Life After Cal:
Tips From a Recent Graduate on Coursework, Graduate School, Resumes, Interviews, and a Sneak Peek into the World of Environmental Consulting

By Nina Bree Fitch
Outline

- About Me
- Classes That Helped Me
- Graduate School?
- Looking For A Job
  - Finding a Job That Fits You
  - Where to Look
  - What Makes a Good Resume
  - The Do’s and Don’ts of Cover Letters
- Acing The Interview
  - Preparing For Your Interview
  - 7 Tips For a Successful Interview
- Starting Your New Job
  - How to Impress your new employer and make the most out of your new job
- So What is Environmental Consulting Anyways?
  - About AMEC
About Me

- **Life at Cal**
  - BA from Cal in Geology/Marine Science in 2009
  - MA “Metal Contamination and Remediation in Surface Water Environments” in 2010
  - Gab Member (2007-2010) and President (2009-2010)

- **What I’ve been up to since I left the Ramsden Room**
  - Staff Geologist for AMEC for 2+ years
The Classes that Helped Me the Most

- **Undergraduate:**
  - Mineralogy
  - Petrology
  - Field Mapping & Advanced Field Course
  - Calculus, Physics, and Chemistry
  - Biology and Geomorphology of Tropical Islands

- **MA Courses:**
  - Water Chemistry (CE)
  - Soil Chemistry
  - Soil Science
  - Geomorphology
  - Hydrology for Land Planners
  - Geochemistry and Ore Petrology

- **What I Wish I Took:**
  - **CE Courses**
    - Fluid Mechanics of Rivers, Streams, and Wetlands (101)
    - Intro to Hydrology (103) or Groundwater and Seepage (173)
    - Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Engineering (175)
  - GIS and Mat Lab
  - Geochemistry
  - Structural Geology
  - Hydrogeology
What about Graduate School???

- What are the options?
  - EPS one-year MA program
    - Good opportunity to take more career specific classes outside EPS
    - Allows you to focus your education on a career goal
    - Short: Good or Bad???
    - relatively inexpensive
    - MA not MS
  - 3 year Master Program or PhD program
    - New environment
    - More time to focus on a specific field
    - $$$
Looking for a job is like going fishing, if you cast out your bait and have patience and determination you will catch your fish.

- Take some time to think about what you really want to do!
  - Geotechnical Consulting
  - Environmental Consulting
  - Resources (mining and petroleum)
  - Research (academic or government)
  - and many more…

- Three Things to Remember
  - Be patient
  - Be persistent
  - Be confident
Looking For a Job: Where to Look

- **People You Know**
  - Friends who have graduated
  - Family
  - Professors/Teachers
  - EPS Department Resources
  - Alumni Student Career Forum
  - LinkedIn

- **Make New Connections**
  - Join a club
  - Go to seminars or conferences
  - Take classes in other departments
Looking For a Job: Where to Look

Clubs, both on campus and off can be a good place to meet people with similar interests as you:

- Professional Clubs in the Bay Area
  - National Groundwater Association
    http://www.ngwa.org
  - Groundwater Resources Association of California
    http://www.grac.org/
  - Bay Area Geophysical Society
    http://sepwww.stanford.edu/bags
  - Peninsula Geological Society
    http://www.diggles.com/pgs/#PGSfuture
Looking For a Job: Where to Look

Attend local seminars in your field, good for your education and your resume:

- **Upcoming Events**
  - **Groundwater Resources Association:**
    - Investigation and Remediation of Dry Cleaner Release Sites Symposium
      - Wednesday November 7, 2012, Concord
      - Wednesday November 14, 2012, Berkeley
  - **Princeton Groundwater:**
    - Groundwater Pollution and Hydrology Course
      - March 19-22, 2013 in San Francisco
    - Remediation Course
      - TBA
Looking For a Job: Where to Look

**Online Resources:**

- **Craigslist**
  - My personal favorite, most frequently updated and trustworthy
  - BUT, not widely used so may jobs will not be there

- **Other Job Websites**
  - Watch out for these, they are not very reliable and tend to scam you

- **Google It!**
  - Look up companies where you want to work and contact them yourself!
Putting Together a Good Resume

Helpful Tips

- Fill up the page, or format it to make it look full
  - Include personal interests if you have space, when you say you like “hiking and outdoor sports” the employer will see “they will be great in the field”
- Keep it to a page
- Any experience is good experience
  - Don’t be afraid to put the little things on your resume
- Include your classes
- Keep different resumes for different positions
- Make note of any leadership experience
- Try not to have time gaps in your resume
- Include a one sentence “Job Objective” section
- Never send out a resume without a cover letter
Looking For a Job: Cover Letter

The Do’s and Don’ts of Cover Letters

- **Do**
  - Send a Cover Letter with your resume
  - Use your cover letter to explain why you are sending a resume, where you found out about the job, and why they should read it
  - Make it look professional but let your personality show through

- **Don’t**
  - Send a generic Cover Letter, personalize every letter you send
  - Write the same things that are on your resume
    - take key points from your resume and provide more details
The Interview: Preparation

- Get to Know the Company
  - Who are they?
  - How big are they?
  - What do they do?
  - Who are their employees?

- Think of questions that you might want to ask
  - Ask questions that show that you are interested in the company
  - Ask questions that show you know a little about the industry
  - Don’t ask “me, me, me” questions
    - “What will I get paid?”, “What are my benefits”… there are other times for these types of questions, but not in your interview

- What the wants to see
  - Confidence
  - Interest in the Company and the Industry
  - Compatibility
  - Intelligence
  - Who you are
The Interview: Asking Good Questions

What advice would you give to someone on their first day working for your company?

I noticed from your website that your company is involved in local community service, how could I get involved?

How might my position evolve throughout my employment?

What would you ask?
The Interview: 7 Tips

7 Tips For a Successful Interview:

- RELAX... don’t be nervous!
- Be Yourself
- Be Confident
  - You are/will be a UC Berkeley grad! Give yourself a pat on the back!
- Be Honest
  - Don’t be afraid to say that you don’t know something, you are not expected to know everything
- Ask Good Questions- you are now expert question askers!
- Look Professional
- Have Fun!
Helpful Hints for Making The Most of Your New Job:

- Be open, take on whatever comes your way
  - Gives you the chance to find out what you like to do best before you settle into more routine tasks
- Don’t be afraid to make mistakes!
  - As a new employee you are not expected to be perfect, so don’t worry about screwing up
  - When you do make a mistake, figure out how to fix it
- If you don’t like something or are uncomfortable… speak up
- Take an active role, don’t wait for work to come to you
- If something doesn’t make sense to you, ask someone
- Be outgoing and positive
What Is Environmental Consulting?

**Market Sectors:**
- Energy
- Utilities/Water Districts
- Industrial
- Legal
- Real Estate
- Transportation
- Government
- Sustainability

**Services:**
- Phase I/Phase II
- Site Characterization and Remediation
- Hydrology
- Environmental Toxicology
- Environmental Management
- Decision Analysis
- Legal Support
Environmental Consulting in a Nutshell

- Environmental Site Assessment
- Site Characterization
- Remediation
What Does a Staff Geologist Do?

- **In the Field**
  - Drilling
    - Direct Push
    - Hollow Stem Auger
    - Sonic Drilling
    - Soil Logging
    - Soil Sampling
    - Well Installation
    - Soil Vapor Point Installation
    - Grab Groundwater Sampling
    - Waste Characterization
    - CPT/LIF/MIP/HPT
  - Monitoring
    - Semiannual/quarterly Groundwater Monitoring
    - Low Flow Sampling
    - CMT Wells
    - Soil Vapor Sampling

- **In the Office**
  - Report Writing
    - Monitoring reports
    - Sampling Memorandums
    - Proposals
  - Data Analysis
  - Cross Sections
  - Potentiometric Surface Maps
  - Laboratory Data Validation
  - Work Plans
  - Health and Safety Plans
  - Scheduling Fieldwork
  - Cost Estimates
  - File Reviews
About AMEC Environment & Infrastructure

Global Footprint

29,000 employees operate in 40 countries
AMEC E&I in the Bay Area

- Over 100 professionals in the Bay Area
  - 36 Professional Engineers
  - 15 Geotechnical Engineers
  - 28 Professional Geologists
  - 7 Certified Hydrologists
  - 5 Certified Engineering Geologist
  - 18 have PhDs
  - 74 have Masters Degrees
  - A bunch of Cal Grads!

- Reputation for providing clients with leading edge technical knowledge coupled with highly efficient and effective problem solving

- Offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and Petaluma
AMEC E&I in the Bay Area

What We Do:

- Environmental science and engineering
- Geotechnical engineering and engineering geology
- Civil/infrastructure engineering
- Construction management
- Water resources
- Decision and quantitative analysis
- Process engineering
- Climate change and sustainability
- Program management
- Military Munitions Response Program Support
Example of a hypothetical project in Environmental Consulting

CASE STUDY
nina.fitch@amec.com
510.663.4288

THANK YOU