**Montclare University**

**Career Placement Center**

***Opening Career Doors***

We know you are serious about your education. We also know you are serious about planning for a career that will carry you far. Regardless of your major, Montclare University’s Career Placement Center is here to help! As part of our current career planning program, we are focusing on one job skill each week. This week, we want to help you master interview skills that will help you land that dream position! We have summarized career advice we collected from professionals around the nation. If you missed the recent symposium in which we explored interview skills, we hope you will take a look at the following summary of advice collected from career professionals around the nation. As always, we are available in Rogers Hall, Room 38, for additional assistance.

Make the most of the time you spend in a job interview. Regardless of the position you seek, the following suggestions should help you put your best foot forward!

**Do your homework**

Homework is not something you leave behind when you leave class. Before going for that interview, research the company you want to work for. Visit the company, check out its website, and talk with someone who works there. Be familiar with the products produced or the services rendered. Become a knowledgeable potential employee. Make a list of things you want more information about so you are prepared to ask questions at the end of the interview.

**Dress for success**

First impressions matter. Enough said. Even if you are a free spirit, an interview is not the time to express yourself. Dress for the job you are applying for. It shows you are serious about getting the job. If you are uncertain, always overdress, which means no athletic shoes, jeans, hats, or midriff‑showing shirts. Cover up any obvious tattoos, if possible.

**Practice**

You didn’t give a presentation in speech class without practicing first, did you? As odd as it may sound, practicing out loud for your interview will settle your nerves and help you sound more prepared. Think about what the employer wants to know about you and rehearse your responses in a mirror. You will come across as much more confident—which in fact, you will be!

**Be on time**

Hopefully, you’ve learned this skill by arriving on time for your classes. Regardless, it’s never too late to learn! You are expected to be on time for work, and this is not a time to cause a potential employer to wonder whether you will be. Arrive at the parking lot at least 30 minutes ahead of time, and be available in the building 15 minutes ahead. Arriving too early can throw off your interviewer’s time schedule, but you certainly don’t want to be late.

**Watch the body language (and language, in general)**

Shake hands with a firm grip. Don’t slouch; you might come across as lazy or uninterested. Try to keep your nerves at bay by taking a deep breath now and then and thinking before you speak. And speaking of speech—be polite, professional, use good grammar, and above all, avoid using slang or profanities. Don’t make negative remarks about previous jobs or employers and don’t complain. You should be positive, enthusiastic, and ready to take on a new challenge!

**Sell yourself, but don’t ramble**

Your interview is a time to sell yourself. You are selling a service that you hope they need. You need to stress the value you can add to the company and convince the employer that your services are better than all the rest. At the same time, don’t talk too much. You do not need to tell the interviewer more then he or she needs to hear. If you are unprepared, you tend to ramble when answering questions, possibly talking yourself right out of the job. Simply match your skills with the position’s requirements. There will be time to get to know each other better later.

**Ask questions**

Obviously, the interview is about getting a job. But is it the job for you? Having done your research, you know the questions to ask to make sure the job is a good fit for your skills. You don’t want to come across as interviewing the interviewer, but do have a few questions in mind. Having a clear set of expectations can help you determine whether you can contribute to the company.