Working with a Career Counselor

Setting Expectations:
What can I expect from a career counseling meeting?

Whether you are just beginning your studies at USC or preparing to graduate, a career counselor will help you develop strategies for your job search. They will help you identify work-related values and interests, as well as assess your unique skills and guide you through decision-making to set realistic career goals.

Career planning involves many steps. A career counselor will not make decisions for you. Instead, they will help you create focused options and develop a realistic plan. It is ultimately up to you to research and take ownership for your career choice and job search. The career counselor is your partner in refining your career plans and developing your job search skills.

You set the agenda, and our staff will work with you on any of the following areas:

- Identifying skills, interests, values, and strengths
- Researching majors, industries and career fields
- Developing effective tools for your job search, such as...
  - Professional resume
  - Focused cover letter
  - Interviewing strategies that impress employers and graduate schools
  - Negotiating an offer
  - Effective networking techniques
- Creating a strategic job search or graduate school plan

Identifying Interests:
Do I need to take a career assessment?

A career counselor will help you decide if an assessment will be helpful and which career assessment is right for you based on your individual situation. Please note that career assessment tests will not tell you who you are or what to do. Assessments simply give you a better understanding of your personality and interests while helping you identify career options. The fee for each assessment is $10.

The following assessments are offered at the Career Center:

Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBTI): The MBTI is used to identify which career areas match your unique personality. This assessment is typically given to juniors and seniors.

Strong Interest Inventory (Strong): The Strong is used to explore a variety of career fields based on interest, as well as to help guide students towards appropriate majors based on interests. This assessment is typically given to freshmen and sophomores.
Preparing for an Interview:  
Should I schedule a mock interview? 
For some students, a mock interview will increase the level of confidence in their interviewing skills. This is not about memorizing answers. It is about being prepared and moving to the next step in the selection process. If you are scheduling your first interview or wondering why you are not called back for second-round interviews, a mock interview might help.

A Career Center career counselor will help you prepare for your job interview. After your first meeting with a career counselor, you may be scheduled for a 30-minute follow-up session to better assist you with your specific needs.

A mock interview is a simulated interview with a potential employer. During the mock interview you will be asked sample questions and receive feedback regarding your responses to improve your interview technique.

The following are guidelines to help you prepare for the mock interview:
- E-mail a copy of your resume and a sample job description to your career advisor at least 48 hours before your appointment.
- Be on-time.
- Dress as you would for a real interview.
- Turn off pagers and cell phones before your interview.