**Robotics Career Fair Prep – Jake Bernier & Jordyn Johnson**

-Introduction

**Hello, I’m Jake Bernier. For internships, I have had a coop with Xcel Energy and got to work with electrical engineers in a large power plant. And last summer, I was a control systems engineering intern for 3M. I got to program machines, touchscreens, robots to make manufacturing automated. I graduate this May and will be working full time at 3M with Jordyn.**

-Recap career center presentation and website.

**The Career Fair is next week Wednesday from 10am-2pm. In case you don’t know, we’re going to briefly cover all the resources and information available on the NDSU Career Center.**

**They have resources for resumes, cover letters, interviewing, networking, job postings, internships, company information, career fair, and more.**

**I’m sure you’ve seen a career center presentation about how to prepare for a career fair, but if you haven’t.. This is what they say: Get resume critiqued, research employers, practice conversation starter, dress to impress, have a plan at fair.**

-Practice talking about robotics during career fair and interviews

**You have access to all that information on the NDSU Career Center webpage and can go through that on your own time. What we want to focus on is how you can talk about robotics during the career fair and interviews. I attribute both of my internships to mostly my involvement in robotics. For those who have been to a career fair, have you ever walked up to an employer and you just kind of looked at each other and it was really awkward and uncomfortable? It’s happened to me. But having a good conversation starter is key. For example:**

**Hello, my name is Jake Bernier. I am a senior in electrical engineering. On campus, I’m very heavily involved in our robotics club with volunteering at regional robotics competition, participating in a robot-in-three-days competition, and coaching kids in lego robotics. I am also a resident assistant in a community of about 70 engineering students. And I’m an engineering ambassador for the NDSU college of engineering. I see you had an internship position posted for this upcoming summer and would like to learn more about it.**

**In your intro, you introduced yourself and told them why you’re there. And put the ball in their court. They might jump right into details about the position or ask you more questions about the things you said or ask questions to determine if you’re a good fit for the position and worthy of being interviewed. There will be a bit more conversation. With 3M, as soon as I mentioned robotics he perked up and said “Oh, you should have said that sooner” and scheduled me for an interview. Imagine you’re an employer. You have to screen through hundreds of applicants at a fair. Therefore your first impression and conversation starter is important. Moving onto interviews.**

**I’ve had a handful of engineering interviews and they all have basically been the same. The questions they’re going to ask you aren’t a mystery. I answer most of my interview questions with robotics experiences.**

**They’re going to ask something like why do you want to work for us/ why should we hire you?**

**I think I’d be a great candidate due to my technical experience and soft skills acquired through robotics. For example, we just recently completed our robot in three days competition. Normally high school students have 6 weeks, we did it in three days, working in a team. I got hands on experience wiring, manufacturing, programming our robot, but also found the importance of communicating and staying organized and troubleshooting which are skills that will translate well into this position.**

**Give an example of you working in a team.**

**In robotics, I programmed our robot but relied on our mechanical people to build the robot, our electrical people to wire the robot, our scouting people to have a proper gameplan, our marketing people to relay proper information, etc. I need to be counted on to due my part, yet trust that my teammates will due their part.**

**Give an example showing communication skills**

**In order to succeed in robotics, everybody has to be on the same page within our team. This is why communication is important so that we’re all working towards the same goal.**

**An example of you taking the lead.**

**In robotics, I became a project lead. Or I took lead on wiring and programming our robot. I volunteered to coach lego robotics. Or I took a lead volunteer position.**

**An example where you had a problem and needed a creative solution. An example of troubleshooting.**

**In robotics, we had troubles with this actuator... so we went with this because… We went with a defensive robot and were successful**

**In essence, robotics is easy to show that you have good technical skills, but you’ll need to demonstrate that you have good soft skills like communication, teamwork, and organization. If you can demonstrate that you have both types of skills, you’ll be set.**

**Prepare your answers prior so you can be confident and personable during your interview. Smile! If you get a tough question, don’t be afraid to ask if you can come back to it.**

-How to be a good intern

**Many people are nervous about internships because they think they’re not smart enough or won’t be able to do the job. Well, if you get hired for a position it’s because the company determined that you are fit for the job.**

**The key is communication. You might get a project, but you are by no means on your own. ASK QUESTIONS. One of your priorities is to have an open line of communication with your supervisor or some other experienced employee. You are an intern. They don’t expect you to know everything. Asking questions is huge.**

**Another tip is to be friendly and personable. Nobody wants a sour intern. A trick I used as an RA that helped quite a bit is find out a person’s name and say they’re name every time you see them. If they determine that you’re an alright person, they’ll probably reciprocate. You don’t have to be extroverted by nature in order to talk to people. Social skills can be learned.**

**In my experience, meeting expectations for being an intern is rather easy. It’s what you do to go above and beyond that will impress.**

**At both my internships I was able to learn the work and do it just fine. But, what Xcel Energy my supervisor was mostly impressed by my documentation. A project I was working involved replacing large underground 4000 volt cables due to some recent failures. I wrote a rather extensive report about the observations I made about the cables, the underground conduit that they were sitting in, the reasons the cables may have failed, and what we can do in future projects to prevent future failures. Every time I see my supervisor, he goes on and on about that report and how that is the new standard for interns. You may impress for reasons that you don’t expect.**

**At 3M, my supervisor was impressed at how well I interacted with my coworkers and my creativity. At the end of the summer, we needed to make a poster board of our work so I formatted my poster as the program that we use. My supervisor loved that creativity and also I wrote the winning nomination for our departments mentor awards. So people I didn’t know came up and told me they were impressed at the non-engineering things I had done.**

**You’re not just an engineer. You’re an employee. They’re not only looking at if you can do the technical work they’re asking, they’re seeing if you’re a decent person to be around. I’d rather hire a person whose mid-range intelligence but personable and friendly, then a super genius who can’t communicate or say a word. Communicating will be the majority of your job essentially so focus on that. Talk to people. Ask questions.**