CEE's Résumé Review Night

Backpack to Briefcase Series
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Presented by the CEE Alumni Association

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Talking Points

- How to write a winning résumé

- Tips on what – and what not – to include

- How to write an engaging cover letter

- Your follow-up with the employer

On average, how much time does an employer spend looking at a resume?

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On average, an employer spends between **20 and 30 seconds** looking at a resume!!

Designing Your Résumé

- Your resume is the first impression that any recruiter will have of you. It is your very own self marketing tool.
- One page for most entry-level positions
- Target your resume to the employer
  - Include skills and accomplishments that meet the employer's qualifications
  - If responding to a specific posting – include information they indicate they are seeking
- Make it visually appealing
- Ensure it's free of spelling, typographical, punctuation or grammatical errors
- Present the most important information first

Types of Résumés

- Chronological
  - Organizes information by positions and experiences in reverse chronological order
- Functional
  - Organizes information into functional groupings of skills or accomplishments
- Combination
  - Organizes experience in reverse chronological order within functional categories

Essential Resume Information

- Contact Information
  - Who you are and how you can be reached
- Objective
  - What you want to do (tailored to each recipient)
- Education Section
  - What you have learned or been honored for
- Professional Employment/Experience Section
  - What you've done
    - Make it relevant to the objective whenever possible
- Leadership/Extracurricular Section
  - What you do outside of school and employment

Contact Section

- Begin your résumé with your name by capitalizing and using bold type
- Include street address, city, state and zip code
  - Permanent address and school address
- Include phone numbers
  - Primary/preferred phone number is fine (Home, Work, or Cell)
- Always include your e-mail address
  - Think about using personal email address for long term correspondence beyond Illinois
  - Think about what your e-mail address says about you

Objective Section

- Briefly indicates the type of position, job title, and area of specialization sought
  - It should match what that employer does and show that you have done your research
  - All other information to follow should be evaluated on the basis of its relevance to this objective

- Language is specific, employer-centered
  - Not self-centered!

Objective Section

- A career objective <u>is advantageous</u> when:
    - You want to specify your interests and where you would fit in the organization
    - You want to present the impression of being focused, self-confident
- A career objective <u>is not advantageous</u> when it is:
    - Too broad and meaningless, reflecting indecision or desperation
    - Not targeted to the audience

Objective Statement Examples

Obtain a Summer Internship at a Transportation Engineering firm in Chicago metropolitan area.

Obtain a full-time position in San Francisco as a structural engineer with a company specializing in the design of seminal office towers.

Education Section

- Start with most recent degree or program in which you are currently enrolled
- List other degrees or relevant education in reverse chronological order
- Begin with the university, followed by location, degree, emphasis, and graduation date
  - If you are within two semesters of graduation, do not use "anticipated" or "expected"
- Include <u>academic</u> honors and scholarships

Education Section

- General Rules for Including GPA
  - List GPA if over 3.0
  - List Major GPA if over 3.0 and overall GPA is under 3.0
  - List both if both above 3.0 and major GPA is at least 0.3 above your overall GPA
  - If you omit your GPA, some recruiters will assume that you have a low GPA
- Omit high school if you have completed more than two years of college
  - Unless referencing impressive honors or extracurricular activities

Education Examples

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,   Urbana, Illinois
  BS Civil and Environmental Engineering, Environmental Emphasis, expected May 2020.   GPA 3.8
          Honors: Chi Epsilon, 2017-Present
                       Dean's List, Fall 2017, Spring 2018

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign,   Urbana, Illinois
  MS Civil and Environmental Engineering, Transportation Emphasis, anticipated May 2021
  BS Civil and Environmental Engineering, Construction Management Emphasis, May 2019;   GPA 3.2

Educational Highlights Section

- Useful when you have developed skills and specific knowledge through education and related activities rather than work experience
  - Leadership roles in extracurricular activities.
  - Even if not in a key role – okay to include, but explain your role.
- Highlights course work
  - Specify unique or advanced courses
  - Research and/or design projects
  - Study abroad experience

Professional Employment Section

- Begin with your current or most recent position and work backward, chronologically
  - Devote more space to recent employment
- Follow job title and organizational information with the city and state of employment
  - Project Manager Intern, Walsh Construction, Chicago, IL
- Provide dates: May 2019 – August 2019

Professional Employment Section

- Stress major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your competencies
  - **S**ituation/Project
  - **O**pportunity/Obstacles
  - **A**ction
  - **R**esults
  - **S**trategic Impact
- Tailor your position description to future career objectives
- Remember to be succinct, emphasizing your experiences and accomplishments
- Every job develops transferable skills

Skills Section

- Computer skills
  - Software applications, languages, operating systems
    - Always indicate proficiency levels
  - Microsoft Office is typically assumed

- Language skills
  - Specific level of fluency and ability to read and write as basic, intermediate, or advanced

Leadership/Extracurricular Activities

- Community service and professional associations sections
  - List of significant positions of responsibility
    - Include title and dates of service
  - Relevant leadership roles, achievements and transferable skills
  - Relevant hobbies and personal interests
    - Opinions differ whether this belongs on a professional resume

Leadership/Extracurricular Examples

- Leadership
  - Alpha Beta Fraternity, Chapter President, Jan 2019 – Present

- Community Involvement
  - Children's Miracle Network Fundraiser, Co-Chair, May 2018

- Extracurricular
  - Concrete Canoe Team Captain, May 2019 – Present

International Students Seeking Employment in the U.S.

- Emphasize the positive: as more companies go global, bilingual employees and employees familiar with working abroad become more advantageous
  - The fact that international students have lived and studies in another country shows determination and resourcefulness
- Provide employers a frame of reference when referring to foreign schools and companies
- Avoid listing an international permanent address, especially if an employer cannot reach you at that address
- Do not list English as a language skill on a resume written in English for an English speaking country
  - Instead emphasize strong English skills on the résumé itself

International Students Seeking Employment in the U.S.

- As a general rule, do not include the following:
  - TOEFL Score
  - Photographs
  - Immigration Status
  - Age
  - Hometown/Home Country
  - Marital Status
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Religion

Discussing your Immigration Status

- It is illegal for an employer to ask you your race, nationality, or immigration status
- They can, however, inquire as to whether you are authorized to work in the U.S.
- Not all employers are familiar with work authorizations associated with various immigration categories
  - It is important that, if asked, you are able to explain your employment eligibility
  - The more knowledgeable you are about the employment options available to you, the better you will fair in this type of discussion

Overcoming Job Search Challenges as an International Student

- Hiring Complexities: Change of Status from a student visa to a work visa
  - You need to be aware of the time it will take to change your status
  - You will need to be proactive in making sure your employer is also aware
  - Be prepared to demonstrate what you can bring to the organization as well as the benefits of hiring a non-U.S. citizen
- Commitment: Show the employer your loyalty to the company and how, if applicable, you can be an asset to overseas operations
- Resentment: Research diversity and its benefits in the workplace

Top 5 Job Search Tips for International Students*

- Grades Matter, but Get Out of the Classroom
- Understand What your Target Employers Want
- Know and Speak your Brand
- Talk to People
- Don't Limit Yourself to the U.S. Job Market

Make Sure that Your Résumé…

- Demonstrates your ability or potential to do the job
- Speaks to the employer's needs and requirements
- Indicates knowledge of the field, typical issues or problems, solutions
- Contains only personal data relevant to your objective
  - Do NOT include: age, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, health, and names of references

Reminders

- Résumés are your first introduction to the employer and dramatically affect the screening process

- Invest the time to create an excellent marketing tool for yourself

Résumé Checklist

- Appearance
  - Use appropriate font style and size (10-12 point)
  - Incorporate enough white space between sections to facilitate skimming
  - Create visual impact using bullets, bold face, underlining and italics
  - If sending via e-mail:
    - Send resume as an attachment (do not cut and paste into body of e-mail)
    - Use typical file types (.pdf) which can be opened by recipient and is not distorted
  - If mailing or hand delivering, print on high-quality bond paper

Résumé Checklist

- Organization and format
  - Include keyword phrases of profession
  - Present strongest qualifications first
  - Make it the appropriate length
  - Account for all time periods
- Writing style
  - Begin sentences with powerful action verbs
  - Use consistent verb tense
  - Use short paragraphs, short sentences
  - Use brief, succinct language
  - Avoid acronyms when feasible

Action Verbs

- Communication/People Skills
  - Collaborated, consulted, discussed, drafted, edited, interacted, persuaded, presented, synthesized
- Technical Skills
  - Built, computed, constructed, developed, installed, maintained, operated, solved, upgraded
- Teaching Skills
  - Encouraged, facilitated, guided, instilled, motivated, taught, tutored
- Research Skills
  - Analyzed, diagnosed, evaluated, interpreted, investigated summarized, surveyed
- Organization/Detail Skills
  - Arranged, categorized, compiled, incorporated, monitored, processed, scheduled
- Management/Leadership Skills
  - Chaired, coordinated, delegated, established, initiated, motivated, reorganized, supervised
- Verbs for Accomplishments
  - Expanded, exceeded, improved, spearheaded, succeeded, surpassed

Above all, make sure your résumé is ABSOLUTELY free from grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors as well as awkward or incorrect use of language

Cover Letter Content

- First Paragraph: Why?
  - Why are you writing?
    - What position and how did you find out about the position?
  - Why are you interested in this employer?
- Second Paragraph: What?
  - What qualifications can you bring to the position?
  - Do not simply reiterate or reword your resume.
- Third Paragraph: What do you want?
  - Summarize letter
  - Refer to résumé
  - Indicate follow-up

Cover Letter Tips

- Your cover letter is not simply a reiteration of your résumé, it needs to enhance your resume

- Take the time to research employer's organization and personalize each letter

- Highlight one or two significant accomplishments or abilities

- Use a polite, formal style

- Be positive in tone, content, and expectations

- Use active voice and powerful action verbs

Cover Letter Tips

- Group similar items together in a paragraph
- Back up general statements with specific facts or examples
- Never overestimate your experience or skills
- Avoid jargon or clichés
- Use correct grammar and spelling
- If sending by e-mail, a cover letter is not necessary
  - Cut and paste the cover letter into the body of your message

Follow Up

- This is an additional opportunity to show a prospective employer how you can add value to their organization
- Depends on the position
- If sending to a specific person, be sure to follow up
- If applying online, there is no likely avenue for follow up
  - It is not helpful to call an HR department to inquire as to the status of a resume submitted online

Questions?

Main Event - Resume Review

- Alumni have come to assist in resume review
- Please grab dinner and head to the crane bay
- Please respect alumni and their time
- **One résumé reviewed per student**
- PLEASE remember, this is not an interview, this is a resume review.
- Each review should take ~5 minutes
- If you would like further assistance, please contact Engineering Career Services: https://ecs.engineering.illinois.edu/