

Intro: You are on with Career Talks presented by the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech a regular podcast featuring students, alumni, and friends of the school offering advice to help you succeed in your career endeavors.

Host: Welcome to Career Talks! A podcast service of the Academic Services Office of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech. We're talking today with Allison Stanford a soon to be graduating graduate student, who graduated from our Bachelor's of Science in International Affairs and Modern in German. she is originally from Hampton, Georgia and graduated from Dutch Town High School. This past fall she attended the All Majors Career Fair hosted by the Center for Career Discovery and Development and she's here to talk to us about her experience. Her experience is unique because she is one of the few Nunn School students who landed a job offer from attending the All Majors Career Fair. In her own words she will tell us how it all happened. Allison why did you decide to attend the careers fair and how was your experience? so things just get.

Allison: So I wanted to attend the All Majors Career Fair at this past fall semester because honestly I'm graduating with my masters in May like you said and to be completely honest I need a full time job because I don't plan on pursuing a Ph D. at the moment. so I thought OK I'll go to the Career Fair. And I wanted to go because I wanted to see what kind of employers were out there and there were a few organizations that I recognized than that I knew hired INTA majors like the N.S.A. for examples I thought the career fair would be a good opportunity to meet with these recruiters in person. And also given the political current political climate I wanted the use the career fairs like an opportunity to get to know other employers outside of international affairs just because the government isn't really hiring at the moment. So I thought it was a good idea to kind of branch on expand my job search. Initially, the experience was a little bit disheartening because when I would go to talk to recruiters I was persistently rejected by employers who are only hiring scientists and engineers. They were only want to hire STEM majors or they didn't know what International Affairs was or in some cases they weren't even hiring master's candidates. So it wasn't the best start to the career fair but I thought okay, I am already here so I'll keep talking to people. So with that persistence is definitely key and then when I was talking to people I kind of realized what recruiters were looking for so after I would talk to one company I would go to another company and kind of like retailer my approach depending on what the company before had talked about.

Host: Have you previously attended any career fairs?

Allison: So this was actually my first career career as a graduate student but I had been to two before as an undergrad. But really looking back I realize that I didn't really market myself very well in the past and also in the past I didn't really prioritize going to the career fair because I think like how a lot of INTA major feel. we kind of think okay I'm an International Affairs major at Georgia Tech but all the companies who are coming are only looking for like C.S. majors and engineers so there's really no point in me going so I'll just apply online and things will work out. Well things didn't really work out when I would do that so I thought okay now is the time to really get serious about going to the career fair.

Host: What was your expected outcome from going and what ended up happening?

Allison: So what I expected and pretty much the typical career fair experience is you go you talk to recruiters for an hour or so not really gain anything substantial you go and get some information as an International Affairs Major. Ok if I go and talk to like a technology company more than likely I would expect that they wouldn't really have anything for me or I would just be told to apply for everything online. So that's what I thought was going to happen. Well what actually happened was pretty cool. I ended up talking to the National Air and Space Intelligence Center otherwise known as NASIC and it is the intelligence branch of the United States Air Force so it's part of the Department of Defense. And obviously before going to the career fair I didn't even know NASIC existed like when I saw all their information actually Googled them before I went and talk to them because I'm like okay I need to know who they actually are. But if it wasn't for the career fair I never would have even known that NASIC existed. When I was there I really connected with right away with two recruiters who were there and actually they were only looking for STEM people. But luckily an Intelligence Analyst was actually there and I was able to talk to her for a good fifteen or twenty minutes or so and in the end I actually got an interview out of it. So the recruiter she took my resume and said if we have anything that opens in the Intelligence Analyst area we'll reach out to you. I gave her my resume and a few weeks later and a few weeks later I got an e-mail from the recruiter saying hey we'd like to interview you for position that opened up and the position actually didn't even exist when I went to the career fair but because I went to the career fair and made that personal connection and was able to hand off my resume, when the job opportunity did come up I was one of the first people they contacted. So in the end I got an interview out of it and eventually a job offer and with the federal government the nonetheless and a time when the federal government or at least people say that the Fed it isn't really hiring at the moment but apparently different Department of Defense is so.

Host: Did you give them your elevator pitch? what did it sound like? So I did, actually and I went something along the lines of... Hi my name is Allison Stanford and I'm a master's student studying International Affairs with academic and professional experience in Europe, Asia, and Africa. My research interests focus on the science and technology policy strategies of developing countries and what impact they may have on the United States. I understand you're recruiting STEM majors today but what opportunities does NASIC have for someone with my background. And also pro tip before I talk to the recruiter actually Google NASIC to see kind of what they did and I tailored my elevator pitch to match kind of what I thought they would be looking for. So with that it's really important to know your audience and kind of okay it's good to have you know your basic elevator pitch but it's also important to know who you're talking to so that way you can kind of tailor it to what they're looking for.

Host: How did the Nunn School/Georgia Tech and/or the career's class help you?

Allison: Yeah so I'm pretty sure that if I had studied any other university I would not have been offered this job as quickly as I was not necessarily on the spot but to get an interview so quickly

right after the career fair. And I definitely have the Nunn School and Georgia Tech to thank for this. So the Nunn School sets you apart. We have the opportunity to work alongside scientists and engineers on a daily basis and if you actually capitalize on this opportunity instead of saying oh no I have to work with the non-INTA major you can actually use it to your advantage when you go and you're trying to look for a job or that internship. So actually while I was at the Career Fair and then later on in my actual interview with NASIC I was actually asked to talk about the projects in which I worked with STEM majors. And like the dynamics there and how well I was able to work with them. And I have to credit the Nunn School because they gave me numerous opportunities to do just that like I feel like at any other school you know all the International Affairs majors that the Political Scientists are always stuck together kind of like in their bubble. But here in the Nunn School we have the opportunity to work with all of these people outside of our field and to learn from them of course. So that was really cool. And also here in the Nunn School we do learn International Relations Theory and all of that but we're taught how to critically examine real world problems. It's more focused on application instead of theory. So the fact that most of the assignments that we have to do with real world applications everything we learn. So yeah it's definitely based you can hear some. So basically the Nunn School's emphasis on applications instead of just theory proved to be incredibly useful because we're taught how to critically examine real world problems using these theoretical skill sets. But we still have like our feet in the ground in we're in touch with reality so that really prove useful. And then how did Georgia Tech help me? Well Georgia Tech is hard and everyone knows that and there's a lot of weight that comes with the name because there's such a high expectation for Georgia Tech in the academics here in what you have to go through. And actually funny enough one of my interview questions was how do you deal with stress and do the work well under high stress situations please give an example and I almost started laughing during my interview because I'm like okay let me tell you about my academic career and the stressful situations that I'm always in and so. I mean this is the reason why Tech students are so high in demand right? It's because no matter what this Institute throws at us and all the projects we have and homework assignments and test and extracurricular and all of that. We still manage to get everything done and not only do we manage to get it done but we manage to do it effectively and we excel at it in the process. So I actually have to thank Georgia Tech for all the stress because it's really helped me with the job search and employers they are appreciate that.

Host: What would you say to students who normally dismiss attending the career's fair?

Allison: I mean to put it bluntly; I would say just go. Like you're not going to lose anything out from going you're only going to gain something. So you just need to get the practice in. If you look at the employers list who are attending the career fair and you think okay there's absolutely no one here for me like I'm not going to get any internships or full-time positions out of this. Okay, you might think that but you might go there and actually be pleasantly surprised or in my case, find a company or organization you didn't even know existed feeling like you really connect with them and then end up getting a job offer with them. And at any rate even if you go and you don't find anyone or any organization that you're interested in you're still going to get the practice in and you're going to practice giving your elevator pitch, you're going to

practice talking about you know the projects that you've done while you've been here at Tech and you're going to practice you know talking about your internships you had in all of your experience and most importantly you get to have face time with recruiters right. So they always say okay apply online apply online you can just go online and search you know international fairs jobs and then send your application out to a hundred different people. But if you go to a career fair and you can actually talk to someone face to face you know and they know and you have a human conversation with them it's not just submitting your resume online that can make a real difference which is really important. And two like in my case you get to know companies that you might have never heard about which was it's a really neat opportunity.

Host: That concludes my questions, is there anything else you would like to add?

Allison: No, I think I covered everything. This was great. Thank you.

Host: Well thank you Allison for sharing your insight and the expertise with our audience today.

Outro: This has been career talks a podcast of the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs at Georgia Tech brought to you by the Nunn School academic services this and other podcast can be found on our website at www.inta.gatech.edu. Thank you for listening.