



Paula Amezola De Herrera, MPH
Career Fair

Paula Amezola De Herrera, MPH: Good afternoon. Thank you, everyone, for joining us today. As you can tell this is going to be a very interactive workshop, so we hope to really engage everyone and our speakers here. I would like to also introduce—well, let me introduce myself first. My name is Paula Amezola, and I'm the career services advisor, and I see our MPH and MS students, and I'm helping them with all of their career development questions. We have mock interviews and offer letter negotiations, so please come and visit me. In the room we also have Janet who is the MPH program manager. Janet, would you like to say hi?

Janet Schmidt: Hello everyone.

Paula: And we will be recording this. Please silence your phones and ensure that if you are getting through or you are eating, just keep it a minimum so we can have good sound for our online students and for the recording in the future.

Today I'm very pleased to introduce two alumni from our Keck School of Medicine, and we will definitely pick their brains and find out and learn from them what are the best practices for the career fair.

Slide 1:

First I would like to introduce Carol Barahona. She graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with a Bachelor's Life degree in Sociology, Chicano Studies, with a minor of Applied Psychology. She received her Master's degree from the USC School of Social Work and an MPH from our program here. Currently she is working as the Senior Community Health Director for Latino Programs and Initiatives at the American Heart Association, and she has a variety of experiences working with the Latino community but also with veterans.

Next, I would like to introduce Ragy. Ragy is also an alumni here. He got his Bachelor's degree in biology from the University of California, Irvine, and a Master's degree in Global Medicine from here (USC), and he's been with Doctor Evidence for 4 years. He is currently the Associate Director of Clinical Operations and Data Integrity, and he serves to ensure that they find out evidence-based information that can guide the methods patients receive care and interventions they receive from their doctors.

Would you like to say something to our audience before I continue?

Ragy Saad: Do you want to go first?

Carol Barahona: Sure, I think for me it's a privilege to come back and share my journey with you all from coming out of a public health—the MPH program and then just being able to share with you best practices in terms of my job search, what a day, what I did



wrong, and what I have learned so far. I'm really excited to be here and share that with you all.

Ragy: Yeah, just to echo Carol, I have had the opportunity to come back and recruit my fellow Trojans which is an honor, and I think one thing that we benefited from as a company, we have a lot of Trojans that we work with, a lot of Bruins, too—they are okay people—but I think it is kind of a valuable exercise to talk about what you guys should expect and what we should expect from people attending these career fairs. The first time Paula and I met was actually after we hired our first USC MPH graduate student and our first time we attended the career fair, so I think we look at this is a serious opportunity, not only to recruit, but actually to hire students, first-year and second-year students, MPH and MS students. It is a valuable opportunity for us. Hopefully we can tell you guys what we expect to see so you guys can come prepared and jump into a career that you are happy with.

Paula: I'm hoping to make this, as I mentioned earlier, a very interactive presentation where I go over best practices, and after each slide I will turn to our guest speakers and have them add their experience at our career fair last year or maybe add something from their perspective as an alumni, and also I'm grateful to have both of them here because they are also potential employers. So it is rare for us to have a conversation with someone who is part of our family (the Trojan family) and we can learn from them what is it that potential employers are looking for nowadays in public health?

For those who just came in, please make sure to sign in, and there is also a paper evaluation for those here in person and there is an evaluation—a link evaluation—for those who are online.

Moving along, these are the topics we hope to talk about.

Slide 2:

It is very simple. We are going to talk about what you should do before, what you should do during, and I think the most important is what you should do after the career fair. I really hope that both of our guest speakers came prepared to talk about after, because this is research that I've done after, but I want to hear, like, okay, what has worked? What is a good indication of what students do afterwards that they are going to be a great employee? And then I will briefly talk about the career registration.

Slide 3:

This is the date. Please save the date. We will have, in our courtyard, around 50 employers who be attending the career fair. They will be here to hire. They will be here for internships. They will be here for networking. What is the purpose of a career fair? Well, I think the purpose is it depends on what you're looking for, right? You can be simply be looking for networking, building your network. You can be looking for an internship, so, yes, first-years should be attending and should be practicing how to talk to potential employers.



Second-years, when you are graduating, there is absolutely no reason why you shouldn't be here, because if you have a job already, great for you! But if you don't have a job, then you should be here and meeting people, expanding your network. For those who do have a job, you just graduated. Your network is limited. Why not increase that network so that in the future you can find the director position, that manager position, that mid-career level position. That is how you are going to jump in from entry-level to midcareer level.

For students, the time will be between 10-4, and the program is typically we have a couple of lectures. We invite people from the career center on main campus, the international program, and then we have our employers here for about 3 hours. After that we have professional photos. For that reason, because we do have professional photos, we ask that you come professional ready, and this is what I mean by professional ready. As you can see, in the image we have a student who is in a jacket. She is wearing comfortable shoes. She has a padfolio. She is prepared with her resume, and she is wearing appropriate gear for the weather. That year we did not have a canopy, so this year I have secured funding to have a canopy, so we will be not in the sun as she is.

Slide 4:

Well, any best practices from the last career fair that we did have a canopy and you want to share with us about maybe what to wear, what not to wear?

Carol: You can start.

Ragy: No, I think you covered it. I would just say it is kind of a longer day, and there are a lot of people who come, so I think especially for gentlemen if you come in a full suit be prepared to—it might get warm in March, but yeah.

Carol: The same thing for ladies, I mean comfortable shoes. I know that we carries sometimes blazers or jackets on. Just make sure that if you have to take it off, what you have under it is appropriate. Keep those little things in mind as well.

Paula: Very good, I never thought about that. See, this is why we are asking potential employers to chime in.

Slide 5:

Before the career fair, so please make sure you decide why you are attending. It is important for you to determine, am I talking to an employer to get hired or to build my network? This is because your introduction is going to be important in telling the employer what you are asking, and we will talk about the introduction more.

Last year we had about 50 employers. I recommend that you research the employers. As the list goes on our website that you research them and that you make two lists; you make a list of 'this is my dream employer,' and you make the list of 'these are my 'B' employers, this is my plan B'. The reason for the plan B is you want to expand your



network, and I'm going to continue saying that throughout this whole presentation, this workshop, because it is so important to have a network. The number one question I get from our students is 'do you have a connection here?' No, but you should check on LinkedIn to see if you have any alumni that are in that organization. You want to make that connection.

You make the plan B, you treat them with respect. Please don't treat them like they are your Plan B. Treat them like they are your dream job, but I want you to warm up with them so you practice your elevator pitch. You take those jitters off. Maybe your stomach has butterflies, all of that stuff can come out with your Plan B. Get it all out of the way. And then you go to your dream job employer. Please do plan to be here the whole time that the employers are here. Even if you plan to talk to six employers, it will take you about 2-3 hours to talk to them, because we are a school of about 700 students, and we have about 50 employers, and that is the max that fit in our courtyard, so keep that in mind.

Researching the employers is the most important thing you can do. And the reason is you don't want to make the mistake of going up to the employer and saying, 'What is your organization? What you guys do?' You are you want to know that. It is the single most important indicator of whether you are a prepared candidate or a candidate they want to dismiss.

I have experienced this with a couple of employers who have attended both of our career fairs. They don't quite understand the breadth of public health, and what they do is they bring a very few job opportunities—maybe the job opportunities that are, like the hardest to get people into—and so what I encourage our students to do is you do your homework. You research. You look at the job vacancies that employers have and you apply online and you come prepared to ask the employer 'Hi, I applied to this job. I am looking forward to hearing from you, and is there anything I can do to ask—is there anything I could, that we can talk about with regards to the application, maybe what you are looking for, or maybe I can answer your questions.' You want to have that name recognition, so you talk to a representative. You've submitted your application, and now the hiring manager is potentially going to hear from the representative and the online application, so you have your name brought up twice and you want to keep continuing to building that name recognition.

Anything you would like to add to before the career fair?

Student: I have a question for you.

Paula: Yes.

Student: So when you say research—you said that the employers that are going to be there going to be posted on the website. What is that? Like where? Like are you going to send a link?



Paula: At the end, the website—I will show you the web link.

Student: At the end of this presentation?

Paula: Uh-huh, at the end of this presentation, and what happens is as the employers are coming in I will continue adding on the website, but also the newsletter I sent. Okay, raise your hand if you received my newsletter. Okay, perfect. Great. Can you put that question online? Because I will add, 'Please remember, 3 days until the career fair,' or 'A month until the career fair, you should be looking for a suit. These are the employers who are here so far who have registered so far,' so you will receive multiple emails from me telling you, 'You should be doing this, and these are the employers that are here,' and then you can always go to the website and see the full—how to prepare. Anything else from—?

Carol: I think for me one of the things that really started out, and I didn't quite understand until I started going out there is the networking. You hear that word over and over again and you're like but why? Like, my skills were supposed to be for me. My job was supposed to be for me, but there is something special about networking that I feel, Paula said in the beginning, take the opportunity to get to know people, the organization, the association. Do the research. Find out what they do. What is their mission? What is their mission? Does the mission really impact you? Is that something you want to be doing or are passionate about? Take that opportunity, like Paula said, to network. It is amazing what happens when you start networking and putting yourself out there. You don't know what doors are going to open and what opportunity you will have to actually go to that other step, so I really want to encourage you to start processing that networking. What does that mean? What are the right ways of doing that?

Ragy: Yeah, and I think for me the thing that was kind of significant is understanding the company before the career fair, because if you can understand it from Carol and my perspective, we are here to meet 700 students, and as much as we love our job and we love our companies and we love telling people our elevator pitch and what we are doing, I think for us there's nothing more impressive about a first impression than somebody who comes up and can say, 'I've Artie looked at your website. I understand this is a type of space you are in,' and then they go into the first question. I think immediately we kind of earmark you into the next phase, so if we see your name on the application we think, 'Okay, that is the person who did their homework.' It's worth doing, and it is probably a 15-minute exercise for your top employer list, but it gets your foot — you get a huge advantage. Your first impression I think it's much better than your peers.

Paula: Thank you. And, Janet, if there are any questions from the online students, please just signal me.

Janet: I will.

Paula: We talked about what you should be doing with the employers, but what should you be doing with yourself? Please Google yourself. Google yourself on regular Google.



Go on Facebook and put your name in there. Go on LinkedIn and put your name and there. Go on Instagram up your name in there. Just find out what is out there about you. And pictures are important. Nowadays I think even likes are important. If you like something that is really appropriate while you are looking for jobs, you might want to reconsider that. We are in a very divisive environment right now, and you have to be careful. If you don't have the time to clean it up, shut it down, that is my advice, at least during this whole process of securing landing a job.

One thing that half of our students do not do is LinkedIn. Let's test that. Can you please raise your hand who has a 100% profile on LinkedIn? Okay, so 80%. Get it to 100 before the career fair.

Student: I have a question for you, too. Okay, like Paula, I remember I went to Paula because she was like, 'You need a LinkedIn,' and I was like, 'I don't want to.' She was like 'No, you need to,' and so I created one, but in my mind, like how often do you all use it? Do you use it?

Carol: We use it.

Ragy: Yeah.

Carol: We use it. It is so funny you mentioned that and Paula talking about it because where I work we went to a national training and they actually—everybody in this association—goes on LinkedIn. They talked about your profile picture. They talked about your kind of mission statement and what you need to have, so yes we do use it, especially—I mean, I don't know about you, but when we are trying to connect with partners and see who is connected to him and how we can start those conversations in order to have those—meet our goals that we have, so yes, I encourage everybody to use your resource right here and create your LinkedIn and make sure that it is top-notch. I mean, for me it was my first time as well, so I was like 'Why LinkedIn?' But, no, I mean it is—it is such a good resource to have especially after you go out to the professional world that you are going to be working in public health, you will be using it to figure out who works where, who is the CEO director of that health system and what does he do and who is he connected to so you can have that conversation, so, yes, yes, yes. I can't emphasize how much.

Ragy: Carol covered it. Paula is right. I think the thing you said that is really important for us, so if you get an interview from Doctor Evidence, a day before you will probably see somebody from Doctor Evidence viewing your profile and we want to know one thing which is how do you know? Are you familiar with anybody who works with our company? Because we want to get to know you a little bit more, and we are not going to do it on Facebook or Instagram. We will Google your name to see what pops up. LinkedIn is key.



Carol: That is what we do when we are screening people, like we go quickly just to see who they know, connections, partnership, potential opportunities, keep those things in mind.

Paula: I use it all of the time.

Student: I see you on there. She's really active.

Paula: I might not post things or I might not be liking a lot of things but I'm searching all the time. I'm searching employers. I'm searching alumni. I'm searching connections, you know, vendors. It is so interesting the power of connecting via LinkedIn. Please, if there is one thing you take away from tonight, make your LinkedIn account to make it 100%.

Carol: I have to say, too, I was very surprised when Paula reached out to me and said, 'So should I be using your title in your LinkedIn?' I was like what? I go 'Yeah, people use it,' so please keep that in mind and make sure that—make it one of your priorities as you go into this. Make sure you talk to Paula. Have other people review it, what your mission statement is and I think that is what that little portion is and there, and yeah be careful with your interests, to, very much.

Paula: And when she talks about interests, there is a section where you can connect with groups and associations, so this comes back to the environment we are in right now, you want to make sure that if you are applying—I don't know—to a human trafficking type of organization, nonprofit, that you don't have the NRA on your like, that you follow. You want to make sure that your goals and your vision are represented in your groups that you follow. I'm sorry I used the NRA. I couldn't think of anything else, but anyway, human trafficking is a big problem and the reason I brought it up is because they adjusted—NPR had a story about that, that in the homeless shelters they found there were 4 women that were being human trafficked in the homeless shelters which, it just stuck on me this morning, so that is the reason why I brought it up.

Slide 6:

So another thing you can do about yourself is your elevator pitch. Now for the online, I'm going to leave it on, so I'm going to see if we can hear these two elevator pitches. Hopefully we can.

[25:05-26:13 sound cuts out; clicking on clips will play Youtube clips]

I would like for you to think about this, like this is too much of a sales pitch. There is no value. There are no accomplishments, there's like, 'I'm interested in changing this in your organization,' or 'I am of value in this way,' so although he was charismatic, he was smiling, he obviously was dressed appropriately, it is just not appropriate for our field, so I wanted to point that out because some of you say I hate elevator pitches because I sound like a salesperson. I don't like introducing myself, but you don't want to sound like this. You want to sound more like this other video that I'm going to show you. It is not a perfect match, as you can see.



[27:05-27:56 sound cuts out]

Can you put the lights back on? Thank you. One of the things he talked about his passion, like to his value system. He talked about his experience. He talked about—he gave his ask, like ‘I am interested in working for this or this,’ and he also talked about his education, so although it was still a little bit sales pitch like, it was more towards what we as public health professionals should be doing, and it is not a perfect match. I will continue searching for a better elevator pitch for our field, but I think that this one kind of has those key components. Anything else to add with the elevator pitch guest speakers Carol or Ragy?

Carol: I think for me one of the things you know when I was listening to his speeches he started with is “why,” and I just want to recommend quickly if you haven’t read “Find Your Why” it is by Steinman, I forget his last name.

Ragy: “Start with Why.”

Carol: Yeah, “Start with Why,” and he started with his passion. It is why we do what we do, right, it is not what, it is not how, but why is it that you want to work for, let’s just say, the American Heart Association? Why are you passionate? Then coming into how are you into it? So just keep that in mind when you go in, like Paula said, it is I think we are lucky enough to be in this field that we can go in and talk about our passion and why we studied public health and what our interests are in there, so start with that as you go in.

Ragy: I think—I’m not going to disagree—but I think I’m going to add context to something.

Paula: Absolutely, yes.

Ragy: But for people who say ‘I don’t like sales. I’m not a salesperson,’ everybody sells every day. You sell yourself. You are selling a product. Everybody is—you know there is a motivation there that they are trying to succeed, and so when you’re in a career fair you are selling yourself to a future employer, whether you want to or whether you think you are or not, and I think the key of the “pitch” is, just like what Carol said, when you start with your purest motivation and your skills and your talents, it is not a pitch anymore. It is just really—you are just being honest with people that you are pitching to, but in a very professional way, and so I think it takes practice to take it away from a pitch and more of, you know, and on his presentation of yourself, but I think there is that misconception that, if you don’t like sales then you don’t sell. No. You sell; you’re not going to be very good at it, so practice it, and I think don’t have it so rehearsed. Sometimes people take this too literally. Not here. We will say UCLA people.

Paula: Thank you for being so kind.



Ragy: They take it so literally. They come with the intent of pitching, and so they will say, 'Hi, how are you, my name is Ragy,' and before you have a chance to answer how you are, they are already kind of in this spiel and so you kind of lose the human aspect of the pitch. It is not a conversation anymore. It goes back to being an infomercial, so I would say when you guys practice your pitch, I would make it more conversational so it is not 'Here is everything I want to say and then you can kind of respond when I'm done.' That would not be good at all.

Carol: Just to kind of piggyback on that, what I would say is I think that word "sales" gets a little bit scary. On a salesperson. I don't sell anything. Trust me, you do so your programs, so there is a truth to that, but I think we have to be comfortable, like Paula is saying, is you are having a conversation, so you have to go in with your why, and why you are going to be doing it and what you are going to be doing and how you can actually collaborate, so don't take it too seriously on having a script, but if you want to create one I think that's okay, you know but I think you have to let it flow but, yes, I think as you go out there into your profession, think about this is the beginning of me selling who I am, you know, but also I'm going to be selling the work that I'm going to be doing, too, so do not be afraid of it. Do not shy away from it. Yes it is scary, but go for it.

Paula: I just want to add some context. I had a student—well, I had two students who had had come into my office on the same day and said, 'Paula, we made an appointment with you but we don't know how to find you. It was really hard to find you. You need to promote yourself.' I'm like, 'Okay, do you receive my newsletter?'

'Yes.'

'Well at the bottom there is my room number.'

'Oh, okay, but all of our classes are on the first floor. Can you post a picture of yourself so that we know where you are at?'

So I agree with Carol absolutely 100%. When you least expect it, you are going to be asked to promote yourself, to sell yourself, and so in the near future, maybe next week, you will be seeing a poster of me with my picture plastered all over the first floor because it was a request of our students.

Slide 7:

Moving on to the next slide here, I love what Ragy said that you practice it, but don't lose the conversational aspect, and I wanted to add context because I love talking about networking, and when you lose that aspect of having a conversation you will not make a genuine impression, and when you don't make a genuine connection you will be forgotten, and then you lost the whole point of going through this career fair because there would be no name recognition. Keep that in mind. These are some elements that I encourage you to include. Introduce yourself. If you do ask the employer how are you, wait for them to respond before you move on to the rest of the conversation, which is perhaps mention what positions you are interested in as the research comes in. Talk



about relevant skills are experiences you have, and then the fourth item is what you have to offer their organization or have them ask. The way I work, I actually when I was looking for jobs, even now, even as a career services advisor and coordinator, I still draft my elevator pitches when I go to certain events, and I may not have a little piece of paper that I read or read in the parking lot before I go into the event, but I do draft it because having that text in writing, I'm a visual learner so for me that works. For some of you it might not, so keep that in mind.

Slide 8:

You are going to have an ask, so these are some of the questions that the employer may ask. Even though it is not set up as an interview, some of the times it does turn into a mini interview where potentially they will ask you, "Hey, can you give me a resume and let's look at the calendar so we can schedule a formal interview," these are the questions that I think are the questions you should be well versed in answering. These are:

- Tell me about yourself?
- What positions are you interested in?
- What kind of experiences do you have?
- What kind of opportunities are you looking for?

If you have a great elevator pitch, some of this would be in there already.

Student: So when you say incorporate an ask, so one of the things I'm thinking in my mind with that be applicable to #4, like that's the kind of opportunities I'm looking for? Like that's essentially the ask, right?

Paula: Well, the ask would be—it can be different things. It could be, 'Hi, I applied for the research manager position, and you do know what stage in the hiring process that is?' That is an ask, or it can be 'I saw on your website that you have a position on analyst and research assistant, do you know the difference between those two? I read the job descriptions and I couldn't really determine the difference.' That is an ask, right? All of this is just to get you a connection to that representative and for them to know, like, you are the candidate they are looking for. Anything you would like to add with regards to Diana's question?

Student: Yeah, what do you want me to ask you? When I go up to you, what do you want to hear me ask?

Carol: I have to think right now. I think for us, you know, I would—what I like to hear a lot of the time is, 'Is there an opportunity in terms of the work that you are all doing here?' For me it is a lot of health education promotion, health systems kind of, so just an ask of 'What do you do in terms of that? Can you give me an example of what a day looks like in your organization or what is a certain program that you have? How would that look like?' I think those, again, are asks, right? I think to get a little bit more understanding of what this job entails, what the association is doing, their mission, or what they are looking for, because one of the things you know it is always innovation—



is there somebody who can come in and be innovative? There might be something that I say after that where I say, 'Oh, you know what? I've actually been working on these.' Really? Tell me more about that because that is someone that can come in, that can really help, so just kind of keep those—I think ask modern questions in terms of the association, what they are doing and how applicable it could be and what you are doing.

Ragy: Yeah, I think every company you will find, we sort of have our own thing that we make sure it is clean and representative, and the advantage of being at a career fair if you get to look under the hood, so what I have found really insightful are people who ask those questions. 'I'm interested in,' for us it would be an evidence analyst position or methodology position. 'What would a day-to-day look like for this person?' Or 'What are some of the soft skills or hard skills that somebody really successful in this field would have that maybe wouldn't be very apparent?' Like, for us, if somebody asked me that question, I would be very impressed because it shows me they are thinking about their placement in that company beyond just there pitch or what they want me to know about them, but it shows that they are actually interested in contributing. So I think employers will have a lot to say about that, like if somebody said the American Heart Association 'What are the skills you use day-to-day that you learn from this program?' For me, if somebody asked me that, I would be very impressed, so I think those types of asks where it goes beyond what is available online that you can just look up on Google is going to be a great opportunity.

Carol: The other thing I want to add is these are good questions. #4: What kind of opportunities are you looking for? That is really good question, but one of the things I want to share with you is a lot of what we do is when we are talking to potential interviewees is we ask 'What is your short-term professional goal and what is your long-term professional goal?' And that sometimes people are not quite ready to answer that the keep those things in mind, because that can't really be telling of the candidate who really wants to work with the Association and have that long-term goal that can be a potential long-term employee.

Paula: Great, any questions from the online audience, Janet?

Janet: No.

Slide 9:

Okay, this is not a resume crafting workshop. We have a lot of videos on that, so you can always look at our website for that, but I did want to talk about, just briefly, that you need to have a polished resume to attend this career fair. My philosophy in resumes is that it is a science, it is an art, and so you really need to determine what is genuine to you, what are your skills, what are your accomplishments? My accomplishments are very different than some of the peers that got their epi from UCLA, and that is because I have been true to my career and what I want to do, and my resume will look very different than my peers who got the same degree, so please make sure that when you come to the career fair you have a polished resume. Make an appointment with me if



you have specific questions about your resume, and visit our website to see the basics around resumes.

Your resume is a changing document. Make sure that you keep updating it. You are all taking classes. You are all doing your practicum, doing your thesis. And sure that that information is and there. You don't want to show up to the career fair with a polished resume from your undergraduate. You don't want to show up with a polished resume from undergraduate. You are a graduate student, you are graduating with a Masters. You want to ensure that everything you did in the past two years is on there.

It's your marketing tool, so it is only going to be as good as you make it, so put some time in it and ensure that your peers review it. If you have professors who have the time, ask them to review it. Come and see me to go over it, and I think the most important thing you can do is have someone outside the field review it, because if they don't know what you are doing, then neither would HR, and that is human resources.

Before I move on, anything else in resume?

Carol: No, I think you said it all.

Ragy: You covered it.

Paula: Yes?

Student: This about the resume. Do you think resumes should be one page or more?

Paula: I get this question every single time I talk to a student, every single time. There is a split in the advisors. Half of the advisors believe that they should be one page, and I think that those advisors work with undergraduates and accountants and lawyers and MBA students. I think in our profession, a public health professional, our job descriptions sometimes are really long, and the #1 job on your resume is to ensure that it is responsive to a job search, and if it takes you two pages then let it be. I don't recommend more than two pages because then you should really be turning in a CV.

Now, let's hear from our employers. What do you prefer; one page, two pages, CVs?

Ragy: So, I think it is okay to have two pages, obviously it is faster to have a one page. I think the most common mistake, though, is I would say attempt to do a one page. If it spills into two it is okay. I think the most common thing that I've seen personally is people kind of start writing a resume without a structure and so it goes two pages and to be frank most of your employers or your screeners are going to take a look at that first page and make an assessment, like a 90% assessment, and if what is there is attractive, if your educational background and some of the top recent experiences align with the opportunities you are applying for will keep digging in and going through, but if you take that real estate and it is just empty, you do yourself a disservice. I think it is okay to have more than one page, but when you challenge yourself to try to trim it



down, you end up with something that is a little more impactful, so that would be my experience.

Carol: I agree. I mean, I will be very honest with you all. When the hiring process begins and I start getting all of these resumes—and mind you, HR goes through a screening process and then sends them to me, mind you a lot of the times the directors or managers they still have their job going on, so we are trying to go through that quickly as possible and looking at the top. If something just comes out I say, ‘Okay I put that to the side,’ no, and then the screening process begins. Again, please make sure—I don’t think—you are right, one page is great. If it is two, I think that’s fine, because if there is content there and you start digging more and more and say ‘Okay, let me see what work they’ve done,’ just make sure, like Paula said, have them review your resume. Make sure that the top portions—usually for me, it’s not for everybody, I always put like a section of qualification skills or highlight qualifications. That’s a really big thing, like what stands out of what I do, and then I go on, so that is really helpful also, just to kind of see what you’ve been doing and what stands out. And if it is two pages, it’s two pages, but let it be meaningful.

Paula: Are the three of us in agreement that the #1 job of a resume is to be responsive to the job description?

Ragy: Yeah, absolutely.

Paula: Stop worrying about the two pages and just tailor your resume for the job, and if you do that, then you have an effective resume.

Carol: The other thing I want to add, and this is from personal experience, I know sometimes the titles can be very enticing and you say ‘I want to do that!’ Read the description. Understand what that job role is, what your responsibilities are, because I mean there are a lot of titles out there—a lot—but sometimes it might not be what you’re looking for. Just make sure that you take the time to read the job description, understand the organization, and to start processing and think about whether or not you can develop something that you can apply for.

Paula: Okay, good question.

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Here are some questions that you can put together for the employers. ‘I’m interested in the “research” position I want to know the hiring timeline.’ You won’t find that on the website. ‘How often are “health educator positions” available?’ For in LA County I would say it’s once a year. ‘What is the most valuable asset or experience you are looking for in the position of case manager?’ ‘How can I establish a professional network with organizations such as yours?’

These are just some questions to ask the employers. Hopefully this gives you a framework to work from. It is not all of the questions that you can ask, but just a few that



you can think about, that these questions go beyond what the website might have, okay? Because you are going to know what is on the website. You are going to know what is on the job description, because you are going to read it carefully. These are some of the things that you may want to ask the employers. Anything else to add from Ragy or Carol?

Ragy: I think just going back to selling yourself. The questions you ask sell you more than anything else you can say, because they reveal your gap of knowledge, so if somebody comes and says 'I've never heard of Doctor Evidence, what do you do?' Boom, obviously somebody hasn't done research, okay. It's not necessary—I don't mind saying with that is, but you have just placed yourself in the 99%, but again if somebody comes in with #3 'What is the most valuable asset or experience you are looking for, for this position' and even adding a little bit of color to your background and experiences, then that reveals somebody who is thoughtful, who's got insight into what your company does, who understand the position, and so it is a huge selling tool. The questions that you ask, I think are a good way to market yourself to your employer. Don't come up with a question that you're not interested in either, because you will meet people who are very passionate. The reason why we go to career fairs is we are the social butterflies of our office and we love talking to people, and if you ask us why are RCTs maybe not the ideal study type, you know we may have a 30-minute discussion. If you are not interested in that, you have 30 minutes where you can go to anybody else, and so ask questions that you are interested in but also frame that in a way that would sell you are market your assets or your experience as well.

Carol: Be genuine, be genuine. I think, you know I know that we are on a hunt for a good job, but make sure that when you are asking these questions it's not because you pulled this list from Paula's workshop today and you're just asking and you're just asking them. Be genuine when you are asking these questions. It is really because you want to know and you want to get to know this organization because this is a potential workplace for you that you want to grow professionally, so stay genuine to that.

Student: Question: [inaudible]

Paula: Okay, I'm glad you're asking this question because when the employers register, there will be a field that they will let us know beforehand if they have visas or not, so I think that you shouldn't. Instead you should look at the website and it will indicate whether they are sponsoring visas or not. I think visas, salary, what your organization does, what positions do you have open our no-no questions for the employers. Anything else you would like to add?

Ragy: I think for the visa thing, if somebody asked it, from organizations who don't do it you will get a 'no,' and everybody else will hear 'it depends,' so I think it is not as—you will get the answer you are looking for because it is a 30-second preview of the job, so I think an interview is usually where we cover something like that.



Paula: But you will know it before know beforehand because I collect that information from the employers, okay? Another thing that, I don't know if our students are doing it, but I know the main campus does this is they will go to an employer be like 'Can I have some sunglasses?' And the answer is don't do that. If they bring souvenirs or anything to give out, make sure you have introduced herself and that you've had a connection and that you say 'Thank you so much. May I now have a pen,' or the sunglasses for the sunny day, so please be respectful of our guests. I did notice that on main campus, so I want to make sure we don't do that. I want to say something, you know. Most of the people and main campus are undergrads, so they are much younger, and Google is used to the students there acting this way because that is why Google brings T-shirts and Amazon brings sunglasses. You know, this is the environment, but it is not our environment here.

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Okay, one of the things during the career fair is that you think the employer—the representative you are talking to. Ask them for a business card. There is something I do want to let you know. Maybe you have something to add. It is that when there isn't this connection or they are not interested they may say something like 'Sorry, we have run out of business cards,' and then you turn around and they are giving a business card to another student. Now I don't want you to get hurt. What I want you to know is that it wasn't a mutual conversation where both of you were interested. When you go to work for someone, it has to be this mutual relationship where you are gaining something and they are gaining something, and if it wasn't there than it wasn't there. Maybe you'll have better luck with another representative or maybe you will have a better luck in another position. Don't get hurt so much as I ran out of business cards. I think it is a learning opportunity. Maybe I can reflect what was a conversation like? Where can I improve it? And, you know, it doesn't mean that you're not going to get a job at Kaiser if that is your dream job, it just means that at that point in time the connection was not made.

#1: Please, when you excuse yourself, please don't overstay your time with each employer. Ragy would love to talk to you about trials for 30 minutes, however the people behind you're not going to appreciate that, so you can tell Ragy, "Ragy, I would love to continue talking about clinical trials, is it possible for me to get your business cards because there are 10 other students who are waiting to talk to you? Would you continue this conversation?" With that be appropriate, Ragy?

Ragy: Absolutely, Paula.

Paula: Okay, so please don't overstay. Excuse yourself. "It was a pleasure to meet you." Mention their name. When you mention somebody's name, it makes a wired connection in your brain, so make sure you say their name. "Ragy, it was such a pleasure to meet you." Now there is a connection. You shake hands. You said his name. You made eye contact and he's going to remember you next time. Then you ask them how is the best way to follow up. Right? Anything else you would like to add to that, concluding the conversation?



Carol: I think that was perfect. Paula did great.

Ragy: There's a really good book. Some people are not going to like it, but I think it is a helpful book for any people entering the professional workspace. Dale Carnegie "How to Win Friends and Influence People." One of the chapters is basically what Paula just said, which is we are primed to respond to our names, and so when you say somebody's name, it is a pretty big impact. I don't know if it is physiological or an emotional thing, but it is not negative, so I will say it's good to know somebody's name.

Paula: Also, there is another book called "Captivate," I forget the authors name, and she talks about the handshake, how it sends so many neurons to the brain that it will make a lasting connection, that handshake, and that is why they ask you to be firm and to make sure that you shake the hand before hand and after. All of these it is just body language, and it is so important when you are in front of someone who has the key to your future to have the appropriate body language.

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Here are some don'ts. I think we have talked about them. Don't overstay. Make sure that when you ask for giveaways, it is after you introduce yourself, have had a conversation. Don't talk about salary, benefits and visa. Ragy said maybe during an interview, I actually think that these conversations come at the offer letter stage because you don't want them to think, 'Should I make an offer, but they also need a visa?' Or, "Oh, they have a family of four," these are questions that, first of all, like how many kids do you have? They are not appropriate questions to be asked during an interview, and so you should be asking, "Oh, I have two kids, do you have insurance?" Right? I would say those questions are at the offer letter. The visa question is something that probably needs to come out during the first interview because if the organization is not sponsoring visas, you don't want to get to the offer letter to ask, "Oh, by the way, I need a visa."

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Carol: I want to say, once your resumes are forwarded to HR, they screen them as well and what they do is do a video—they send a link to upload a video, and they will have 5 questions on the slide and you have to answer them. Keep that in mind, too, that things are changing. Technology is really being a part of that interview process now and that is how they are screening, to, so just keep those things in mind.

Paula: Can you tell me a little bit more? So there would be a question and the person is to video record themselves answering that question.

Carol: Answering 4 questions.

Paula: Okay, so when they are answering the questions, it is a full video.



Carol: Yes.

Paula: So they need to be interview ready?

Carol: They need to be interview ready: your attire, your setting—please do not have your bed with clothes in the back. Make sure you choose a nice setting when you're answering these questions or you are recording yourself, so everything is appropriate. It is like you are going to an interview, but you are recording yourself, so when HR gets that they send it to us and that we view it. We like they didn't answer any of the questions, and then that is just another part that you have to keep in mind, too. Yeah, [inaudible] a lot.

Paula: See, I knew I was going to learn. Okay, so Ragy already touched upon this...

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And he said, your thank you or your follow-up email is going to be crucial, and he also talked about how it should be a good match between what happened with the person and the email or the thinking it says. Please make sure that if you talked about X, that you write about in your notes and you say, "I talked to Ragy about X," and you said tethered—tether in your email, "We talked about X. Thank you so much for coming to the career fair. I look forward to hearing from you." I encourage you to—if he gave you a big job position, like "Hey, you should look into this position," that you actually apply to that position before sending that resume, that thank you, and say "I did it. I'm done. I followed up with what you recommended." Sometimes the recommendation is to contact somebody, right, so contact "This is a business card for my colleague at clinical trials. Please contact them and tell them that I sent you." Well, now you have to do to contact. You have to contact the person in clinical trials and you need to contact Ragy and you need to tell him "Hey, I did what you recommended."

Here is the apply online. Connect with their colleague, and then if, let's say, this—let's say, email a tailored letter, cover letter, and resume, if for example that interaction was not like a 100% you think, you still want to give it another try. They gave you the business card but maybe somebody was pushing you or something and you kind of got frazzled and you couldn't complete the connection with the representative, I recommend for you to tailor a cover letter and you send the resume to them and say, "Hi, we met. Unfortunately there were 20 students behind me and we couldn't really have an extensive conversation. I wanted to reach out because I believe," or "I'm passionate about what the Heart Association is doing, and I really believe that this is a good fit and this is why." It is okay if all you got out of that connection is a business card and you follow up in that manner. Do you agree?

Ragy: Yeah, I think a lot of times if it is good for you guys to understand that the titles of the people that you are meeting with because oftentimes you guys will be needing, you know the people that are at the career fair are the decision-makers and if you did not have that good connection with that decision-maker, it is not one and done. There is still that opportunity to do it digitally. There is a little bit of precedence there with the career



fair, but you have a little bit more ground to cover, so I would say, you know, especially if you are meeting with somebody who, based on your market research or your conversation, you know that this is somebody who is responsible for making that decision, it is definitely good to have a tailored communication and it is very easy to see when it is not tailored. I can't underline that enough. We can tell when it is "Hi, it was a pleasure to meet you. Please let me know about my application." We know that that is one of 15 emails. But when you meet with a decision-maker, something tailored can help you build a little bit more of a common base.

Carol: Yeah, and also, keep in mind that as you email back "thank you" it is continuing networking. You know, that thank you can go a long way, because it opens—it possibly opens to other opportunities, so you've got to continue networking, because maybe you will get that position, you know, during this time, but a follow-up later, something might click where that person says "Hey, listen, what about that person I met? Is that person still available? I should send them an email." This is crucial. You have to continue networking and the thank you goes a long way, but again make sure that it is tailored and not just "Thank you and bye."

Paula: I love what you just said, Carol, because the last thing I was going to mention is the connection. I know, here it is again. I mean, I don't get paid by this, but yes I'm going to put a plug-in for LinkedIn one more time and that is let's say all you got was a business card. You didn't feel that good jive. Maybe you were like it's a cool organization, but I don't work there. I would say it is a must for you to connect with them on LinkedIn. You've got a business card. Do it. What do you have to lose? It could be the beginning of relationship. Now, I think that a lot of the reasons why people don't like networking is because they failed to understand the key to networking, and networking is not for you to find a job or for you to find an intern. Networking is about building relationships, and so you approach somebody at the career fair. They were graceful enough to give you their business card. The least you can do is connect on LinkedIn and say thank you. You can say "Thank you so much for coming to our career fair. It was a pleasure talking to you." Connect, right? You don't want to work there. You are not asking them for a job or an internship, but you are now starting a relationship that could, in the future, be fruitful one. Okay, anything else would like to add?

Ragy: No, I think connecting is good because we will have colleagues that may see that we have a connection, so they will say "Hey, we saw that you are with Paula. Paula just applied to our job. What do you know about it?" I got those LinkedIn messages, so expanding your network could also help you build a new contacts and positions that you are interested in or meet people that you want to get in touch with for your career or just professional development. Sometimes people want like a professional mentor, and it is a great way to move up.

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Paula: All right, so this is, in summary, what I think we were able to accomplish today, and that is you must be prepared. You must research the jobs and the organizations, and have a resume, and elevator pitch. These are all musts. Please, if you attend this



career fair, and none of these are published, I would say I hope that at least you can have some connections on LinkedIn, but come back to me and be like “Paula, I didn’t get anything out of the career fair.” I would say “Did you do a resume?” Then we will start figuring out what were all of the things you neglected to do to prepare for the career fair. Also, I want to say you are all representing this program. This is your program for the rest of your life you will have this degree, and so you want to make sure that you are prepared to talk to these employers and that you put your best self out there, because the worst thing I can hear later on because the employers get evaluations is your students were not prepared, because that is not the reputation we want. We want—which in the last two years--100% of the employer saying “What I like best about the career fair is how well prepared the students were.” I want to continue that trend, and I hope that you all contribute to that trend.

Make sure, we talked about the resumes, the elevator pitch. This is something old-fashioned, but I kind of love it. Print your resume on resume paper. Go out there by yourself a little packet. It costs like \$7.99 at Office Depot. It says resume paper. It’s linen. Get the 100%. It is going to make a difference when you handed to them. You know, hand them a little flimsy white piece of paper or a linen piece of paper and say “Here’s my resume.” What do you think?

Ragy: Linen, linen 100%, Yeah.

Carol: Yeah, for me as well. This person took time to actually go by this paper, make sure that the resumes stood out amongst all of these flimsy white papers, so it says a lot. It makes you start thinking about what type of person does this? What do they do? Do they go to that extra mile to get things done? It can say a lot.

Paula: All right, the last thing is, make sure you follow up because you don’t want your name to be forgotten.

Okay, this is for Diana, because she asked. What website? For all of you, save the date, March 23. For our employers, my budget was just approved, so we are moving forward 100%.

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And you will be given an invitation for registration by the end of this week, and this is the website where you all can get the latest news. It hasn’t been updated because I just—it has all of the information from 2017, but I will be updating for 2018 information.

For those of you that don’t know my website, here is my website:
https://mphcareers.usc.edu/carreer_fairs.php.

I hope you all visit the website. We have tons of videos. This video will be posted there. There are tons of resources, you can book an appointment with me there. I want to thank each of you for coming today on a Wednesday evening to come to hear us have a



conversation about how to put your best self out there at the career fair. Thank you so much, and we will take questions for our guest speakers now.

Janet: Question online from Amanda. The question is: when you hand your resume to someone, should you attach your business card to the resume or should you save that for a business card exchange? Or is it an “in the moment” sort of decision.

Carol: I would say my preference, I mean it could be different for everybody I think, I would want it to be business card exchange, you know it because I feel it's like “here take my resume and my business card.” Usually for me it is at the end of the conversation, to say “Let me give you my contact information so we can connect.” I would leave it at the end. But I don't know if you feel differently.

Ragy: I agree. I think a lot of times we have a lot of resumes to hold, so functionally speaking that business card may be lost if it is not exchanged properly.

Carol: Personally for me I think it is very powerful at the end to be able to give that business card and say, “I would love to follow up with you.” Yeah, yeah [inaudible]

Paula: Any other questions? No? All right, well let's give a round of applause to our guest speakers.

[Applause]

I learned so much today, thank you. I would like to thank our employers because then I can give actual information to our students. For those who came in, please please fill out an evaluation. It is so important for the success of our program, and if you haven't signed in, please sign. I just want to see hands, how many are MS students? Everybody is MPH, all right, good showing. I thought Ragy was definitely going to bring in the MS students because you guys have a lot of MS students, right?

Ragy: I don't know. I don't know the breakdown. I will find out.

Paula: Okay, since nobody asked this question, I swear I thought some of you would ask this question. What are you planning to bring to our career fair? Internships, jobs? You not know yet? I'll put you want to stop there.

Ragy: Can I say something? Because I think USC is such a great program, but I will say that I think one of the things I've noticed about MPH students specifically is they are very eager to find an internship, and a lot of times we don't bring internship JDs (job descriptions). We bring professional job descriptions because we expect professionals who are graduating or professionals who are graduating soon and so, we are bringing professional entry-level and mid-level positions that we want to have a repository of students for, but I would just maybe add a challenge that it is good. It's not bad ask for an internship, but as graduate students you guys should be ready to step into a career, and don't be eager to find an internship when there could be a full-time career waiting



for you and something that you love. You know, if you offer to do an internship, nobody's going to say no. Like, people will say "Can I just do an unpaid internship part-time?" Yeah, that's the problem, meanwhile we have behind the door a full-time job with benefits, so I would say just be prepared to engage that way, but we are going to bring not the internships. We are probably going to be looking at the entry-level and mid-level positions.

Carol: Well, on my end, we are bringing internships. Yes, we right now are on a mission at the American Heart Association [inaudible]. We are on a mission right now. We are falling really behind on improving hypertension, so we need all the help we can get in terms of going into the communities and related health education, not only with communities but with healthcare systems, with clinics, as well as having people in their to be part of the curriculum we have, so there is great potential to do internships to do hours, to really get hands-on being part of what—I'm sure you are all sitting in here right now. Right now one of the biggest things that is happening amongst organizations is "collective impact." And that is something that the American Heart Association is doing, so there is an opportunity to join that with us as well, as well as to lead the healthcare education, to move that needle in LA County, so I will be bringing the internships. I will be bringing internships because we are really looking at our health and also an opportunity to allow you to really learn what it means to be in the community and apply what you have learned as well.

Paula: And for the students who are here, this year we are trying to implement something new, so the students can put on their name tag if they want an internship or a position so they can put a blue sticker or a blue star for internship and a yellow star for "I need that golden job, the Cardinal job," and the employers, during their registration, will let us know what they will be having, so beforehand the students will know whether this is an employer who will have internships or positions or both, and the employers just by their name tag will also be able to tell that this person is looking for an internship, okay? Anything else? I totally forgot I wanted to ask that question about what you are bringing in.

I think it's been great to have a private sector represented here that lets hiring MPH and a nonprofit sector who loves having internships to make the great impact that we so much need in hypertension, and I think isn't it the number two killer?

Carol: Number one.

Paula: Number one now.

Carol: A lot of people think it's breast cancer, but it is number one killer, so that is a big movement that we have, the campaign for that, and I think it is number two or three—don't quote me on that—and obviously when we start talking about ethnic groups it differs, but it is number one for women.



Ragy: Carol, how impressed would you be if somebody came in and told you they read the guideline that was just published two months ago? How impressed would you be?

Carol: I'm super impressed right now.

Ragy: Do you hire them on the spot?

Carol: Probably, yeah I would say give me your card. Yeah, I would be super impressed if somebody were to come up to me and say that.

Ragy: That's a pro tip for everybody who is interested.

Carol: I would be very impressed if they said, "You know, I've heard that in November you guys released your new blood pressure guidelines."

Paula: Interesting. I continue to learn. I did not know—so the way I would approach the Heart Association would be like "Hi Carol. Thank you so much for coming today. I believe that heart disease is rampant in the Latino community. My mom got her first heart attack at 42 and I'm passionate about working with these people making an impact." Do you guys notice? I didn't even say I have a degree in epidemiology, right? And she would probably pay attention to me, and now I made a connection, and some people feel comfortable talking about their personal life when they are introducing themselves? You don't have to, but I'm just straightforward like that, so everybody knows my business.

Carol: And I think it's great. You know, like going back to the beginning of researching the organization, a company you want to work for, what is their mission? What are they trying to do? I mean, is that applicable to you? Is that something you want to work towards? And I think that is where you create that genuine conversation and connection, you know, again I know about the new blood pressure guidelines or I know it's the number one killer amongst women. All of that information would blow somebody like wow, you've gone to our website. You know.

Paula: I don't want to delay this further, but thank you so much.

1:31:30 presentation ends.

Please complete the online survey.