

Dominican Students Host Speed Interview Workshop

The students were participating in a speed interview workshop dinner with professionals from Bay Area businesses, including Deloitte, U.S. Capital Partners, Chevron, and Lateef Investment Management. Sponsored by the Dominican Accounting and Finance Association (DAFA), the event attracted about 35 students and 10 professionals.

The speed-interviewing sessions gave students the chance to practice their interview skills in a no-pressure, learning environment. Following a group dinner with their guests, teams of students rotated to a new professional every 10 minutes to face a series of questions and then gain instant feedback from their interviewers.

The event is among a series of activities organized by the student-run DAFA. The past three years, DAFA has held a fall event focused on the association's mission of bridging the gap between academic studies and professional careers, said DAFA president Meghan Nelson, a junior who is double majoring in business and political science. Past events have included lectures and dinners with business executives.

This year, however, Nelson wanted to do something that would meet a need identified by both students and recruiters. When organizing the fall event, Nelson and DAFA members asked employers of Dominican business students, as well as business students and business alumni, which skills existing students would most benefit from enhancing. This research pointed to a need to focus on students' interviewing skills.

"In the past we have held dinners with executives. We wanted to keep the dinner atmosphere again, but involve more professionals," Nelson said. "We decided to hold a speed interview dinner so that we could help enhance our students' interviewing skills."

DAFA worked with Vanessa Ioannides, career counselor with the [Office of Career and Internship Services](#), to structure the evening and develop questions for the employers to ask the students.

The speed interview exercise is valuable for any student getting ready to apply for a job or internship, as it helps students gain confidence and gain new skills, said Elizabeth Capener, assistant professor of accounting in the [School of Business and Leadership](#) and faculty advisor to DAFA.

"This is a great opportunity for students to practice their interviewing skills, network with local professionals and recruiters, and learn powerful tips to promote themselves in future interviews," Capener said "Sometimes it is difficult to talk effectively about yourself, especially when asked about your strengths and weaknesses. There is no substitute for sitting down and saying things out loud."

At the end of the interview period, representatives from the companies shared with students tips on conducting themselves during interviews.

The evening, Nelson notes, went flawlessly. She received positive feedback from both students and professionals.

“The professionals said that the event was fantastic and they want to return to Dominican and get involved with more events.”

Maria Bullen, associate professor of business, said the event was extremely valuable for developing leadership skills.

This type of event provides a wonderful opportunity for our students to gain vital job search and networking skills needed to complement their Dominican education,” Bullen said. “I applaud the Dominican Accounting and Finance Club for organizing this great event. It is a good chance for students to develop their leadership skills.”

Throughout the year, DAFA is interested in holding smaller, more informal workshops on a variety of topics.

Meanwhile, Nelson is gaining additional finance insight as a result of winning a 2013 scholarship from the Financial Women’s Association of San Francisco. In addition to \$5,000 in scholarship funding, Nelson receives invaluable guidance from a professional mentor she meets with once a month.

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