



National Association of Colleges and Employers - 2019 Inclusion Committee

Transcript: Dress for Success

Hello, I'm Saleem Clarke from the Pennsylvania State University Career Services today.

I'd like to share with you what our campus is doing to meet our goals around diversity and inclusion and how that is working for us specifically with respect to diversity best practices when discussing with students how to dress for success.

Now in a perfect world, we all like to believe that nobody judges a book by its cover.

But well, we live in an imperfect world. We all know that first impressions mean everything especially when it comes to a job interview career fair or networking at that employers, recruiters, and hiring managers judge people every day based on first impression, but some students might ask. What do I wear?

Do you think I should straighten my hair?

Will they hire me after they see my piercings what is considered acceptable in the professional work space? And how do you know?

Well, it starts with owning who you are when I work with diverse student populations, and they ask me these questions.

I try to empower them by turning some questions back on that. For instance, would I want to work for an employer who doesn't have an inclusive trust policy? Am I willing to conform to this company's exclusive dress policy just so I can land the job? Will the work space be safe for me if I don't conform?

One key to being supportive of students from diverse backgrounds is to create a positive relationship and learning environment that is built on awareness.

For instance, if I'm unaware that traditional professional dress policies are not all-inclusive and could possibly be harmful to students from specific populations, then why would I change?

Therefore, increasing my awareness can help eliminate some assumptions that I might make about a student.

I believe it's important to empower students by asking questions to create an open dialogue that allows students to let me into their world.

So I can gain first-hand knowledge about some of the concerns related to professionalism in the workplace

It's also important to understand that inclusive practices can exist despite one's own personal views about traditional professional trust policies

Career professionals can empower students to be their true selves regardless of their personal beliefs. I also like to encourage students to conduct research on companies of interest and try to gauge on whether or not that company would suit their professional needs.

Info sessions provide great opportunities for students to engage with employers and ask questions about dress code expectations and company culture using platforms like LinkedIn to reach out to alums to work at different companies to ask them about company culture is another great way to get this information.

I appreciate the time to share some of our diversity best practices related to dressing for success.