Jodie Rettinhouse: Hi, I’m Jodie Rettinhouse and I’m an advisor here in the Career Center and today we're going to talk a little bit about interviewing. The presentation will be somewhere between 30-45 minutes. I understand that a couple of you may have to leave early, and that's fine feel free to leave as we go along. And feel free to ask questions as we proceed also, we can answer questions as we go along.
So today we're going to talk on a little bit about researching organizations, qualities and skills that employers see when you're looking to hire a college grad. We're going to go over some common interview questions. We're going to talk about what you should bring to an interview, what you should wear, how to make a good impression, what kind of questions to ask and the importance of following up after an interview, and then also how you report your job offers to the Career Center.
A couple of points that we like to emphasize when we begin to talk about interviewing is that it's important to remember that the company is interviewing you, and you are interviewing the company.
Is definitely a two-way street. I think a lot of job candidates tend to focus more on the fact that the company is interviewing you, and they forget and the student forgets that it's also their opportunity to see if the company is a right fit, and the position is a right fit for their future career plans, okay? So we don't need to give all the power to the employer. All right? Also the more you interview the more offers you will have. So sometimes students tell us, “Oh, I'm choosing company XYZ as my top company and so I'm only gonna interview with XYZ company”. And then they don't get an offer from XYZ company and they don't have an offer before they graduate which for many students is ideal. So we know that just statistically speaking the more interviews you do, the more offers you'll have. Sometimes it's just one offer, hopefully it's more. And along those same lines it's perfectly acceptable to decline a job offer. Sometimes students feel like if they go through an interview process that's 2-3-4 interviews for one single position that at the end, if they received a job offer that somehow they're bound to accept it; but they're not. Okay, you're not. So it's always good to just interview, and get to know as many companies as possible and as many positions as possible, cause that's the way you decide if an organization and a position is right for you. And above all else it's important to have a positive attitude, okay, that's the number one quality that all employers look for.
So researching the organization, okay, there are several places that you can find information; the company website, news articles, information sessions that the company might hold here on campus. You can talk to former and current employees, or others who might know the organization. What would be a good way to locate former, or current employees of an organization? Can you think of a resource?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]
Jodie Rettinhouse: LinkedIn, exactly! LinkedIn is a great tool for locating say Chico State alumni, who work at a particular organization, who you could contact for the purposes of asking them advice for the interview, and more information about the company. The number one thing we actually hear from employers as to why a candidate was not successful in an interview, was the interviewer tells us, ‘they didn’t know anything about my company’. Okay? It's okay not to know about an organization when you're going to a career fair, but it is not okay to not know anything about the company when you’re going in for an interview. What are the types of things that you should know? Does anybody have any ideas of the types of things that you should research about an organization before an interview?

Audience Member: [inaudible]

Jodie Rettinhouse: Right! What else?

Audience Member: [inaudible]
Jodie Rettinhouse: Exactly. These are the types of things that would be important to know.
What type of organization are they? Are they for-profit? Nonprofit? Do they have a product or are they service oriented? What's their mission statement? Get to know the qualities the organization looks for in an employee, you can find that, again. By talking to people who know the organization, or by just looking at the job posting. For the careers section about a company it's often very clear, it'll say, “We look for team players”, “We look for people who are customer oriented”, “We look for people who are analytical”. Whatever it might be. And it's not that in an interview, you're going to try to be someone you're not. You're not gonna say you're analytical, if you're not; but you certainly of the things that are true for you, you certainly want to know the important points to bring up in an interview, and have examples of the times you were say 'customer service oriented' if that was one of the things the organization looks for.
You want to know the locations, if you can find out, so that way if they ask you; 'What location are you interested in', you know that if they don't have a Southern California branch to say 'Southern California', and then they don't have that location, that would be a disadvantage to you. Knowing the basic job description, and what the required qualifications are. Any questions on that? Let's say we do our best to research, and we are able to find out some information, hopefully a lot; but what are some things that we can fall back on, when we're talking to employers, that we know all employers look for in a new employee? What are some skills and qualities that all employers would find valuable? Can you think about what some of those might be? There's a survey that happens every year, it's from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, it's a professional association that we belong to in a survey hundreds of employers across the country, in a variety of industries, for variety of positions, and they say 'what are the top qualities and skills that you look for?', and what do you think are some of the things that come up on that survey? Can you guess?
Employers Rate Specific Qualities/Skills
Communication skills, year, after year, after year it's always the top. Okay, no matter if you're going to be an engineer, or sales, or a social worker. Every employer values communication skills, and a strong work ethic, and initiative and so on. Okay?
This is the list from, 2009. It happens every year. We probably should update it; but it's always about the same every year with those top ones being there. Okay. Are there any things on this list that are surprising to you?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Jodie Rettinhouse:** Sense of humor, okay. Why do you think a sense of humor might be important?

**Audience Member:** [inaudible]

**Jodie Rettinhouse:** Right, and as a team member I think everybody likes a team member, who is not a perfectionist. Who can kinda laugh at themselves if things go wrong. But anyway this is a good list, that you can look at for the purposes of coming up with examples, and we're gonna go over that a little later on how you tell stories, about your past work experiences to illustrate in an interview, but we know if we have stories or examples that have to do with communication skills, and having a strong work ethic, and initiative, and so on, those are always good once a fallback on.
Okay so we're gonna go over a couple of uh, I'm gonna show you some common interview questions. That you might want to be familiar with in preparing for your interview.
Jodie Rettinhouse: We have time to go over two of these, what, which ones would you like to practice? In the time that we have allotted. Does anyone wanna... These are the interview questions that are often difficult for students.

Audience Member: [inaudible]

Jodie Rettinhouse: What's your greatest strength, what's your greatest weakness? Okay, so what's difficult about my greatest strength? Why is that difficult? Is it hard to choose just one?

Audience Member: [inaudible] you.
Jodie Rettinhouse: You feel embarrassed talking about your strengths, you feel like it's bragging. Absolutely, very common, uh, statement I hear all the time. Of 'I'm embarrassed', ironically I tend to hear that more from women than men. I think that's something we need to –

Audience Member: [inaudible]

Jodie Rettinhouse: You know what's interesting? I mean I just - I always think back to kind of our, our trend of wanting to get women's pay up to where men pay is, and sometimes I wonder if there's a correlation between - we need to - an interview is a time to talk about our strengths. And let me mention that you all have learned in your communication courses here Chico State, that sometimes it's how you say something, the nonverbal medication that makes a person seem like they're boastful versus confidence.
Right? So if someone says, 'yeah, I can just - I can take any project that comes my way. I can just ace it, I am - I am just awesome at every project that's given to me'. That sounds kind of boastful right? But what about saying, 'Every project that is given to me, I give it my all, and I typically am able to follow through with a great performance'. Not word for word; but kind of the same message. Right, and the first like uh boastful, what was the second one? Confident. So I want everybody to kind of have that frame of mind, of this is your time to talk about your strengths and employer expects it. As long as you don't come in with nonverbal body language that's offensive. It's not gonna come across as boastful. It's gonna come across as prepared and confident. Good strengths to use in an answer, are the ones that are true to you, because we want it to be the right fit. And if you have many strengths, which I know you do, because I've worked with lots of students over the years, and I know you have many. Choose one that is aligned with what they look for - that they mentioned, they look for, but again those ones that I said - were on the former slide of initiative, and a strong work ethic, and communication, and interpersonal skills are all good ones to fall back on. What about your greatest weakness? Tell me about that. Why is that a hard question to answer?
Audience Member: Because you don’t want to bring attention to potential weakness that might result in you not getting the job.

Jodie Rettinhouse: Right. Right. It's true. And how I always say 'is we never lie in an interview, but we can use examples that are to our advantage'. So if, um, someone gonna ask me what my greatest weakness is. I’m gonna think, 'well I got a lot of 'em, so I'm just gonna choose one that's maybe not very damaging. And you want to stay away from anything that has to do with you being difficult to work with, or hinting towards being difficult to work for. I once had a student say I'm going to say, 'That I always seem like I'm in a bad mood, even though I'm not in a bad mood'. Okay, because an employer's biggest fear is someone is not to get along with her coworkers. That's gonna create low morale, okay. And typically the things that the employer can't train. It's really hard for an employer to train someone to have a good attitude, or have good interpersonal skills or communication skills, or to be team oriented. So you want to stick with the things that they can train you to improve, okay. I'll give you a couple of examples, so you can kind of visualize what a good example might be. One of my students said, that she felt her communication skills were lacking.
So we're all going 'oh my goodness that's the top thing, and she was talking about the fact that she - English was her second language, and she had problems pronouncing - uh - pronouncing certain words. So she said to the employer, 'my communication skills - I have trouble pronouncing certain words, such as...' and then she gave examples, she said often I say 'duh' instead of 'the'. So she was very specific, and the key to this weakness was the employer could see, that it wasn't that bad. The employer could see that he - that he or she could live with what this respondent was saying. And then she went on to say and 'This is what I'm doing to improve my English, I go to tutoring every week, I only read and watch movies in English. Whenever I am out and about, I tell my friends to correct me on the spot if I mispronounce a word. And I think although I sometimes am hard to understand. I think that what this shows, is that when I have a goal, I'm going to take the necessary steps to improve. And that's the kind of person I am. And that's the kind of employee you're going to have. If you hire me, I'm gonna take whatever steps it takes to reach my goal'.
So do you see at the end of that, the employer's thinking 'did I just ask the weakness question?'. Right? Because it was a weakness it was true, but it was fixable. She's already improving it, and she turned it into a benefit.

Another employee - uh - student I was working with, talked about the fact that he looked really young. Okay, he was going into management, he had braces, he had a very youthful haircut, and so he was going for management jobs, and he said 'I think the fact that I am - that I look very young is a weakness in a management position'. Okay, well there sitting across from him, and they can see the not that severe of a problem, okay? And he said, 'Here is how I overcome looking young in the workplace', he worked at Costco in the Meat Department, he managed the Meat Department, and he said, 'When a customer comes up to me and they don't believe that I'm the manager, I act confident. I make eye contact, I stand up straight. I have a very customer service oriented attitude, and I take a leadership role in solving their problem, and pretty soon they realized, through my actions that I'm the type of person that can be a management role'. So again at the end of this question, that employer's thinking 'did I just ask the weakness question?'
So those are the types of things, you want to brainstorm for yourself. Okay, and we can help - that's something that we can help you with here in the Career Center, through appointments is going through some of these questions. We don't have time to go through all of them, so I'm going to move along, but hopefully those two, were helpful for you.

Okay, this last one 'tell me about a time when...', has anyone ever had that kind of question in an interview. Okay, what has been the question that has stumped you? Do you remember?

**Audience Member:** It was like, tell me about a time when, like, a co-worker did something negative, and you had to, like, say something about it. Something –

**Jodie Rettinhouse:** Or you had overcome it. Okay, so time when an employer or a co-worker was negative, and how did you overcome that negativity? Okay, great.
So what we're wanting to do, is we're wanting to come up with an answer that's called behavioral interviewing.
That type of question of 'tell me about a time when', 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 that's why employers ask these kinds of questions. Cause it's very easy - not easy, but it's easier for people who are interviewing to say, 'Well' I'll say I'm a great communicator, and I'll say I'm a great team player; but when you have to bring up an example, from your past work it becomes more difficult to kind of fake it, and the employer can also just picture how you've acted, because the reality is.
Um - and, the - how these questions start is with 'tell me about a time when',
because - uh – so what we want you to do, is think of examples of your past accomplishments to practice before the interview. Now we may not be able to guess exactly what the question is gonna be, because there's almost an infinite number right? 'Tell you about a time you overcame a problem with a coworker', 'tell me about time you overcame a problem with a customer', 'tell me about a time you made a sacrifice to reach a goal', 'tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult person', 'tell me about the time you went the extra mile for someone'.

**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.
Right? But what we can do, is we can come up with a variety of examples, and we would describe them, using this acronym: STAR. We're gonna describe the situation, we're gonna explain what our task was, we're gonna describe our action, and then we're gonna tell the result that we achieved, and it better be a positive result. I've been in many interviews where we get to the very end, and the result was not positive, and it kinda goes downhill from there.
Okay, so what I going to do, is I am going to show you the examples one, this nice person in the back row, already brought up
about 'tell me about a time,
Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions

- “Give me an example of when you went an ‘extra mile’ to help a customer.”
- “Describe a time you made a sacrifice in order to reach a goal.”
- “Tell me about a time you worked with a team, resulting in a positive outcome.”

you overcame a problem with an individual'.
Okay, so I'm gonna tell you my example of, uh, the first one 'give me an example of when you went the extra mile to help a customer'.
Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions

- "Give me an example of when you went an 'extra mile' to help a customer."
- "Describe a time you made a sacrifice in order to reach a goal."
- "Tell me about a time you worked with a team, resulting in a positive outcome."
- "Give me an example of when you overcame a problem with a co-worker or boss and how you handled it."

So let's pretend that I worked in the Macy's Shoe Department, last summer as my summer job. Does anyone have a similar job they've worked at a retail? Anyone in this room been in retail? Okay it's a really typical college student job. So I say to the employer who just asked me 'give you an example of when, you went the extra mile to help a customer.' I say 'last summer I worked in the Macy's Shoe Department, as you can see on my resume. We had a customer that came into Macy's, and wanted a specific shoe, in a specific style for her daughter's wedding. Which was in three weeks, and the customer was very distraught that we did not have the proper size. So I told the customer that wasn't gonna make any promises, but that I would try to locate the shoe for her. So what I did, even though we're very busy, at the Macy's Shoe Department, I took 15 minutes from my lunch hour, and I called all of the Macy's in Northern California, and I located the shoe in the particular style and size that she needed, and had it shipped to her house. The result was, and this is where that positive piece comes in, she came back to the store after her daughter's wedding, complimented me on my performance, asked to speak to the manager, and ended up buying $200 worth of merchandise on that day, because she was a repeat and satisfied customer. That is the same type of behavior, I'm going to bring to your organization if I'm hired.
Okay, so that was 'tell me - give me an example of when you went the extra mile to help a customer', could that same story have worked for 'describe the time you made a sacrifice in order to reach a goal'. Could that same story have worked, yes. Right, because I could've talked about what the lunch hour. What about 'tell me about a time you worked with the team, resulting in a positive outcome'. Could that same story have worked for that? Kinda, if I had emphasized the part about calling all the Macy's in Northern California, and I said something like 'a part of being a good valuable team member is always helping out your colleagues, because you know then when you need to call them for a favor they're gonna work really hard to make it happen for you'. 'So I because I'd been a good team player to all my colleagues in Northern California, I knew I was gonna be able - they were gonna help me when I called on them'. 'Give me a problem - an example of an - of when you overcame a problem with a coworker boss, and how you handle it'. That was one that - maybe the one that you came up with. No, that story really doesn't work for that one, but the point being, it worked for three of the four. So if I have confidence, that if you came up with 3 to 5 stories, that you told in that example,
with that acronym: Situation, Task, Action, Result. You would be able to, in the interview, emphasize various parts of that story to fit the question. Because it's very hard, when you're in the hot seat, and things are silent. Okay, and they're saying 'tell me about time', and you're going like this. For the very first time, you're thinking of that example, you're going 'hmmm, let me think'. Well the more silent it is, the harder it is to think of example, and then it's more silence, and more silence, and that's when you end up coming up with that story, that isn't very positive, and it ends up being a negative answer; but if we have three to five pre-rehearsed examples of stories. The only thing we have to think about at that moment is, which of my pre-rehearsed examples is best for this question, and I'm gonna emphasize that part. So those can be random examples from our class projects, part-time job, internships, volunteer work, even a roommate situation could work, under the right circumstances. Okay, any questions on these behavioral interviewing questions? Okay. Next we're gonna talk about what to bring to the interview. Any ideas on things you should bring?
**Audience Member:** Your - several copies of your CV or resume
Jodie Rettinhouse: Absolutely. Several copies, you want to bring several copies, because you never know who you're gonna meet at that interview setting. They may not - they received your resume online, that they not - made - might not readily have the example, available in front of them. You just look very prepared if you have it. Well maybe you apply for the letter of recommendation. Or maybe they didn't require a letter recommendation, that - but you have them. No reason you can't bring them, to the interview, to leave behind if you have those. Um, copies of projects or papers, let's say you had a paper that you did exceptionally well on, a project that related to the job which you're pursuing, and it had a big 'A' written on the top of it. That wouldn't be a bad thing to bring as an example. You don't have to use these things, but at the end of an interview or if it was appropriate during the interview would be something nice to have. And then a professional notebook, we recommend something like this, where everything can be nice tidy and organized. In fact when I go to an interview, I just put my car keys right in here, I don't even have a purse. That's just me; but it's just one less thing to worry about. And then when you walk in you have your - all of your information. I'm gonna shake your hand, you have everything and you seem so professional, and so organized. Okay, any questions on what to bring? How about what to wear?
You want to match the attire to the workplace, it is better to be slightly overdressed than under-dressed, and you want to dress conservatively. Okay, whatever that word 'conservatively' means for you. Because it does mean different things to different people. And when we say we want to match the attire to the workplace. What we mean is not necessarily how we would dress every day on the job, it might be how we dress every day on the job; but it usually means one notch up from how we would dress every day on the job. Okay, so for instance a person going for construction manager, construction project manager, is probably going to be wearing jeans and a polo shirt maybe or some kind of button up T-shirt, and a hardhat and work boots. That doesn't mean they have to dress that way to the interview, maybe they wear slacks and a button up shirt, and a top; but they probably wouldn't wear a suit, you see. You definitely want to show that you understand the workplace, okay? A teacher, for example, might not be dressed in a very conservative business suit, because this is a person is working with kids all day; but it doesn't mean they wear jeans and flip-flops. Okay, these are some photos of a proper attire.
Well this is what not to wear. Okay, some of these are very obvious, he would not look like that. Um - things like really short skirts though, should be off limits. Okay,
things that
look like evening attire,
things that are just kinda too
again this is kinda like an evening attire.
This would be appropriate dress for women, the two on the right are more business attire, formal business attire. On the left is more business casual, okay.
So, okay, and then men, everyone was tell me, this gentleman has his sleeves - are too short. Possibly so, you want things nicely tailored, this might be a good - let's say I mentioned a teacher. This would be a great interview outfit for a teacher, because it's probably - maybe they're not gonna quite dress that formally every day at school, but the interviewer knows that you're there for an interview. At the very least everything needs to be neat, clean, and well pressed, okay. If you have any questions about those things, you can always stop by the Career Center, and we can help you.
It's important to make a good first impression, you want to show up 10 to 15 minutes before the scheduled interview. Any earlier and it looks a little too eager, okay. Um, it's not necessary to be there a half an hour beforehand. That being said, you can certainly be there half an hour before, and sit in your car in the parking lot. Until it's time to enter the building which actually would be recommended. Cause then if you got a flat tire, or ended up not being able to find your location, you would have a little bit of buffer there. You're gonna be polite to everyone you meet, from janitors to front desk staff, to people passing in the hall. Many times employers, because, again they're looking for that team player. They're gonna ask their front desk staff how they were treated. Smile, make eye contact, have a firm handshake. You're gonna, again, have all your materials organized, okay? You're gonna answer your questions truthfully, because you are looking - an interview is not a performance. It's a discussion, okay, it's a discussion with an individual who has a need, and you're trying to see if you can fulfill that need. Of - 'they need a new employee', and on the opposite side 'you need a job', and you're trying to determine if that's the right job for you. So we definitely want to ask questions - answer questions, truthfully, putting our best foot forward.
In case we decide we do want the job, but it's never a good idea to per- to act like we're on a performance, and try to be someone we’re not, because ultimately won't be a good fit. We're gonna be ca - careful about bad habits. I'm gonna borrow your pen, okay, so one of - this is one my bad habits when I get nervous, and I would –[clicking a pen button] in an interview I wouldn't even know I was doing this; but it would be incredibly annoying to the other individuals. So you need to be aware of your bad habits, and so I don't bring pens, that have beautiful buttons on the end, when I go to an interview. Okay, if you're a person that crosses their leg, and bounces their foot uncontrollably when you're nervous, cause you won't realize you're doing it. Don't cross your legs like that, okay?

And you're gonna watch the interviewers body language. Just be aware of when they are looking at their watch, or looking to the side, or stacking their papers, okay. That it might be time to wrap up that particular question.
When you are at the end of your interview, they're going to ask you if you have any questions.
You always need to have questions, because that shows the employer that you are interested in their position, that you're invested in knowing more. So you can demonstrate your company research, you might say something like, I read that you have a six month training program. Can you explain in more detail as to what that looks like, the components of that six month training? Is it classroom training? Is it practical training? Asking things that will help you decide if you want to work there. You can ask about, what the typical career path for a new person starting in the position. You wouldn't want to ask too many things early, that are all about you, and it's sometimes how you phrase it. So saying when will I be promoted, is sort of offensive; but to ask - like I just mentioned, what's the typical career path of a new person in the job. That's not as offensive. Typically it's best if the employer brings up the pay question first, okay? I'll just leave it at that, but there are exceptions to that rule, like if you're required to drive to the Bay Aea, and miss a whole day of school. It might be good for you to know the pay for that job, or the general pay. And their ways we can find that online. And their ways you can ask that. So if that's your situation, you can ask. And then you also can ask about, the next steps in the interview process. So you can tell if you're weeks away from a job offer, or they're planning to make a job offer the next week, or what that might be. Any questions on, questions?
And you're gonna want to follow up, write a 'thank you' note, letter, or an email, promptly. Have it go out that day, or the next day. You can mention something in that email, or letter, that is interesting to the employer. So the basic 'thank you' is, 'thank you so much for your time, for meeting with me about - the position. I look forward to hearing from you'. But saying something like 'I was very intrigued about the team oriented environment at your company, and how the projects are accomplished via work teams. That aligns greatly with my training in organizational communication at Chico State', or something. Something so that they see, that you understand the job, and you're providing another benefit to them of why you would be a good candidate to them. That's just a little bit more of icing on the cake, okay, and you're going to be politely persistent in your follow ups. Students always ask us, 'well I had the interview last Friday, I wrote my thank you note on Monday, and sent it off by email; but I haven't heard anything, and it's now Thursday'. Well, I think it would be okay, maybe today to send another email, just checking in. You know, depending on what they told you, as far as the timing, when you asked what - 'what is the interview process'. It's perfectly acceptable for you to follow up, and check in with them, because these are busy professionals. We don't check in every day, okay, but maybe once a week, a couple times a week, depending on what they've mentioned in that follow-up answer, okay.
And then you're going to – evaluate a request and offer letter, okay? All companies will be giving you - that are legitimate, quality offers will have an offer letter.
You're going to be aware of the time. So the offer letter, is a letter to you, and it states; when the job begins, when you need to accept or decline the offer, like the deadline. It will mention your pay, okay? So be aware of those. And you can always ask for extensions; because hopefully again you're interviewing with lots of different companies, and we can help you with that process of asking for extensions. All the time, at this point in the semester, from here to the end of the semester, and hopping into next spring, we get students coming in asking us; 'I've got this problem. I have this offer, which is a good offer, but I'm really hoping to get an offer from this other company. How can I ask for an extension from the first one?'. It's important that you consider everything. Um, you know students often tend to focus, as all job applicants do on pay; but remember company culture, remember you know, learn how to crunch the budget, and know there's lots of resources online, like how is it going to cost live in that location. Because $40,000 a year in Chico goes a lot further than $40,000 a year in San Jose. So you want to be aware of those things. Report your offer to the Career Center. We have a link on our website, where you can report your job offers. We need to know those offers for the purposes of statistics. Cause we keep track of all the offers by major, and um, the salaries, okay? Cause w-we keep it confidential, but we like to combine it, and come up with an average by major.
That helps future students, and we want you to have a picture taken for success board, and again just to recap some of the points we've talked about. It's important to research the job and organization, number one complaint of employers, that we hear, is 'the person did not know about my organization'. And sometimes websites are confusing. So if you can't figure it out, come in and see us. We have drop in, every day from 1 to 4, and we can help you with that. Practice your common interview questions. We do mock interviews here in the Career Center. That's another service that we provide. So you can always schedule an appointment for a mock interview. Prepare for those behavioral interviewing questions, using that star method; Situation Task Action Result. Even if they do not ask you, that behavioral question of, 'tell me about a time when', they likely will; but even if they don't, you can use those stories to illustrate and support, an answer like 'what's your greatest strength' or 'why should we hire you'. What's my greatest strength? I'm a team player, let me give you an example;
Situation Task Actions Result, okay? Preparing all your items to bring, dressing appropriately, showing up early, making that good impression, always answering your questions truthfully, I can't speak highly enough about that; because, um, it's so important. Ask questions at the end of the interview, make sure you have some questions prepared, and then you're gonna follow up with your 'thank you' email, and checking - and if necessary. Any questions at all, from the audience? The wonderful amazing audience, but I'm so glad - was here, because I didn't want to be taped talking to an empty room. That would be very d-difficult. Question?

Audience Member: I've heard about [inaudible] interview

Jodie Rettinhous: What's that?

Audience Member: [inaudible] case interviewing, or something.

Jodie Rettinhous: Oh, case study?
Audience Member: Yeah, well-I, I were to apply for [inaudible] company, but I read they have, um, case interview or something.

Jodie Rettinhouse: Case studies, right, we could look on various sites for that employer specifically, like on questions, like on sites like glassdoor.com. You can see there's information about the case study. I have heard that, um, so what it is, is they give you a case study, of like a business problem, and they give you a certain amount of time to prepare an answer. Either in a group, sometimes, or individually, and then you come back and relay your answer. Sometimes it's a little mini case study, where it's not the type, where you go away and prepare your answer, and they just present a case or a scenario, that often is typical in their organization. So they might, if you were interviewing for a career counselor position. They might say, tell me what you would do, in this case where a student came in, and this was happening, and was having this problem and your boss needed to talk to you, and the front desk had a phone call coming in. And they would wanna see, how did you process that problem, and how did you-
Jodie Rettinhouse: Yeah or just - what, yeah. How fast or just what - how good your answer is in terms of the process. But what I would suggest is if you want specifically to know about a case study interview for that employer. Is to research it online. Google, 'case study interview company name', okay. Go to LinkedIn. See if you can find some Chico alumni that work at that company, and see if they can help you. Ask your faculty if they know of any former students who have gone through that experience, and then make an appointment with an advisor here, and ask the advisor, okay. Any other questions?

Audience Member: [inaudible] what do they specifically look for.
Jodie Rettinhouse: Very good question, that was the other one I typically like to go over, but I didn't want to take up too much time. So why don't we just do it now, if you all can wait a couple minutes. Okay, so that's the other, in addition to the greatest weakness, I find that the most challenging question, because we don't know where to start, and we don't know where to stop. Because I can talk about the year I was born, and my favorite color, and that I like to eat pie, and my favorite movie, and blah blah blah, right? So we want to stick to things that are of value to the employer. We always want to think about, that employer should never be saying in their mind, 'so what'. So what, that you grew up on a cul-de-sac in Sacramento, so what; but if the job is in Sacramento, and you want to talk about the fact that you grew up in Sacramento. Maybe a cul-de-sac isn't that important of a detail; but you want to say you grew up in Sacramento. And how excited you are that the job is in Sacramento. And you feel very connected to that community, and you know lots of people, and you have lots of connections, and therefore you might be really - that would be advantageous in a sales position. Then that's something interesting and of value to them, okay. So other examples, that people have mentioned to me before when we've practiced interviews or real interviews.
I was raised on a ranch, I was raised on a farm, in Siskiyou County, a 600 acre cattle ranch. That is the unique upbringing, and what I gathered from that upbringing, what I learned is a strong work ethic. I was that teenager, that was up every morning at 6 AM on the weekends, taking care of my animals. I'm very thankful for that work ethic, that I gained growing up on a farm, okay? So it's kind of interesting that she grew up on a farm, and she's able to weave in the benefit of a strong work ethic. Don't just say, 'I grew up on a farm', cause what are they gonna say, 'so what'. It might be fun, but it's not a benefit to you. If you're going to bring up something unique, you always have to weave in the benefit. 'I grew up in the military. Because my parents were in the military, I moved every two years as child - as a teenager, what I gained from that is resourcefulness. I was - I always had to make new friends, I had to adapt to a new culture, and while growing up that seemed difficult at the time; but I'm very thankful for that ability to be resourceful, and to be adaptable to difficult situations'. Just a short little bit, about growing up in the military, and what that person gained. And granted you may not have grown up on a farm, or grown up in the military, or - but you see how but that's the kind of example, of the type of personal-ness that you want to get, as long as you can mention the benefit. If we don't mention the benefit, 'I grew up in the military'.
They're just gonna go 'okay', it's about branding ourselves, the reason we want to bring up things, if possible, that are unique beyond; 'this is my major and this is when I graduate', is one they already know that 'cause its on your resume, and we're trying to brand ourself to be memorable. Our goal is that immediately, they like what they're hearing, and that you're interesting, and that you can differentiate yourself from another candidate. Just relaying, again our major, and that we went to Chico State it just doesn't - doesn't make you different then the next candidate, okay? Um, because at the end of the day, when there - when that interview committee is sitting around a table, and they're saying, 'Who should we bring to the next - I like that one that grew up in the military - I like that military one, I like the person who grew up on the farm'. That they're already like, kind of labeling you as this person, okay? Um, the other thing about 'tell me about yourself', is how do we end it? Right? We're going on and on, and it shouldn't be a very long answer, should be maybe 30 seconds.
It's not very long. We can - remember I said watching their body language, and watch their body language, you can watch their body language and see how they're reacting; but the best way to end the question is, you say little something about maybe your upbringing, that provides a benefit to them. We say a little something about, unique about our educational experience, maybe we worked 30 hours a week, while going to school full-time, and were so - we had to learn how to manage our time. Something unique about our - in our major coursework, that we're thankful for. Whatever it is, a few little things, and at the end of that you can say 'and that brings me here today, since I'm graduating December, I'm looking for professional position, and I really appreciate this opportunity to talk with you, and learn more about XYZ company, and see if it if it for me. Thank you so much for meeting with me'. There's no question that, that's the end of that. Otherwise you're kind of adding more things, and they're nodding, and you're saying 'do I bring more up, how do I let them know that I'm finished', okay? And these are the types of things that we can help you in appointments, we can meet with you one-on-one, and talk about your particular situation, and come up with ideas that might be specific to you. Any other questions? Anything else...okay. Excellent questions, thank you for coming.