



National Association of Colleges and Employers - 2019 Inclusion Committee

Transcript: Mock Networking Event for Students With Disabilities

Hi, my name is Cassie Rosas Carson, and I'm a career counselor here at the Pennsylvania State University's career services.

Today, I'm going to talk to you about a mock networking event that we had for our students with disabilities.

We would like to talk about the details of the event how we ran it the things that our students got out of the event and the next steps that we are taking at the career office.

So we were contacted by the office of vocational rehabilitation to collaborate more with their students on campus and getting them integrated into the services that they had. Through this we identified that they didn't have the networking skills or experience to be part of some of the networking events that we had here on campus. So I wanted to create an opportunity for them to practice these skills in a smaller less intimidating environment than our very large three-day Career Fair with over 12,000 students that can be really overwhelming for those students, not only navigating the fair but the large crowds things like that.

So we hosted an event the week before our fall career days here at Penn State career services office in one of our kind of larger classroom conference areas.

We wanted to keep the event small for the exact reason of not intimidating those students making an open welcoming space.

We invited about ten of our employers and I worked with our employer engagement specialists to help identify some employers that we were willing to participate and sponsor in this event.

We had Ernst & Young sponsor the events that we were able to provide some light refreshments for the students to have opportunities to kind of navigate, eating some food, having conversations things like that.

When the students walked into our office we had them swipe into Arceus for attendance.

We had about 20 students that attended the event then once they were there the event was from 3 to 6 pm to try to not interfere with some of the other events that were going on campus and class schedules.

The students were able to come and go as they please so they could go in and talk with one employer, they could talk with several employers.

It was completely up to them.

Many of students would just walk up to the tables, practice their elevator pitch, ask them questions and then our employers were instructed to give them some feedback of things that

they could do to improve or things that they did well. We got some really great feedback from all of our students that attended and even some of our faculty that participated and so we're going to be continuing this event here this spring. Some things that we like to do differently is that we would like to have a table outside

of the event specifically for career counselors like myself that we can talk with the students before going into the event see if they have any questions or need some help.

We had some students that were kind of nervous even attending this event and then we can also touch base with them after. We want to increase our collaboration, so we are going to reach out to our counseling services on campus continuing to work with our disability office and then also further collaborate with an instructor who teaches one of our communications classes/public speaking but specifically for students with anxiety and really big public anxiety public speaking anxiety so we are going to specifically advertise with those agencies having them contact their students specifically and then notifying all of our partner career offices as well so that when they're working with students that might fit the population that we're navigating then they can advertise this event specifically. We wanted to keep it small and specifically for those students and many of the employers that we invited as well have specific initiatives for individuals with disabilities so this way we were able to connect these students, give them an opportunity for them to practice these skills and feel included here on campus.

If you have any questions or want to know more about this specific event, please feel free to contact me at CLR277@psu.edu.

Thank you and we are!