Captain’s Log

~ Feature Article ~

The Interview, the Questions, and the Law

John Stowe – Career Counselor

It is important for faculty and students to understand the federal and state laws that limit the questions that can be asked during the interview process. It is equally important for job applicants to be mindful of potentially illegal questions. Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal and state laws, it’s illegal to discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, citizenship, disability, and age. There are also state laws that forbid employers from discriminating against applicants on the basis of a protected category.

Employers are permitted to ask questions based upon a bona fide occupational qualification. This means that employers are permitted to ask applicants if they have a valid driver's license, the ability to stand for periods of time, or a required degree, if such qualifications are necessary to perform a given job and are essential to the operation of the employer's business.

While most employers and applicants can spot the obvious illegal question, it is the innocuous questions that may lead to uncomfortable moments and possible liability. Here are some do’s and don’ts for successful interviewing and avoiding legal trouble.

1. Provide training to the employees who will be conducting interviews. In addition to guidance on how to conduct interviews, employees who will be interviewing job candidates should be informed about the appropriate subjects for inquiry and topics to avoid.

2. Ask the same questions of all interviewees. By asking the same questions of all applicants, you can avoid a claim that any one particular individual was singled out because of a protected characteristic.

3. Limit questions to job-related areas. Interview questions should focus on the education, experience, and abilities of the applicant and her suitability for the position.

4. Maintain detailed, careful notes. Notes taken during the interview should be objective, detailed, factual, and concise. Notes created during the interview process can and will be provided to the applicant if a lawsuit is filed later.

5. Avoid promises. An interviewer shouldn’t make any promises. Simple comments about the hiring process or job security may later bind the employer.

Continued on next page

For more information on these upcoming events visit: www.ecu.edu/career
6. Avoid questions/comments about an applicant’s disability. Don’t ask about medical conditions, hospitalizations, medical, psychiatric, or psychological treatment. You may, however, legitimately ask about his general history of absences. You may ask whether he’s able to perform the job, with or without reasonable accommodation, when he has an obvious disability, volunteers the disability or when all applicants are asked the same exact question.

7. Avoid questions/comments about an applicant’s history of workers’ comp injuries. Don’t ask an applicant whether she previously was injured on the job. Don’t ask an applicant whether she previously filed a workers’ comp claim.

8. Avoid questions/comments about an applicant’s race, national origin, age, religion, military status, gender, marital status, physical attributes, or sexual orientation. Don’t ask whether English is an applicant’s first language. If fluency in a particular language is a required job responsibility, however, you may inquire about an applicant’s ability to speak, read, and write the language. You should avoid questions or comments about pregnancy, family plans, number of children, and child-care arrangements.

9. Avoid questions/comments about an applicant’s arrests. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) takes the position that such inquiries have a disparate impact on minorities. If relevant to a particular position, you may investigate an applicant’s criminal convictions.

Following these basic guidelines can help you and your organization avoid any legal complications from potential employees. Also, understanding what you can legally be asked can also help you as an employee avoid any acts of discrimination that may keep you from being hired. Everyone must know the rules of the game so that everyone has an equal chance at employment.

Navigational Notes
~ Past event wrap-up and upcoming event ~

2014 Fall Career Fairs
Patrick Robert – Career Counselor

Each fall semester The Career Center hosts the Fall Career Fair for all current ECU students and alumni to support networking with employers for internships, co-ops and full time career opportunities. Employer attendees represent organizations throughout the United States and offer entry level career opportunities for students and alumni.

- These opportunities exist for all academic majors and this year there was over 120 employers on campus from over 50 industries.
- We saw a 63% increase in attendance, exceeding 1,000 students and alumni.
- From evaluations completed during this event: 98% of employers reported an overall recruiting experience at ECU of good to excellent
  Over 80% of students reported that as a result of attending the career fair they had gained employer contacts, an interview, or an internship.
- The Career Center has hosted 28 employers on campus for interview sessions with ECU students.

Career Leadership Conference
John Stowe – Career Counselor

2015 Career Leadership Conference
February 7, 2015
Mendenhall Student Center
8:30 am - 3:00 pm

The Career Leadership Conference (CLC) is a one-day professional conference dedicated to educating ECU students on career planning, leadership skills and community involvement. This year’s conference will feature workshops, panel discussions, and activities that empower students to Learn, Serve and Lead!

The CLC will begin with a Business and Alumni Networking Breakfast where students can meet professionals from a variety of industries, and may participate in a variety of Panel Discussions featuring Employers, Alumni and Community Leaders. Students will receive a leather Padfolio for future interviews and professional events along with a nice engraved business card holder.

Registration fee is $15. Last day to register is January 30. Departments interested in sponsoring students, please contact The Career Center at 328-6050.

For more information: www.ecu.edu/career/

Professional Etiquette Dinner 2014
Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/112512186
YouTube: http://youtu.be/ANbwj7uw174

Check out the CLC video from 2014!
Vimeo: http://vimeo.com/87888708
YouTube: http://youtu.be/VbK6snfl80M
**First Mate**  
~ Student Highlight ~

**Name:** Aaron Mullen  
**Hometown:** Elizabeth City, NC  
**Status:** Senior, May 2015  
**Major:** Business Administration – Marketing

In business as in life, return on one’s investments is of primary importance and one our ECU College of Business student is profiting exponentially from his university experience. Aaron Mullen is a Senior Business Administration major concentrating in the field of Marketing. He hails from Elizabeth City, NC and brings with him a strong work ethic and a mission to provide support to the next generation of ECU students. Aaron exemplifies the well-rounded student through his robust academic focus and his leadership activities including involvement in the Vice Chancellor Student Affairs Advisory Board, American Marketing Association, National Association of Black Accountants, Pirate Tutoring and the Forever Pirates Alumni Association.

When asked about his association with the Career Center, Aaron explains that in addition to receiving traditional assistance, it is the personal relationship with the staff that has truly made a difference in his university experience.

“I used the Career Center as a personal resource. I’ve been in countless times to get advice about my resume, career, classes to take and internship opportunities. I believe that the Career Center in the College of Business is the best on campus.”

“I’ve actually obtained one interview from the Career Center [sic] referral and was able to create my own position within the Student Media Agency. If I had never made that connection, I would’ve missed out on a lot.”

It is obvious that the COB Career Center services are simply a tool for this dynamic, self-motivated student. When asked to give advice to other students Aaron explains,

“First off, I would advise fellow classmates to use the resources that the University has to offer. Career Services offers things that people outside of the university would pay thousands of dollars for. Secondly, I would tell them to build relationships with their instructors. Knowing the right person can take you far in life.”

I personally suggest that students get to know Aaron Mullen.

Aaron’s post-graduation plans are to attend graduate school at either Duke, ECU or Old Dominion and obtain his MBA. Any institution that he attends will be fortunate to have him as a student and I am sure that he will be personally successful in the future while giving back to his community as a leader and a mentor.

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**Channel Markers**  
~ Employer News ~

In an ever-changing economic climate, it's important to adapt to customer needs. Employer Relations team, along with The Career Center staff, have implemented a variety of new programs to benefit our employers and ultimately our students. Activities include: Graduate School Fair; Education Expo; adding a Mix and Mingle portion to the annual Professional Etiquette Dinner, which provides an additional opportunity for students and employers to network; and the Student-Athlete Career Conference.

Creating new and adapting current events while providing exceptional customer service has led to enhancing our relationships with current employers who tell us:

“I want to thank you both for all of the efforts to assure our employer visits have transpired efficiently and with an emphasis on quality customer service.”

“Congratulations on a Career Fair very well done. It was quite obvious that you all put in a tremendous amount of work and it showed.”

“I have just really started using the Career Center and I’m just thrilled with all you do. Happy to support your efforts!”

“Thanks for working your magic! Yes, the site visit paid off”

“You are the best, thank you for looking out for me!”

Upcoming plans to innovate and increase efforts in Employer Relations for 2014/2015:

- Specific Employer Relations Strategic Plan to be revealed spring 2015
- Creation of a Career Center Employer Advisory Board
- Production and distribution of an Employer News Letter
- Implementation of a coordinated effort to collaborate with the Alumni Association
Points of Sail
~ Assessment Facts and Figures ~

Fall 2014
Points of Pride

Top 3 Reasons Students Seek Help from The Career Center:

1. Resume/Curriculum Vitae Review
2. Career/Major Exploration
3. Cover Letter Review

Most useful fact I learned about Resumes/Curriculum Vitae:
"Have more than one resume and tailor each for the specific event. Work on the wording of each bullet point too. It makes a huge difference."
"The difference between a resume and CV and how industry resumes differ from graduate school resumes."

Most useful fact I learned about Career/Major Exploration:
"That a Liberal Arts degree is not Useless! It's up to the individual to carve out their own career path and follow their dreams."
"I was shown many new things from my major and what careers would be available to me in the future."

Most useful fact I learned about Cover Letters:
"Trying to make sure I use key "buzz" words from job posting in my cover letter."
"What is acceptable professional correspondence."

98% of students agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement:
"The appointment/walk-in helped me with the problem/concern(s) I came in with today."

What Students are Saying about Their Visit to the Career Center:
"The Career Counselor was absolutely wonderful! I hope to receive further guidance from her in the future! :)"
"The Career Counselor was extremely helpful and went into great depth to convey how to market myself in the best light to employers."
"The Career Counselor is very nice and helpful and really seems to care about my interests and needs."

East Carolina University
THE CAREER CENTER

701 East 5th Street
(corner of 5th & Jarvis)
252-328-6050
www.ecu.edu/career

Walk In Hours:
Monday – Thursday
11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Satellite Offices:
Bate, Room 3016
Brewster B, Room 209-A
Carol Belk, Room 3405
Joyner East, Room 101-D
Laupus Library, Room 3508C
Rivers, Rooms 135, 140
Science & Technology, Room 239
Speight, Room 239
Ward, Room 244A

Career Staff (Alphabetical Staff List)

Melissa Allay - Career Counselor (College of Health and Human Performance)
Lee Brown - Assistant Director (College of Business)
Meredith Clinard - Business Services Coordinator
Catrina Davis - Assistant Director (College of Education)
Larry Donley - Associate Director (College of Engineering and Technology)
Susanne Killian - Career Counselor (College of Business)
Sarah Lage - Career Counselor (Graduate School, Student-Athletes and Deciding Students)
Harriett Moore - Administrative Associate (College of Business)
Nadirah Pippen - Career Counselor (College of Allied Health Sciences and College of Nursing)
Rick Poe - Vet Success Career Counselor
Mary Beth Pruitt - Recruiting Program Specialist
Patrick Roberts - Career Counselor (College of Human Ecology)
John Stowe - Career Counselor (College of Arts and Sciences)
Curtis Street - Assistant Director (Employer Relations)
Karen Thompson - Director
Carol Woodruff - Career Counselor (College of Fine Arts and Communications)