

## Overview:

[P20's Student Representatives](#) concluded their year-long program (2024/2025) at our Q2 meeting in April. For their final project, each student delivered a [two-slide presentation](#) reflecting on common themes that emerged throughout their previous assignments. These presentations were shared during our Action Team Meetings in March and are now available on our [YouTube channel](#).

A key theme that emerged was the limited effectiveness of job and college fairs. To better understand this issue, we asked students to explore what aspects of these events are working and which are not. The ultimate goal was to develop actionable recommendations for educators and employers.

Below are two summaries and recommendations based on the questions:

**Question Prompt #1:** If you were an employer or post-secondary institution, and were going to a local high school college/job fair, how would you attract students to your table? What would your table look like? How would you communicate with them effectively both during and after the event?

**Question Prompt #2:** Based on your experience with job/college fairs, what are you seeing that is done right, and what can be better?

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### **For High School Educators**

#### **1. Increase Awareness and Visibility of Events**

- School Announcements: Students recommended using intercom or digital message boards to alert students about employer/college visits.
- Advance Promotion: Educators can share who will be attending and what opportunities are available, helping students target their interests.

#### **2. Prepare Students for Meaningful Engagement**

- Pre-Fair Activities
  - Guide students to identify personal interests and career/education goals.
  - Practice questions they might ask representatives.
  - Encourage Preparedness.
    - Post-Fair Reflection and Action
      - Classroom Debrief: Schedule time for students to reflect on interactions and consider next steps.
      - Parental Involvement: Encourage students to discuss brochures or opportunities with family members at home.

## For Employers and Post–Secondary Institutions

1. Create Visually Appealing Booth and Table Displays.
  - Students emphasized the importance of first impressions:
    - Use bright colors, bold signage, and minimal clutter.
    - Include staff photos, team–building event photos, ‘office party’ photos.
    - Avoid excessive paper.
2. Attract Attention with Interactive Elements
  - Fun Features - Photo booths, spin-the-wheel-games, interest-based mini-quizzes or contests
  - Incentives: Branded giveaways (e.g., stickers, hats, lanyards), candy or snacks
3. Ensure Interactions are Meaningful and Personal
  - Greet Students Warmly: Begin conversations by asking about their interests, favorite classes or post-high school plans.
  - Tailor Messaging
    - Don’t immediately push for enrollment or hiring; match the message to the student’s interest and comfort level.
    - Offer multiple ways to engage (e.g., internships, info sessions, online programs).
  - Bring Relatable Representatives: Recent grads or younger employees were noted as more approachable and easier to connect with.
4. Make Your Follow-up Simple and Effective
  - Use Technology: Provide QR Codes linking to short videos, forms, or personalized content. Collect contact info (with consent) for text or email follow-ups.
  - Follow-up Content: Include brochures, student success stories, job details, or a list of available programs. Send thank-you messages or event recaps shortly after the fair.

## Key Takeaways from Open Forum Discussion

Students expressed a strong preference for authentic, engaging conversations where representatives show genuine interest in getting to know them rather than focusing primarily on promoting their business, organization, or school.

There was also significant interest in having more practical, hands-on resources available at event tables. Suggested offerings included:

- Resume printing and resume-building support
- Assistance with college essays
- Interactive quizzes to help identify potential career paths based on student interests (whether through credentials, direct-to-workforce options, or degree programs)
- College application checklists tailored for Juniors and Seniors
- Scholarship information and guidance
- Interview tips or interview role play

Additionally, students emphasized the need for alternative environments that better accommodate different personality types and learning preferences. Ideas included:

- Quiet rooms for those who find traditional event settings overwhelming
- Panel discussions to support introverted students who may not feel comfortable in one-on-one conversations

Lastly, students advocated for more transparency and education around real-world financial factors, including:

- Job wages, benefit package, and local cost-of-living worksheets

## Question Prompt #2: Based on your experience with job/college fairs, what are you seeing that is done right and what can be better?

### For Educators and Organizers

#### What's Working:

- Access to a diverse range of college and career options in one place
- Successful preview events with hands-on sessions (e.g., attending specific classes)
- Grouping of booths by career/college type for easier navigation

#### Areas for Improvement:

1. Logistics & Structure
  - Avoid overcrowding by spreading booths out across multiple rooms or areas.
  - Provide fair maps and organize booths by interest/career path (e.g., STEM, trades, 2-year vs. 4-year).
  - Improve traffic flow to reduce confusion and overwhelm.
2. Pre-Fair Preparation
  - Share information about the fair clearly and through multiple channels.
  - Help students identify their interests beforehand.
  - Offer pre-event materials or interest surveys to guide students.
3. Student Support During the Event
  - Host workshops on resumes, interviews, and career planning.
  - Schedule breaks or debrief sessions to allow students to process information.
  - Provide one-on-one guidance to help connect interests with opportunities.
4. Post-Fair Follow-Up
  - Include resume printing stations or digital resources.
  - Encourage students to reflect on their experiences and follow up with contacts made.

## For Employers

### What's Working:

- Friendly and enthusiastic representatives
- Tangible giveaways (e.g., pens, stickers) that attract interest
- Broad representation of careers and opportunities

### Areas for Improvement:

1. Engagement & Presentation
  - Avoid scripted pitches; personalize conversations with students.
  - Incorporate hands-on or interactive activities such as games, trivia, or quick job-related challenges.
  - Use pop culture references and trendy booth designs to attract and engage younger attendees.
2. Communication
  - Clearly explain specific job roles, qualifications needed, and benefits (e.g., pay, insurance).
  - Share real-life success stories or testimonials to build trust and connection.
3. Support On-the-Spot
  - Provide resume or application tips and immediate feedback.
  - Offer sign-up sheets for students interested in receiving more information or mentoring.
4. Atmosphere
  - Set up informal or lounge-style seating areas for more relaxed conversations.