the weakness question. This is the standard one that people have problems with. I don't know about you guys, but, I have a lot of weaknesses. And, one of the things we know that's important at an interview is to always tell the truth. We don't fabricate things because it will always come back to haunt us. We'll get placed in a position that isn't a right, a good thing for us or something like that. So, we don't want to try to, you know, sort of play the interview to exactly what they want to hear if it's not true to us. So, what I think about the weakness question is we always want to try to say something that's true that the employer can see first hand, you know isn't that bad that they can live with, sort of, and that, we are taking strides to improve upon that weakness, okay. So, let me give you an example because I have a couple good examples over the years that I've worked with and I think these are really exceptional. The first one was a student of mine who said she felt that her communication skills. You might think, oh my gosh, communication skills, that's the number one thing on the list. Why would anyone ever say that? But, what she was referring to was her pronunciation. She had a pretty thick accent. She'd only lived in the United States for about five or six years prior to coming to school here. And, she was a little bit hard to understand. And, there were definitely some words that she pronounced in a different fashion. First off, as the employer, when she's answering at an interview I can say, I see what you're saying but I can live with that. It's not that bad. It's transparent. She went on to say let me tell you how I work with my language difficulties in learning, you know, but let me tell you how I work on learning English.
I go to tutoring once a week. I only listen to, watch movies in English, okay, and read in English for pleasure. I, whenever we're out and about, my friends and I, they, I coach them to correct me whenever I pronounce something wrong. I want them to tell me right then and there. And then, she gave me an example of friends who sometimes they say the instead of the because it's very real. I'm seeing what she's talking about. And then, she turns around and says, and actually, although sometimes I believe I'm hard to understand, it think the strides that I have taken to learn English are exceptional and I think it shows my initiative and that I go after my goals; all the steps that I'm taking to improve and the fact that I've only lived in this country for six years. I think I'm doing pretty well. So, by the end of that weakness question, the employer's going I just asked the weakness question so that's kind of what you're striving for; something really unique. And we all are different, so you can work with us on something about yourself that you want to, you know, portray in an interview. Another student used, he looked young. He had braces, little boy hair cut, looked like he was about 16. And, he was going for a management position. And, he was concerned about his appearance that he didn't look managerial enough. So, that was his weakness that he used. He said you know I'm concerned, at times, that I don't look authoritative. And then, he gave an example of working at Casco in the meat department. He managed the meat department. And, he gave an example of how he deals with that and he talked about customers coming up and saying they need help with something. And, at first, they don't believe him because he looks so young. And, he talked about, you know, I use very, I'm a good, great leader, I use direct eye contact, I use very confident communication skills, I have excellent customer service skills. And, he said, and pretty soon, through my communication, they realize I have the ability to help them, you know. And then, again, to make it an A plus answer he can say and those are the types of qualities I plan to bring to your organization; that same leadership and communication ability. What do we say if we left our last job because it was a terrible job and we didn't get along with our supervisor and they ask us why did you leave your last job? And, remember we're telling the truth, right, but we also want to remember that thing I showed you in the slide about being positive. So, would we go on and on about how terrible our boss was? No. Bosses, all belong to, what I call the boss club. I was a boss before.
And, it's a really hard job being a manager. And I think you're, if an employee or perspective employee gives that kind of answer immediately the little red flag goes up of trouble maker, trouble maker, you know, they don't get along with people. It might, actually, be the truth. But, what I like as an answer for that is to talk about how the job just wasn't the right fit for you. You don't need to go on detail by detail. You might just say you know what, that organization just wasn't the right fit for me and talk about some things that weren't ideal. You know, it didn't really have enough people contact or, you know, I prefer to work in a busy environment or whatever it might be. But then, what I'd advise you to is to go immediately into the positive things about that organization and what you learned. So, you might say one or two quick little things of why it wasn't right and actually that, I guess, you know, just saying it wasn't the right fit for you is basically the answer to the boss with me, you know, because it's the truth. It wasn't the right fit, you know, because we always want to tell the truth. So, you say a few other things of what you were looking for in the new job, more people contact or whatever. And then, say something like, you know, but I learned a lot. I learned about customer service. I learned how to be analytical. I had to work on reports and I really honed those skills, whatever it might be, some, because you know what, every job, we can gain something positive from it. I don't care what experience it is. Maybe it was yard work, working in 110 degree weather. And you say you know what, I learned that I'm the type of person that can get up early and work in really demanding work conditions and I'm really thankful for that. So, it's say the answer in sort of vague terms, that it wasn't the right fit or some things what weren't exactly right. And then, move on to the positives of what you learned from it and what you hope to gain in the new position. So, therefore I'm hoping to now move on to a position where I can be interacting with people more. Makes sense? Because, you always want to tell the truth; but you just don't want to go on and on about negative things. What geographic location will you prefer? A lot of the organizations that, like, interview here on campus or just organizations in general have multiple locations. And, it's an important thing for that organization for many organizations that have multiple locations; that, they're able to higher someone that's a little bit flexible to where they would live. Is there anybody in this room who absolutely must have a certain location after graduation?
Raise your hand if there's anybody. No. Usually we have a couple. Is there anybody in this room who has sort of a preferred, like a strongly preferred? What's the strongly preferred?

**Student:** Tahoe.

**Professor:** Tahoe, excellent. What's another one?

**Student:** I'd just say a city.

**Professor:** A city, so, like okay great. What I advise, when talking about geographic location, is, assuming we know they have a location in Tahoe, this organization, they do, great, is, we might say something like, you know, I'm flexible and open. And, I'm leaning toward the Tahoe area, a large city, but I'm flexible and open for the right opportunity. Because, at the end of the day, through the interview process, you might learn something about that organization that is so desirable to you that you're willing to live somewhere else than Tahoe or a big city; especially for a short time if you might be able to move later on with the organization to be transferred. So, try as much as possible to be as flexible and open and to communicate that. If he just says Tahoe, then, they're going to probably write down Tahoe. And, if that isn't available they might say, you know, we're willing to go with a candidate that's more flexible to moving. So, I'm flexible and open and right now I'm leaning toward this but I would consider other, you know a lot of locations. Any questions? Do you have a question? No. Is this helpful for you all?

**Student:** [Inaudible].
**Practice Common Interview Questions**

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in our company/job?
- Why should we hire you?
- What is your greatest strength/weakness?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What geographic location do your prefer?
- Tell me about a time when...

**Professor:** Well, it's going to come back to our research that we did. Sorry, oh okay sorry. So, let's repeat the question. How should we answer why should we hire you? It's going to depend on the research and what they look for in an organization. And, when in doubt, we know we can focus on the top things that we looked at the slide that we looked at before, what all organizations look for, okay. We're going to tell the truth. So, we're going to pick out those things that match. We don't want to fabricate anything because then, we're going to go get a job that isn't right for us, okay. So, if we're not a people oriented person, we're not going to say I'm so people oriented, because, then we're not going to be happy in the job, or vice versa, okay. If we're very, if we're not very analytical and we're, and don't like to work alone and we know that's what the job requires, we're not just going to fabricate something. I would pick out a couple of things. You know, why should you hire me? Because, I have a really strong work ethic, if that's what's important to them and it is to most organizations if that's true for you. You might say, and again, I have a strong work ethic and then we're going to validate it. As I mentioned in our, when we first started talking, I grew up in an agricultural environment. So, I've had a strong work ethic for a long time. It's really engrained in me and also, as you can see in my resume, and you might have a copy of your resume right there, I've had quite a huge, and then you, maybe, show it to them, you say I've had quite a few jobs in college. This one in particular working at the Bear as a customer server, you might say, this one I was really, you know, was able to demonstrate my work ethic because I always had to be called at the last minute to cover for others students. And, I would really love the opportunity for you to talk to that supervisor. He's on my reference list. I'd really like that's that validation piece. Or, maybe you have a letter of recommendation there that you show. So, it's going to depend. You don't want to go on and on because maybe there's multiple things. Maybe you pick one or two talking points, and, obviously, this question comes in a variety of fashions. Why should we hire you? What's your greatest strength; that type of thing? This tell me about yourself one, going back to that one, truly is an icebreaker. It truly would be awkward to sit down in an interview setting and for them to say first thing what's your greatest strength. I mean, that would just be not a natural human to human conversation. That's the purpose of the tell me about yourself.
A lot of times other sort of icebreaker questions are what do you know about our organization. And, that's where your research comes in. What do you know, why are you interested in working for us? I want to let you know that you're not required to regurgitate every fact and figure that you saw on the website. What do you know about our organization? Pick out a couple of things that are important to you. What would be something that would be important to someone in this room in an organization that would make them want to work there? What would be an example?

**Student:** I have an interview tomorrow. They've got five awards for you know. Cooperate. So it was a really big eye opener when I talked to them.

**Professor:** That's really all she needs to know. She doesn't need to know the dates, the names of the awards. Don't stress yourself out with having to memorize. Just saying they, you know, I was just really pleased by the fact that you received five awards for humanity. Is it a for profit organization?

**Student:** I don't know.

**Professor:** You don't know. So that would be something to find out. You know, and that's really important to me, so I was really intrigued by that. I know, you know, maybe it might be something I notice you have a sustainability initiative, all kinds of things to do these days. You know what I think we'll do, I'll work with you right now, but maybe at the end of the term we'll actually get into a website and we'll find it. I usually do that at this point in the talk. But, I usually run over. But, at the end we'll do that either on the screen or together. We'll go to a website and look at, for a few key words. Usually, it's pretty evident because companies usually, in their career section or on their homepage, immediately start talking about values.
Certainly, they usually talk about, like, especially again in a career section, how many employees do you have, do they have, which again, we don't need to memorize that they have 20,000 employees. We just need to know they're large and they have multiple locations, you know. Again, what product or service they provide, if you can't gain that from the website or other info, ask us. Sometimes companies say things like we provide business solutions. What the heck is that; business solutions? So, if it's not readily available and you don't understand it, come and ask us because we can help you weave through that. Is that helpful? You know, large company, lots of opportunity, are they competitive? Are they a nonprofit? What kind of population do they serve? How long have they been in business? And what you want to say for, if the question is truly why do you want to work with us tell real reasons like yours real reasons of why you want to work there. We're trying to establish a relationship here. And, our goal is for there to be a fit. In Human Resources, we always talk a lot about a fit in recruiting and that some people might be an outstanding job candidate, an outstanding individual, but, for some reason, they're not going to fit with our organization and what we stand for. So, that's what we're looking for, for you too, is, we want you to be really true to yourselves because, ultimately, at the end of the day, we want you to have offers from several organizations that could be a fit for you. And that will usually translate to better job satisfaction. So, we need to move on. The last question here that I'm going to talk to you about is, many times employers will say tell me about a time when, or, give me an example of a time. Has anyone had a question like that? This is different from when an employer paints a scenario and says let me give you a scenario of you're standing at the customer service counter, three customers come in, your boss is calling, the fire alarm goes off. What would you do? That's situational and you can't prepare for that question. That's a situational scenario. What we're talking about, does anyone have that, like that one I just described? What I'm talking about is when they are saying tell me about a time when, say, you went the extra mile to help a customer. Tell me about a time when you worked as a team to achieve a common goal. Usually, those questions are going to be things that are important to that organization; working in teams, or being customer service oriented. They come in, many of these questions come in many shapes and sizes.
Strategic Interview Techniques

Behavioral Interviewing

- Based on the premise that the best way to predict future on-the-job behavior is to review past behavior in similar situations.
- Questions often start with, “tell me about a time when...”
- Think of examples of your past accomplishments to practice before the interview.

So, what this is, it's called behavioral interviewing. And, it's based on the premise that, the best way to predict future on the job behavior is to review past behavior in similar situations. Employers realized, about 20 or 30 years ago, that sharp interviewers and smart people could just come up with a list of qualities that they knew the employer was looking for and spew them out in the interview. What are your greatest qualities? Oh, I'm a really hard worker and I learn really fast I'm good working people. But, if the person is required to talk about a situation in which they displayed those qualities in the past, it's going to be harder to come up with, okay. So, that's why employers started asking questions like this. They often start with, as I said before, tell me about a time when, give me an example of, okay, that's. And, what you want to do is think of examples of your past accomplishments to practice before the interview. I recommend you come up with like three to five general examples. And, we're going to talk about how, what types of topics you might think about to practice.
Answering Behavioral Questions: STAR Method

- **Situation**: describe the situation
- **Task**: explain your task
- **Action**: describe your actions
- **Result**: tell the result(s) you achieved

When you answer a behavioral interviewing question, we call it the STAR Method, and it stands for Situation, Task, Action, Result. So, if the employer said give me an example of when you went the extra mile to help a customer, you might say something like this. Well, as you can see on my resume, I worked in the Macy's show department in Roseville last summer. Okay, so, you're kind of leading into the situation. And, we had a customer that came in that needed a certain size and style of shoe that we didn't have available to her, a certain color. It was for her daughter's wedding which was about a week. And, she was very stressed about the fact that we didn't have the shoe for her. So, what did, we're really busy at he Macy's shoe department. But, what did was, on my break, I called all the Macy's in Northern California and I located her shoe for her and I had it shipped to her house. She was thrilled. She called to thank me. Okay, we're on to actions now, what we did, and now we're actually onto results. She called to thank me. After her daughter's wedding, she came in and she brought a letter for my supervisor saying that she was a customer for life and that I'd gone the extra mile for her, etcetera, okay. And then, you can summarize and say, and this is the same type of customer service spirit I plan to bring to your organization if you'll hire me. So, do you see how you walk through Situation, Task, Action, and Result? And, if you have, you want to remember an easy way to relay that, you can even say the situation was, the task I was faced with was this, the action I took was this, and, the result was this, if it helps you stay organized. So, you might be saying to yourself well, how, we can't practice the scenario for every single question they can ask, right. They can ask about going the extra mile to help a customer. They could ask us about the time we worked with the team, right.
I mean there's an unlimited number of types of scenarios that they want to hear about. But, what I want to present to you is that, there, in that example I just gave you, there are many questions that that could fulfill. Could it fulfill give me an example of when you went the extra mile to help a customer? Absolutely. Could it fulfill describe the time you made a sacrifice in order to reach a goal? Yeah, she called on her break, remember how busy she was. How about the time you worked with a team that resulted in a positive outcome? Does that work? She stressed the fact that she called all the team members in Northern California. Oh I forgot my little bullet. Give me an example of when you overcame a problem with a coworker or boss and how you handled it. Not so much. But, three out of four is pretty good. Don't you think? That, if you had that scenario practiced, you would just emphasize something different about it depending on the question that was asked.
So, I don't want you all to stress out about having to think of a scenario for every single possible question. If you can think of three to five, practice them using this Situation, Test, Action, Result. Some people say, and I happen to believe that, looking in a mirror really helps. Have you ever heard that; looking in a mirror and saying? Rehearsing them, then, when they ask you in the interview, you just have to be worried about which of my three to five examples is the best one and emphasize the quality of that scenario that addresses their question. I've been in a lot of interviews where people have gone through this whole thing and at the end the result wasn't positive. And, it's really a downer. You can, or even if it was so, you know, you all have school to draw from, you know, your group projects that you had. Maybe you had a difficult semester where you had 15 units and a part time job and you were involved in a club. And maybe that's a going the extra mile, being organized type of things to illustrate. You have personal situations. You want to be careful about personal situations. But, they can be utilized as scenarios. Like, you had to overcome a different, you know, a difficult problem with a person, it could be a roommate situation, you know, but again, staying away from certain topics which could be discriminatory, which can flirt, can discriminate you for, against you on. Okay so, does this seem easier now? You're going to come up with those three to five, practice saying them using this formula, okay, alright. Any questions at all, okay.
Now, we're going to move on to what we should bring to the interview. We've been practicing. We've been practicing our answers. We've been doing our research. What should we bring? What are some examples stuff we should bring, some answers.

**Student:** Copies of resume.

**Presenter:** Copies of your resume, absolutely. They may not have it handy. You've emailed it to them. Good job, first one, he said, he said, copies of resume. [Laughter] Good. Because, they might not have it, you may have emailed it to them. And you get into the interview location and they're scrambling around. And you happen to say, oh, copy right here. I'm so organized. Bring lots of copies because you might, on an onsite interview, you might actually meet with lots of different people. It's pretty common. And you would like to have a copy for all of them. Actually, if you're job searching, you should be taking copies of your resume everywhere. You never know, you might run into someone in a line at the grocery store who's hiring, give them your resume. If you have letters of recommendation, there's no reason you can't bring copies of those to the interview even if you've already submitted those prior. See, when stuff gets submitted to a company, sometimes it goes to Human Resources. And, maybe the manager who's actually interviewing you didn't really read over every little detail of your application prior to you interviewing with them. So, pretend like they kind of don't know anything yet about you. So, if I had a really good letter of recommendation, and lets say one of the things that I was trying to illustrate is that I was a great team player, okay. That would be something that all employers would be interested in, just about. Well, let's say I'm illustrating that about myself, I'm answering the question of why should we hire you or what's your greatest strength? Well, what if I said I'm a great team player and then I pulled out a letter of recommendation and I said, as you can see right here in the second paragraph, my supervisor at Lulu's Fashion Lounge talks about what a great team player I am and I brought this for you to keep. Okay, so, that's validation.

### What You Should Bring

- Copies of your resume
- Letters of recommendation (if available)
- Copies of projects or papers (if available)
- A professional notebook and paper/pen

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Not only am I saying it, this third party is saying it, okay. And, I should've written up here copies of performance reviews. If you have those that are stellar, performance reviews, if you have a copy of a performance review that are stellar, you can bring that and point things out. Sometimes we might want to talk about, we almost all do group projects here at Chico State as part of our course work and part of our curriculum. Maybe we have a really great one, its marketing plan or something. Make sure it has a good grade on the top, an A. We could bring that out as an example of something, you know, technical about the job that we've already done marketing research or that this was something we produced as a team and what that entailed and here's the positive outcome of that, okay. It's all about validation. I think it's important to bring a professional notebook, of sorts, that looks like this. It should zip up. Mine is a little bit unorganized right now. It has candy from the career fair in it. But, when I go to an interview this is all I bring, this, that's it with the resumes and stuff inside. I put my car keys in here and I leave my bag and all that because, while I like this, and I usually have a piece of Kleenex in case I need it, it's because it's, I can, you know, look really professional and I can shake hands, see. It's like my little security blanket that I can hold onto and have stuff in here but I'm not lugging around a purse that I could forget or a backpack that's going to fall off my shoulder. You want to have paper inside. You don't want to have junk falling out like I do. And a pen because you might want to jot down something during the interview, you might keep it close and at the point that they, remember, it's just a conversation with a human, okay, the point that they say something you want to jot down, you might, quickly jot something down. And, you might even say at the beginning, oh would you mind if I jotted down at the notes? They'll say okay as we talk, okay. One thing that I usually mention in the beginning that I didn't mention is, I want you to all go into the interview with the frame of reference that this person's my friend. This person's job is to bring people into their organization. This is not a gatekeeper whose job it is to keep me out. They're going to give you every benefit of the doubt because that's their job to recruit people. So, it's a really nice person that you're having a conversation with that's going to draw out positive things about you.
And, if they're not a really nice person, remember that thing I said in the first slide about you're interviewing the company, they're interviewing you, that's information for you to decide if it's the right fit. So, I just wanted to say that, you know, as you're wanting to take notes or something, I mean, that's it's not weird. It's your person that wants it, you know, we don't want notes for that you're going to be relaying on here. We're going to get to questions that you might want to ask. You could have a few pre-rehearsed questions on here. So, any questions on that, about what you should bring or anything you would like to add? What if you're having an interview between classes? Absolutely, you can bring a backpack. I'm not saying that bringing a backpack is wrong. I'm just saying that's what I typically do, like, I would maybe put it in my car or put it in a friends, with a friend or something, just, that's me. But, yeah, you're students. It's completely okay. Remember, I said you're looking for the whole performance. It's not a big deal. It's just like, and you also have to know yourself. I forget things a lot. So like, I'm the type that would leave the backpack in the interview room or I'm clumsy. See, my boss is nodding. Or, I would go to shake the hand and the desktop would go like thunk, off, and I'd go oh excuse me. So, this is all about setting yourself up to be successful. I have to bring this up because I don't know if it's on any slide. What might be in our backpack that we want to make sure is turned off before we go into the interview?

**Student:** Cell phone.

**Presenter:** It sounds silly but we had it happen last week. Great stellar student, first interview of the semester, cell phone went off. So, just, I've got to say that. So, good question. And that's a good question to bring up because I want you all to know, these are just things that I'm saying I thing really work well. But, it's not like a must, you must do this.
Next, we're on to what we should wear. So, you want, to the best of your ability, match your attire to the workplace. Forty years ago, you always wore a business suit, pretty much, to an interview which would be like this except with like black pants and maybe a dark colored shirt. You're, oh you're a good example. Can you show, can you come up here really quick so I can show a business suit. I'm sorry. See look. See how nice he looks, nice business suit, a little fashion show here, okay. We have some pictures too. This would be the men's example of a suit. So, he's probably interviewing today for a business position like sales or marketing or accounting. I'm just taking a guess, okay. If he were interviewing to work as a onsite construction manager, a person who's going onto the construction site to supervise construction workers, what do you think? Does that match the workplace? Does that means he comes in holy jeans or scruffy flannel shirt? No. usually what we say, if you want to be slightly over dressed, you want to have like one step up from what the person might wear on a given day. Maybe in the job he's going to an interview for, they actually don't wear a suit every day. They wear like a polo shirt and like Dockers or something. But, it's like you're going to an interview so you're bringing it up a notch. But, it is important to ask. Usually you can tell by the website to match the culture. People that go to interviews at Apple Computer, if they come in, in a three piece suit, that's not the Apple Computer culture, it doesn't mean you wear flip flops and cutoffs. No one's going to laugh at you going across the, in the lobby of the company saying look that person's overdressed. They know you're there for an interview. You want to be conservative. I think, it never hurts to be conservative. It never hurts to cover up tattoos. It never hurts to remove piercing, okay. It never hurts to not, if you're a woman, to not be showing too much, or a man for that matter, too much skin, you know. If you're saying to yourself, but that's me, my piercings are really important to me. That's great, just know that it might hurt your chances of getting the job, okay. But, I am all for individuality. And, if that's actually important to you then by all means, you know, don't cover the tattoos or whatever.
So, these are some examples of what not to wear. You know, these are extreme, messy, way to short of a skirt. Women should wear skirts that hit about at their knee. You know, she's like evening gown, tanning straps. This one, I'd say, would be acceptable if you were getting, interviewing, do you guys know like Clair's at the mall, it's like kind of teeny bopper girly stuff, you know. Maybe that would work for that. So, this is what not to wear.
What is appropriate for women would be this, okay. All, this would be considered like business casual, business casual. These two are more businessy, okay. What if we're interviewing for a, anybody child development in here, are going to be working like with children? Okay, if you were or the social services setting, maybe something like this would be good, because again, like if they came looking much like these women that are dressed in like a corporate fashion, it would look like, well you don't really understand that you're going to be on the floor with kids all day, okay. So, that's the kind of thing we're after.
For men, see I had to bring you up because people are saying that that guys sleeve shouldn't be showing the, guy in the suit, his jackets too short. Jackets should come, for women, I'm not sure for men, for women, the sleeve is supposed to hit, mine's a little long. It's supposed to hit between here and here. I don't know about men. I think, maybe, a little shorter. Oh, maybe you do for men. People always point and say that guy's too short. No. Is that right? But maybe that's a little too much, maybe, anyway, we don't know. Okay, good. People usually tell us, when we're giving this presentation, that that's too much shirt showing, so. Anyway so, see, so different business casual. This, this works for any setting, you know, the tie and shirt, even if it's the setting of the more casual work environment. You know, again, they know you're going to an interview. And, you can always take your jacket off. Like, for women, if you're wearing a pantsuits. Pantsuits are great because they can either be more formal or more casual. So, what's next? Let's see. Any questions on that?
Now, we're going to talk about making that good impression that good first impression, just a few little bullet points here. You want to show up about ten to fifteen minutes before your scheduled interview, not right on the nose because you go into the reception area and the receptionist's busy and they can't get to you right away and they call your interviewer and it's five or ten after. That doesn't look so good. You don't want to come a half an hour early because what does that look like? Odd, kind of stocker, weird, hanging out at our office building a little too much, over eager. I usually arrive at the location a half an hour, 45 minutes, even an hour, I know I'm crazy, before hand. But, I wait in my car because you want to plan for contingencies. You could get a flat tire on the way. You could get in a little fender bender. And remember I said that bosses kind of all belong to a little club? Well, they also all have heard the excuses of there was traffic, I got a flat tire. They really don't want to hear that excuse. They want that well prepared person that's planning in advance and that realizes this interview is important. So, just plan for contingencies. I interviewed for a job in San Francisco once and I looked for parking for an hour and a half. It was in the Christmas season. I went around and around. Finally, I just had to get out of my car and just go like this to the parking attendant. You've got to park my car I've got an interview. See you later. Do what you need to do. And, they parked it. But I knew like, I can get it, this is how critical that is. You have to be on time. You're going to be, you guys can practice your interview questions in the car, listen to music and do homework right. Be early if you're going to go in that amount time before. Be polite to everyone. There's other decision makers besides just the person you're interviewing with. When I hired people in my company that I work for, I'd always ask the receptionist how did they treat you. And, if they didn't treat that receptionist well, that was not someone I wanted on my team. Janitors, people passing by, okay, just remember that. You always want to smile, make eye contact, and have a firm handshake, so, if I'm. Practice that with friends. That was perfect, okay, we don't want to be too hard, crushing, we don't want the limp handshake. We want our materials organized. That's I demonstrated over and over my binder and how we don't want
So, if I walk across and stuff's flowing out, everything's just organized. You want to be readily available as soon as they call you to step up and go into the interview. I've seen students here in this office say, oh just a minute. And they, like, clear up their homework and stuff. We've already talked over and over about being truthful and how important that is for yourself so that you find an organization that's the right fit for you. Be careful of any bad habits. See, I'm a pen clicker. So, when I get nervous, I tend to click, this one doesn't click so well, but I tend to do this when I'm nervous. So, I know I can't have a clicking pen in an interview. Is there any women in here that are hair twirlers? If you're a hair twirler when you're in an interview you put your hair back. Okay, it's just knowing about these things about yourself. Anybody a foot bouncer? Okay, you guys are foot bouncers, so you go like this when you're nervous. I had a vice president once [inaudible] and in a sales presentation she did this and her shoe flew off across the room. So, it's just sort of these fun things about being aware of our own personal things that we do because we're going to be nervous. Everybody's nervous. I think it's weird to not be nervous in a job interview. And, when I'm interviewing someone, if they're not a little nervous, I think it's odd. So, it's okay to be nervous. We just want to control it. And, we're going to watch the interviewer's body language, as to when to kind of wrap up questions. You know, what's some body language that tells us that we need to kind of wrap up our answer?

**Student:** Nodding.

**Presenter:** Nodding, exactly, looking at their watch, not making eye contact with you, kind of looking down at their paper for the next question type thing. Jumping right back up to eye contact, does anybody have trouble with that? It's a pretty natural thing. A little thing for eye contact is, if you look right here at the person, they'll never know you're not looking at their eyes. Like, right now, I'm looking at your forehead. Can you tell? See, okay, so that's a good tip for you all because it's important as much as possible. So, we've gone through our interview. We've done a really great job of...
And now, it comes time that they're going to ask us if we have any questions. So, you want to have some prepared questions. It's not a good idea to say no I don't have any questions. You can ask things that demonstrate you've done the company research. Okay, remember, you're shopping for the job. So, you want to ask things that help you decide if you want to work there. That's one of your opportunities. Usually it's best to not ask about pay or benefits too early in the process. And, this varies from company to company from job to job. So, I can't really make a blanket statement that says never ask about pay in the first interview. Sometimes, you might be invited to an interview in Sacramento on a school day when you have a quiz or you have to work and you need to know, in general, if the pay is something worth you missing a day of school. So, you might need to ask that question at the point that you're asked to, you're invited to the interview over the phone. And, you might say something like, ooh, typically I would not ask about pay in the first conversation, however, this is going to require that I miss a day of school which I'm very willing to do for the right opportunity. Might you give me an idea as to the pay range that you're considering? (Student Question) Okay, very good question. He asked about he's interviewing for companies that are commissioned based. They offer only a commission or even if they offer a base plus commission, so, he wants to know how to address that question. It's very acceptable to say, is there a base included with that commission. It's very acceptable, a lot of times, companies will spew off, oh well, in the company that I work for, we provide, we pay 6% of gross profit. I'm like okay what is that? I've never worked for your company. I don't know what your gross profit is. I don't know what's typical. So, a way to ask that, when there's commission involved, is what does your average performer earn in the first year and what does your top performer make in the first year. And, if you're in sales, I'd say what does your top performer, in one sentence, what does your top performer make and what does your average performer make? Or again, I kind of told you I'm sort of clumsy. So, you can figure you're going to be somewhere, if you just ask average, they're going to be thinking he's average.
But, you can ask that to get an idea. They should be able to give you a figure. And, in sales, it's a little different, they really want folks to be money motivated. But, you don't want the questions to be all about what's in it for you at first. There's plenty of time for that later, okay. So, you can always ask about what's the next step in the interview process. What might be some other questions that just would be just off the top of your head? Does anybody have any ideas?

Student: [Inaudible]

Instructor: Excellent. Okay, what do you like best about working for XYZ Company? What do you like best about your job? How did you get started? Why do employees typically leave your organization when they leave? What's the reason? How would you describe the culture? You know, you can ask about training things like that. Just make sure it's not something that's the most obvious thing on the website right there that you're asking. Like, one company we work with, they have right there on the front of their career section, here's what a typical day looks like. So, if the person asks well what's a typical day, it's just obvious they didn't do their research. But, in other instances, I think asking about a typical day is a pretty good question. It's a little bit cliché. But you always ask about the next step. But, truly use it as an opportunity to ask about things you want to know. And, you know, a lot of these, you know, in interest of time we're talking about a lot of these topics pretty generally. We have, here in the career center, you know, we have drop in time from one to four you can come in any time and ask little questions, little scenarios about what's specific for you. If you're a distance student, you can call and make a phone appointment and you can chat with an advisor about any little situation that is specific to your scenario.
So, after we've asked questions, the interview is coming to a close, we're going to follow up after the interview. We recommend you write a thank you note or a business letter that thanks them or an email. I always recommend an email and then you can always follow up with like a card or a business letter. Now, a thank you card can look like this. You see how they're very businessy plain looking. They're not like flowers and teddy bears and butterflies, okay, it's very kind of sterile looking. These are decent examples. Or, you can do a business letter. But, I like an email immediately because it tells them that you're prompt. And then, I like, the best, I think the best technique is to follow up that day, mail out this or a letter saying in the letter, I already emailed you to give you my thanks but I wanted to take another opportunity to further show my appreciation. And, maybe talk about a few things that you particularly liked about the organization. I was particularly impressed with your teamwork, the teamwork that you described. I was very excited about your new products that you're launching, whatever it is. That shows them that you're interested. You're going to, if they tell you to call them a specific time to follow up, you're going to do that, okay, or if they told you they'll call you on a certain day. If they tell you you're interviewing today and they say I'll call you next Thursday and you don't hear from them, when do you call them? Friday, early in the morning, not Thursday at five, it's still Thursday. And, on that Friday morning, if you hadn't heard from them on Thursday and they told you they'd call you, what would you say on the voice mail or in person, what would you say? You said you were going to call me and you didn't call me. Nothing even, similar to that, not even those words at all even if it was not in that tone. You might say, I just wanted to give you a quick call and let you know that I am still very interested in your position, very eager to hear back from you, very excited about the opportunity, look forward to hearing from you, okay. Quick little note, be careful about your voicemail message, professional, not music blaring for 30 seconds or hey what's up, you know, nothing like that. You laugh, but time and time again it's like shocking to me. Yeah, so we hear it from recruiters all the time. So, anyway so, you're going to be kind of politely persistent in following up.
Next, we have the most exciting thing, oh silly me. See, that's how goofy I am. I'm clicking over here. You don't want to be goofy like me. You're going to evaluate and report your job offers. Okay so, you're going to request what's called an offer letter. An offer letter is an employment document that all employers do or should provide for you at the point that they're giving you an offer. Sometimes, the offer is orally spoken over the phone, you know, we'd like to bring you into our organization. But, it should always be followed up with a written offer letter. It's not to mean that that is a contract in any way, shape, or form. The legality of how binding it is, is a little bit up in the air, okay, but it's that it's an understanding between you and the employer as to the job title, the pay, when they expect you to start, okay. So, just because they give that to you doesn't mean that it's a promised job necessarily but it's just that everybody's clear on the same page and they're offering you the job. And then, they'll always give you the deadline as to when you need to respond by. And, at that point is when it kind of when it becomes official. And, but, in California we're all at will employees so you can still be let go at any time. But, anyway, the reason we say that we need an offer letter is, time and time again we have students that accept verbal offers and then they get there and, oh I'm working for 12 dollars an hour. I thought you had said 40,000. Oh, well that's the training, the 12 dollars an hour is the training rate for the first six months. Sorry you didn't understand that. And, it's not an employer trying to pull one over on a student. It's just some of his communication is missing. So, we want the offer letter. And, it usually comes in like a Fed Ex, you know, and it's all official and sometimes over email like a PDF format, talks about benefits, things like that. You're going to be aware of timelines and ask for extensions. You know, sometimes we have offers coming in it's a great thing, offers at the same time. And, this company wants us to let them know tomorrow, and this other company, we just had our second interview with. So, we need to do some juggling there. That's a great thing to talk to us about is how you handle those either over the phone or in our drop in time. You're going to consider all your options, you know, the location, the pay, the advancement. Remember that 50,000 dollars a year in Tahoe, the gentleman that wanted to go to Tahoe, is a lot different than 50,000 dollars a year in New York City or wherever. I mean, remember cost of living when you're thinking about pay. You're going to report your offers to the Career Center. We have, we keep track of numbers of offers, numbers of offers by major, things like that. We really appreciate it if we can use that data. We keep it all confidential.
And then, you're going to have your picture taken for the Career Center success board which is, oh again I did it.
Have your, have your picture taken on the, you've probably seen it out in our lobby, okay. So, it's just sort of fun. It looks like that. And, that's pretty much all we're going to talk about today.
Just, in recapping, oh and if you're a distance student, you can email us your photo to put on the board. We really appreciate that. So, you're going to research, you're going to practice the interview questions, remember that STAR method. You're going to prepare items to bring to the interview, okay, all this preparation before hand, dressing appropriately, showing up early. How early are we going to show up? Ten, 15 minutes; practicing our making a good impression with our handshake and our eye contact and smiling. It's okay to be nervous, remember everybody's nervous but work with it. Asking questions, have a few prepared. Some might come up as the interview progresses along. Following up with thank you notes, calling, okay, and then evaluating reporting your job offers and having your photo taken. Any questions at all? Has this been helpful for you? Okay, you know where to go for more help? Where do you go? Career Center, you can make an appointment with an advisor, there's an advisor for every major. If you're not on campus, you can make a phone appointment or you can come to our drop in between one and four. Between one and four we always have an advisor on duty. A lot of times it's questions like resume questions and things like that. But, as the semester progresses and students are having questions about negotiation, what do I do I have these two offers. How do I decide? What do I say to this employer and that employer? We can help with all those things. So, thank you for coming.
Oh and here's my last little slide.

Go Get That Job!