

*A Short Guide to:*

# Technical Interviewing Skills



## Vision

FIU graduates are equipped with the tools and resources to develop and manage their careers within a global workforce.

## Mission

To provide FIU students, alumni, faculty, administration and the community with current information regarding career development skills, trends and issues while preparing a viable global workforce for the 21st century.

## Policy

It is our policy to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual preference, age or disability.

# Learning Objectives

- Learn about types of interviews
- Understand the goals and importance of the interview
- Learn effective tools in preparation for the interview process
- Familiarize with process before, during and after the interview is conducted
- Understand the appropriate communication skills, behavior, dress code, and knowledge of self and the employer



# Types of Interviews

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**General:** Exchange of information sufficient to enable employer and candidate to determine if further contact is warranted

**Screening Interview:** Short term interview designed to eliminate unqualified candidates (might be over the phone)

**Second or Selection Interview:** More in-depth discussion of qualifications, responsibilities and other aspects of the position

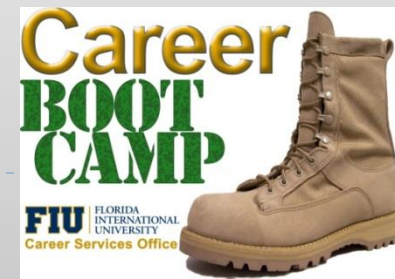
**1/1:** Interviewer and candidate

**Panel:** Several interviewers at the same time and candidate

**Group:** Several candidates

**Lunch/Dinner:** Your demeanor and communication may be evaluated, even if not a formal part of process

**Phone interview:** screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants invited for 1/1 interviews



# Know Yourself, the Job, and the Company

## Understand the Job and Company:

Mission, goals, subsidiaries, market, competition

Know about the position and expectations

Prepare questions to ask

Specific responsibilities, room for growth

## Understand Yourself:

Skills, experience, interests, goals

Be able to discuss everything on your resume

Have “mental list” of your skills and how they match the position

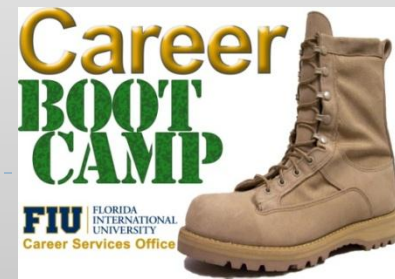
Work-related values

Interests

Skills

Strengths and weaknesses

Company culture



# First Impressions

## Make Lasting Impressions

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### Be on time

- ▶ Show up 15 minutes prior to appointment

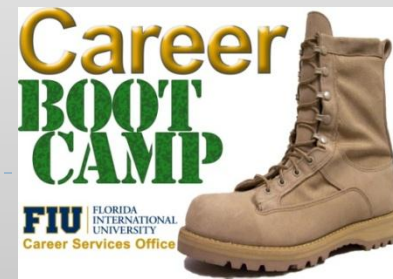
### Carry a portfolio with:

- ▶ Extra resumes
- ▶ College transcripts
- ▶ Letters of recommendation
- ▶ Samples of your work
- ▶ Address & phone numbers of at least three references

### Greeting

- ▶ Introduce yourself
- ▶ Smile and shake hands firmly
- ▶ Wait to be invited and to sit down
- ▶ Look confident and friendly

### Dress professionally



# Don't Be So Nervous

- ▶ If you're too relaxed you can come across as aloof
- ▶ If you're slightly nervous, you can convey interest; like you care

## **A Confident Approach: Prepare for your interview in advance**

- ▶ Think about the experiences you've had that they should know about
- ▶ Not the time to be modest. Be proud of what you've done

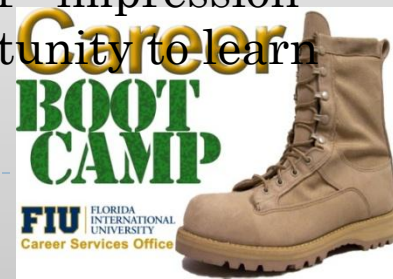
## **Build rapport with interviewer within the first 5 minutes**

- ▶ Walk with confidence, eye contact, smile, extend your hand for a handshake
- ▶ If your interviewer makes small talk, reciprocate – no yes or no answers

## **Tend to be Shy?**

- ▶ If on campus, remember that FIU is your turf. Treat them with the same warmth and graciousness as you would a guest
- ▶ Focus your attention outside of yourself. Think about the 1<sup>st</sup> impression they make on you. What do you notice? Focus on the opportunity to learn more about the company and position

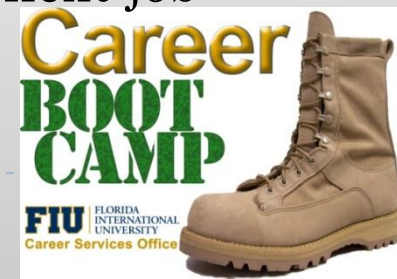
▶ “Don't Be So Nervous” UC Berkeley



# 12 Personal Themes (with examples) that showcase your skills and qualifications

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1. Passion for the business:  
Why you're interested in the field. What excites you?
2. Motivation and purpose:  
Why you want this interview and this job
3. Skills and experience:  
How you'll use specific key skills. Minimize weaknesses
4. Diligence and professional character:  
Thoroughness and accountability; see projects through, predict obstacles, etc.
5. Creativity and leadership:  
Effectiveness, initiative; how you overcome problems, take advantage of opportunities, and rally support of others
6. Compatibility with the job:  
Specific qualifications. What you're seeking in next job  
(Should match job description)

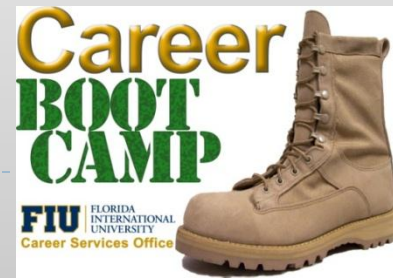




# 12 Personal Themes (with examples) that showcase your skills and qualifications

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7. Personality and cultural compatibility:  
Fit. How would colleagues, supervisors, or customers react to you? Interact with you?
8. Management style and interpersonal skills:  
Skills with peers, leaders, customers, etc. What kind of colleague or boss would you be?
9. Problem-solving ability:  
How you've resolved difficult issues. Practical and realistic?
10. Accomplishments:  
How you've delivered more than expected. Action taken and positive results. What can you contribute?
11. Career aspirations:  
Reiterate skills and strengths you want to develop further, such as cross-functional experience, budget, supervisory
12. Personal interests and hobbies:  
Balanced lifestyle? Personality reflected in career choice? How would you reflect on the company?



# “Initial contact”

- Smile
- Make and keep eye contact
  - ❖ Right/Left Eye
- **Rule of Thumb:** Only hand your resume or any appropriate documents when requested.



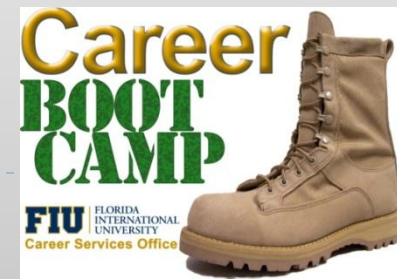
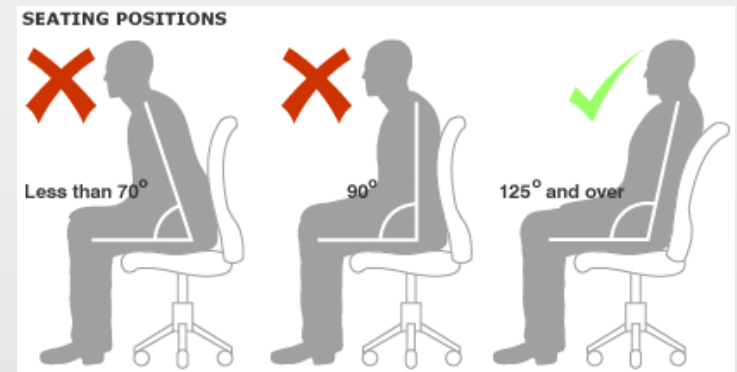
# “Posture”

## Basics

- ❖ Sit up Straight
- ❖ Eye Contact (left/right eye, eyebrow )
- ❖ Clear Voice

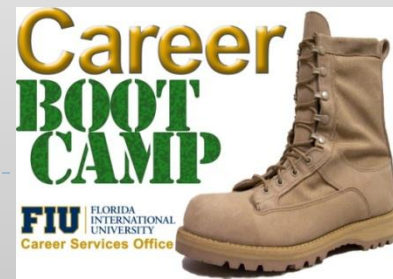
## Body Language

- ❖ Both hands visible
- ❖ Smile
- ❖ Lean in to focus on discussion point



# “How to Answer Interview Questions”

- ▶ Be direct, solid and assertive
- ▶ If you know the answer: Do your best
  - ▶ Use pictures and diagrams if it helps
  - ▶ When finished, ask if that was what they were looking for
- ▶ Technical questions often asked, for which you won't know the answer
  - ▶ Interviewer will direct you to try and evaluate your process for approaching a problem just as much as your answer
- ▶ Logical and reasonable thinking preferred over a one-line response
- ▶ Review skills on your resume that relate to the job. Questions will likely be based on what kind of work or research experience is listed
  - ▶ "Could you tell me more about your role in the 'X' intern program? How could you apply this research to the oil and gas industry?"



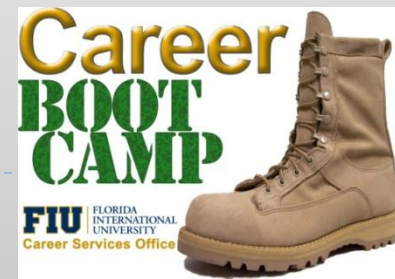
# “Questions you might be asked”

1. Please explain, based on your education and previous work experience, if any, why you are the best-qualified candidate for this position.

**Suggested Response:** Discuss your education and certifications that qualify you for the job. Previous, related work experience. May use samples of unrelated jobs to provide examples of initiative, quick thinking, diligence, etc.

2. What tools would you use to insure that established deadlines are met on assigned projects?

**Suggested Response:** Set-up reminders and schedule tasks in advanced. Suggest using the calendar feature on the MS-Outlook, scheduling products such as MS-Projects, set-up and update daily a spreadsheet outlining tasks need to be completed, etc.

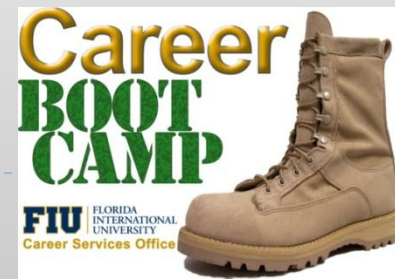


# “Questions you might be asked”

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3. Please discuss your computer skills, as well as any other skills, that would make you an asset to this company.

**Suggested Response:** Discuss computer courses you have completed. Describe your experience and ability using software such as AutoCAD, MS- Excel, MS-Access, MS Projects, etc. Mention any licenses or skills related to the job that may enhance your qualifications as a more desirable candidate. For example, speaking and writing fluently in other languages, public speaking ability, certifications such as general contractor, engineer intern, asbestos inspector licenses, ability to learn quickly, etc.



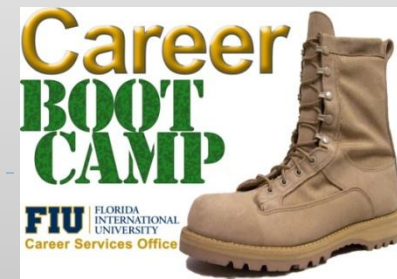
# “Questions you might be asked”

4. Please discuss your experience with cost estimating. Be sure to mention what resources you would use as reference to generate accurate cost estimates.

**Suggested Response:** Discuss coursework and procedures you would follow to generate cost estimates for various types of projects. Discuss resources used to generate accurate cost estimates such as historical cost databases based on previous projects, discussion with manufacturers and contractors, RS Means, etc.

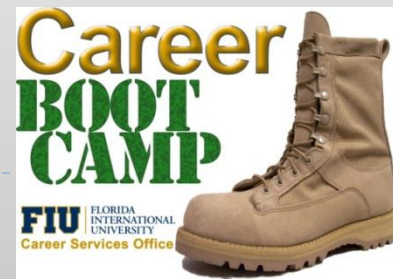
5. What course of action would you follow to resolve a conflict with another employee, a contractor, or a consultant?

**Suggested Response:** Show initiative in trying to discuss and resolve the situation directly with the other individual, and a willingness to advise supervisor(s) and follow the chain of command, as required, if unable to resolve personally.



# “Question you might ask”

- Is training provided? How long?
- What are the department's goals for this year?
- What characteristics do successful people in your organization possess?
- How is feedback given concerning job performance?
- Is there a probation period? How long?
- How do you evaluate your employees? Time frames?
- Is continuing education encouraged?
- What staff development programs are available?
- What is the next step?

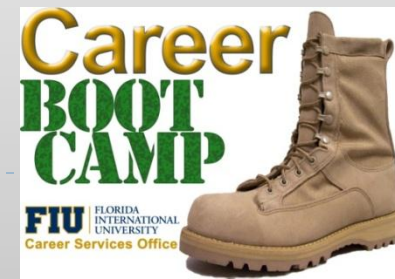




# Tips for the Second Interview

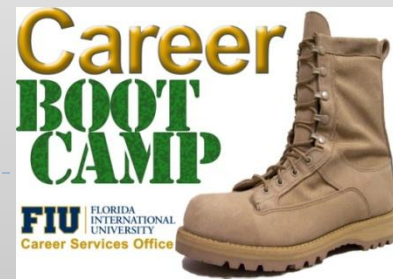
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- ▶ The employer is seriously considering you
- ▶ **Get the name, phone number, and job title of the person arranging the interview**
- ▶ Ask for the itinerary and names and titles of the interviewer(s)
- ▶ Ask how you should dress for the interview and any social activities
- ▶ Ask if the interview(s) will be 1/1 or involve groups of employees or possibly more than one applicant at a time
- ▶ Know what the travel arrangements are, including reimburses
- ▶ Be reasonable on the expenses you develop and if visiting more that one employer on a trip, prorate the expenses.



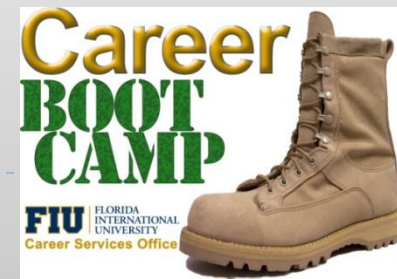
# Tips for the Second Interview

- ▶ Most are one-half to a full day in length and consist of a series of one-to-one sessions with various individuals
- ▶ Block out time in your schedule to seriously prepare. What did you learn during the first interview?
- ▶ A meal will typically be included. Consider this a continuation of the interview - they are assessing how you fit into their group. Concentrate on the conversation instead of the food
- ▶ Send a thank you letter, even if you are no longer interested in the job. Address the letter to the key person who arranged the visit and be sure to mention the names of all the individuals you met



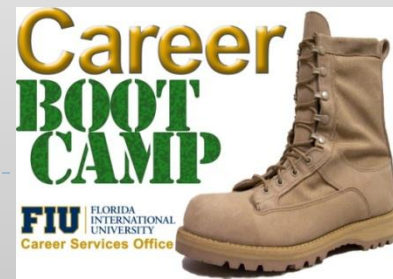
# Tips for Phone Interviews

- ▶ Every contact is an interview
- ▶ Proper phone etiquette; be courteous; answer in a business voice
- ▶ Ensure quiet, private location
- ▶ Be prepared; stay on your game at all times
- ▶ Get details; keep pen and paper near phone
- ▶ Inform roommates that you may receive a call
- ▶ If a recruiter calls to interview you on the spot, let them know that you have a conflict (class, work, etc) and provide possible times
- ▶ Have: pen and paper, job description and resume, research, list of questions, and your calendar
- ▶ Smile - it comes through in your voice
- ▶ Stand up - your voice may sound stronger
- ▶ Find out what the next steps are so you can follow-up
- ▶ Send a thank you note after the interview



# Tips for Behavioral Interviews

- ▶ **Past as Prelude:** Your past behavior is the most reliable indicator of your future response in a similar situation
- ▶ Draw on your actual life experiences,
  - ▶ "When you've had to juggle numerous projects at once, how did you ensure that nothing slipped through the cracks?"
  - ▶ "Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone you didn't like or agree with."
- ▶ Trying to elicit information about your temperament and help determine whether or not you're a good fit in organizational culture
- ▶ Use stories about past experiences to illustrate aspects of your personality. How you respond to pressure, what motivates you, etc. Can be drawn from academic, volunteer, or social experiences.



# Tips for Behavioral Interviews

## SPARE

S - Situation

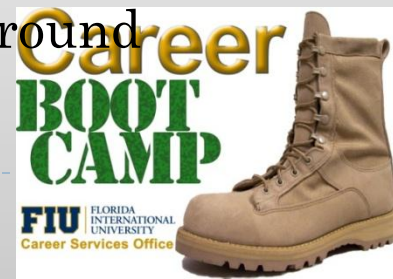
P - Problem

A - Action

R - Result

E - Experience – what was learned?

- ▶ Be proud of your experiences. Tell what you gained from them
- ▶ You're not expected to be perfect
- ▶ Don't be afraid to relate experiences that did not have a great outcome
- ▶ Show that you have the ability to overcome obstacles, learn from mistakes, and apply that knowledge the next time around



# Behavioral-Style Questions

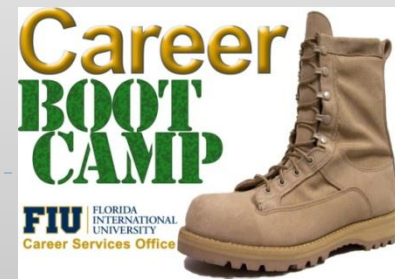
**Adaptability and Flexibility** - Able to modify your style to respond to needs of others and maintain effectiveness in different situations

Tell me about a time when you made a mistake and rectified it; what, if anything, would you do differently?

**Initiative** - Self-motivated? Meet goals?

How do you influence events?

1. Tell me about a time when you reached out for additional responsibility
2. Tell me about a project or idea you initiated, how it was implemented, what challenges you faced, and how you overcame them



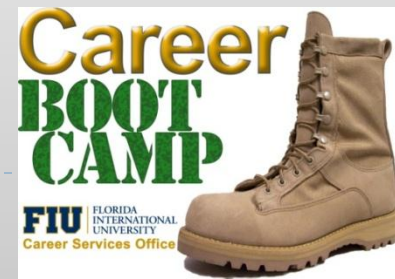
# Behavioral-Style Questions

**Communication** - Are you articulate, persuasive, able to listen well?

1. Describe a project that required a lot of interaction with people over a long period of time
2. Tell me about any presentations you've made to groups, both successful and not so successful

**Problem Solving** - Demonstrate reasoning ability, judgment and an understanding of the issues, and the ability to effectively combine diverse information, intuition and common sense when considering alternatives

1. Tell me about an experience where you had a limited amount of time to make a difficult decision
2. How did you prioritize? What steps did you take in solving the problems?



# Uncommon Interview Questions

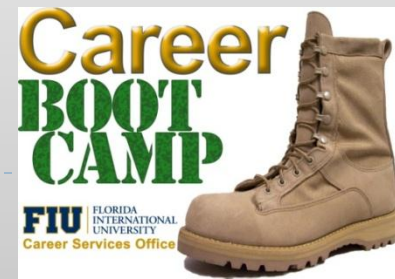
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**Riddles:** How many cars are there in the USA?

**Algorithms:** Implement a linked list. Why did you pick the method you did?

**Applications:** Suppose we wanted to run a microwave oven from the computer. What kind of software would you write to do this?

**Thinkers:** If you could gather all of the computer manufacturers in the world together into one room and then tell them one thing that they would be compelled to do, what would it be?

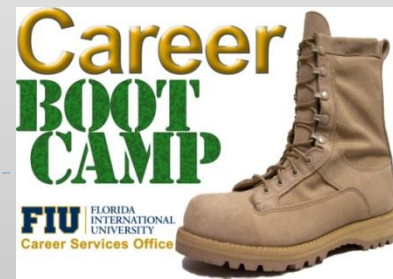




# “What If You Don't Know the Answer?”

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- ▶ Make sure that you understand the question.
  - ▶ If not, ask for clarification
- ▶ Be honest: "I don't know" is preferred to erroneous information
- ▶ Errors are more harmful to product development than, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you."
- ▶ If it's a "difficult" question, ask for some time to think about it

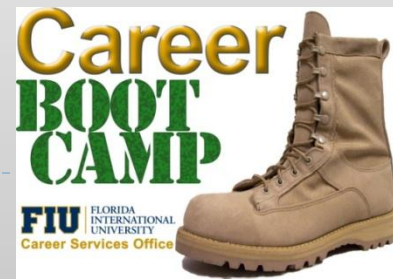


# “What If You Don't Know the Answer?”

What do you look for in answers to technical questions?

- ▶ Good communication skills. In teams. Written. Oral
  - ▶ Engineering concepts must be captured, documented, and presented
- ▶ Ability to understand the question, think clearly "on your feet," and be able to explain a technical solution clearly at the appropriate level of technical detail
- ▶ Clear and organized thought process as well as aptitude and enthusiasm for their engineering discipline

▶ “Engineers: Prep for Technical Interview Questions” UC Berkeley

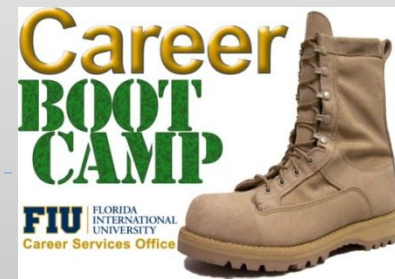


# Illegal Inquiries

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Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 USC 2000e, makes it unlawful for an employer to hire or discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his/her compensation, terms, conditions or privileges of employment, because of an individual's race, color, religion, sex or national origin. This covers hiring, firing, promotions and all workplace conduct.

The Americans with Disabilities Act which prohibits discrimination against individuals with physical and mental disabilities. Passed in 1990 by George Bush.





## Dashboard



### Conduct Interview

Click Here to pick your question set, plug in a webcam, and conduct a practice interview.



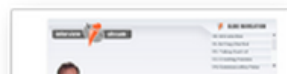
### Watch Interview

View your practice interviews and critique your interviewing skills.



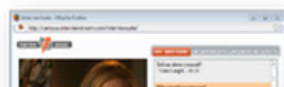
### Now on the iPad!

Learn how to download InterviewStream Go and conduct interviews on your iPad.



### Interview Webinar

Watch 8 expert modules giving you a complete overview of how to ace your interview.



### Expert Tips

Learn from two interview experts by watching short insider tips on how to approach certain questions

### Tutorial

View a quick tutorial on how to conduct your practice interview.



## Message Center

Welcome Babacar,

Welcome to InterviewStream! Here you will find valuable resources to assist you with your interviewing development. Before you get started, make sure to view our InterviewWebinar and InterviewSuite that feature expert tips and advice on all things interviewing. Once ready, you can then conduct interviews and receive feedback from anyone with an email address.



[Helpful Resources](#)



[Need More Help?](#)

# Some Coming Events

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## Engineering Student Showcase

Thursday, 4/11/13, 3pm-4:30pm, EC

Groups showcase work and projects to employers

RSVP required for each group

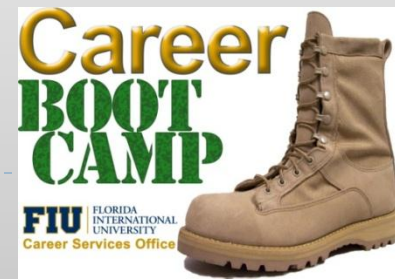
## Statewide Job Fair

Thursday, 5/9/13, UCF in Orlando, FL

RSVP required to reserve a seat on a bus from FIU

## Federal Government Statewide Conference

Friday, 6/28/13, GC Ballrooms





*“Please Complete a Survey  
Before you leave today”*

Modesto A. Maidique Campus  
11200 S.W. 8th Street, GC 230  
Miami, FL 33199  
(305) 348-2423

Biscayne Bay Campus  
3000 N.E. 151st Street, WUC 255  
North Miami, FL 33181  
(305) 919-5770

Engineering Center  
10555 W. Flagler Street, EC 2910  
Miami, FL 33174  
(305) 348-1281

*“Move Your Career Forward”*

<http://career.fiu.edu>