

CNN Professional Networking Panel

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SUZI BILLINGTON: So why don't we get started, and I guess if we've got some late stragglers, they can join us when they arrive. So good morning. My name is Suzi Billington. I'm the director for the Carson Center for Student Success. And on behalf of the Carson College of Business, I'd like to thank you for joining us this morning and welcome you to our Career Networking Night networking panel that we have.

As business students, you always hear the importance of networking, and I was hoping that we would have a little bit more in the audience, although I know that we do have a number of Cougs joining us through the Global Campus as well. The importance of networking is super-important as a business student, as you're going out into your career, and you're going to learn a little bit more about that from our panelists that we have here.

And what I want you to think about is, as you're going into either the Career Networking Night tonight or the Career Expo tomorrow, think about the things that you've learned and you've heard at today's panel, and see how you can incorporate that in a natural and effective way as you're going out and meeting the new people who could possibly be your next either internship supervisor or your job supervisor. So think about that and how you will incorporate that into your networking style as you move on for the rest of today's and tomorrow's events.

Today, I am joined by four of our student leaders who will be helping with this panel and playing a large role in our panel. I'd like to introduce our moderator, Andrew Poulton, who will be joining me as well. Andrew is a finance and accounting major. He's a junior from Texas, although he does come from a family of Cougs. He's a VP for Beta Gamma Sigma, which is one of our honor societies within the College of Business.

I also have Paul Theda, who is an MIS and finance major, who is also part of Beta Gamma Sigma and is one of our volunteers that will be trying to pass around the microphone for questions later on. We have Jack Lehman, who is from Alpha Kappa Psi, is also a finance major, management major, too.

Oh, I forgot to mention that Paul will be working with Ali in a few months here when he graduates. And then, also, Jack-- where's our-- where's Jack? Jack is down here, too. He's from Alpha Kappa Psi, and he'll be helping us with questions, audience questions, as will Rohit Khandekar, who is from Alpha Kappa Psi as well.

So I've got four of our student leaders who will be helping with today's panel. And what I'm going to do next is bring up Andrew. He's going to tell you a little bit more about the panelists that we have. We've got four panelists, great panelists, that will be joining us and sharing their insight and wisdom with you, and so, Andrew.

ANDREW POULTON: Thank you all again for coming today. Let's begin right with the introduction for these four panelists. On the far end, we have Michelle Williams, who is the Director of Internship Selection Development for Northwestern Mutual in the Northwest.

As the leader of Northwest Mutual's nationally ranked internship program, she exposes young professionals to incredibly rewarding and impactful career. She also serves on the board of Kootenai County's Distinguished Young Women, and enjoys staying involved in her community.

Next, we have Gary Barquet. He is the Regional Sales Recruiter overseeing Cintas Corporation's Western and Central Regions. He joined Cintas in 2016 as a management trainee and found the professionalism and confidence of Cintas employees and the culture of the company to be a great fit. Last year, he was promoted to his current role. He is dedicated to learning and serving others, and as an executive ambassador for Treehouse, a nonprofit organization serving youth in foster care.

Next we have Meredith Sansburn. She is an Organizational Development Analyst at Fisher Investments and has been with the firm for over three years now. She works alongside OD program managers, providing support for engagement with the business through reporting slash tool creation, analysis, dedicated communications, and frequent interaction with internal coworkers. She is a native of the Palouse, a Vandal alum, and is excited to be back in the area networking with Cougs.

Lastly, we have Ali Ruther, who is an Accelerator at Highspot, serving as an Implementation Coach for customers pursuing-- or purchasing software-- sorry. She helps Highspot customers design their solution, set up integrations they have with other technology platforms, and train all users throughout the process. In addition, she provides best practices to Highspot customers in sale enablement system-- or space-- sorry.

Now, for the panelists-- in about a brief one-minute summary, what is the one thing that you wish you would have known while you were in college regarding networking reasons? So if any of you would like to start first.

GARY BARQUET: Well, first and foremost, I really want to thank all of you for being here. Truthfully, you guys are definitely-- give you guys all kudos for being here because you guys are clearly ahead of the game. And a big part of networking is putting yourself out there and showing up, maybe even when other people don't. So again, kudos for being here.

One of the biggest things I wish I would have known or even tapped into a little bit more when I was in college is probably the importance of networking itself. Simply getting out there and starting as soon as you can is critical to your success because networking is a career-building power tool. It's all about who you know and who you build relationships with. So simply said, starting as early as you can is going to be the best thing for you.

A good example of this is, when I was in college, I was able to go to a professor's after-hours, built a relationship with her, and I was simply asking her for tips on my project, you know, how do I improve this? How do I-- I really wanted to know how I got a better grade. I was like, how can I get a better grade at this? I wanted to step this up a little bit.

And, ultimately, one of my goals was to get a summer job. I ended up sharing that with her, having no idea that she actually put my name in a hat for a summer job at her office. And I ended up getting a job that summer at Connors College, the actual office there. And I ended up having a job for the next two and a half years, all from going to a professor's after-hours and building that relationship. So ultimately, my message would be, put yourself out there as much as possible, and the sooner the better. So start earlier-- I wish I would've started even earlier.

SUZI BILLINGTON: All right.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: I'll echo Gary here a little bit. Everybody's heard that saying, it's not what you know, it's who you know. And I feel like I was great in college about going to networking events. I was not great about following up, and I think that's a huge part of networking, as you can go to an event and feel really good about the connections that you've made and gather business cards.

But if you're not somebody that's calling the next day and saying, hey, it was really great to meet you, and I would love to sit down for a cup of coffee, you're really missing the boat there. And I discovered late in the game that that's a really key piece of networking in general, that I've since gotten really good at and I always preach about because it's such an important part of the networking process. So I would say, not only put yourself out there, but make sure that you're following up.

Even if it's a company or a person that you don't think you want to work at, still see if they are willing to have a cup of coffee with you, or sit on the phone for 20 minutes and share more about what they do and why they're passionate about it. I think that's a huge part of networking.

ALI RUTHER: Yeah, I was going to say something very similar about making sure that you follow up, but in addition to that, sending your resume in that follow-up can be really helpful. A lot of times companies have to rescan the resumes once they get back to their company, so sending it already in that file can be a really quick push to the recruiters if they remember the conversation that you had. So making sure that in your follow-up, if you send via email, just providing a little quick blurb about what you talked about can make a huge difference.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: My suggestion is, when you go to these networking opportunities, take advantage of it and just be yourself because you never know who you're going to meet when you go to these events. For example, my junior year of college, I went to a fall career fair, and I actually spoke and shook hands with someone that was going to be my direct manager a year and a half later.

And who knew my first impression there at that event could pay off further down the line, and when I moved to the Portland area? So I met him here on the Palouse, and I worked for him in Portland. So be yourself, be prepared, and just take advantage of these opportunities because they're-- it's really a great opportunity, so take advantage.

ANDREW POULTON: So right back to Meredith, what is one thing that you're looking for when you're networking with students?

MEREDITH SANSBURN: One thing I'm looking for or one thing I'm really impressed by when networking with students is when you're prepared. So when I say prepared, I mean you've either done your research about my company, you know a little bit about what we do, because I can then meet you where you're at with what you know about my company, and then we can build the conversation from there.

That way, it's just such a natural conversation where I can truly get to know you, what you're looking for, and if my company would be a good fit for you, and then also continue to educate you about the opportunities we have.

ANDREW POULTON: Michelle, what would you say is the best way for a nervous student to break the ice? How should they approach you, and how do they get past those nerves?

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: So a little bit more of an echo here-- preparing to go into any kind of networking event is huge. Now, I'm with Northwestern Mutual, right? We're a full-service financial planning firm. The amount of times that I've had a student walk up and say, hey, you're a bank, right?-- blows my mind. Is it that big of a deal? No, but somebody that walks up and says, hey, you're personal financial planning, right? That makes a huge difference to me because that tells me that you actually did your research.

And that goes right along with making you feel a little bit more confident in approaching me because if you know who I am, if you know what company I'm with and what we do-- you've done that research-- maybe you know what our mission statement is. Maybe you know that community is really important to you-- hey, we're really involved with a childhood cancer fund.

Know those kinds of things. That's a really great way to start a conversation, instead of saying, gosh, now, who are you with?-- and then feeling like your heart's racing, and you're sweating, and you're not really sure how to continue the conversation. You've got questions to fall back on.

And so in addition to that, if you're being prepared, you're going to come off much more confident. And you should always be remembering, as you're entering any kind of networking event or career fair, you are interviewing the people that you're talking with just as much as they're interviewing you.

Even if you are in that instance where it's not a formal interview setting, make sure that you are learning everything you can about the person, why they're passionate about what they do, why they've been with the company that they have been, how long have they been there. Ask those kinds of pertinent questions, and make sure that your values and your beliefs and the things that excite you really line up with that person in the company.

ANDREW POULTON: Gary, with the realization that any good relationship is a two-way street, how can a student be a good networking contact, and what can the student offer a seasoned professional?

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, absolutely. This question definitely got me excited. So I mean, the first part of that question is, how can a student be a good networking contact? You have to be a networker, and it kind of comes down to what we had addressed earlier, as far as you going out there, building the connections with the right people on campus.

Be that person who you can introduce to somebody else of value. Be that person who, when they think of you, they know they have good relationships on campus with people and has a good reputation to precede that as well.

And then the second half of that question, I mean, I would almost define it as a mentor-mentee relationship. When you have a relationship with a seasoned professional, most of the time it will look in that mentor-mentee form. So when it comes to that, I mean, it really comes to the value that you're able to bring to that mentor as far as your excitement, your engagement, you being interested in learning, learning about what they do and how to gain some of their skill sets.

Any seasoned professional, they want to see you win. They want to see you win. They want to be successful. They want you to be successful. They want to share their knowledge with you. So when you come to the table hungry, eager to learn, prepared for the conversations, that's how you can be a good connection and an asset to a business professional.

I can guarantee you that any professional in the building or any professional will get excited from you coming prepared, you coming engaged, and them wanting to share their knowledge with you. So just take that serious-- always respect their time.

A couple, like, few rules that I wrote down for you guys is always respect their time, always come prepared, have an agenda, take initiative, be engaged, and just, again, show your energy and eagerness to learn. And that's really going to set you apart. Any professional will value that, guaranteed.

ANDREW POULTON: Ali, a student may realize that they need a professional network, but they don't know where to start. What are some key things to remember when building a professional network?

ALI RUTHER: I would say one place to start is, I feel like it's easy to panic about being behind, and while, yes, everyone wishes they could have started yesterday, you've already started by being in classes with other students and forming relationships with each other. So at least, try to think about that as already a win.

And then, from there, like I mentioned, with professors-- Gary also mentioned this, how networking with his professors helped him. In addition, my professors, while I was here, also were really helpful in giving me opportunities to network with other people, as well as I had some folks that were willing to review my resume from an industry perspective.

And lastly, don't feel afraid to reach out to recruiters over LinkedIn. While that may seem scary, I've had quite a few people that I know be successful with that. One person that comes to mind at Highspot, actually, he applied for a really high-up position just right out of school.

And then he followed up with the recruiter and asked, hey, I never heard back from Highspot about this position. And she said, well, you weren't exactly qualified for that position. But then a few months down the line, she actually reached back out to him and said, hey, we have this position. I think that you'd be a good fit for it. And that was really helpful in getting him a job out of school.

ANDREW POULTON: Thank you, panelists. At this time, we'll allow for Q&A from the audience, so if you have a question, if you could state your name and then your major, and then proceed with your question. You can ask just a general question for all the panelists, or if you want to ask a specific panelist a question, either one of those. So do I have any questions from the audience?

AUDIENCE: Well, I guess to kick things off, one of the questions that I'm interested in is hearing what do you not like to see when you're networking with someone? Basically, what should we avoid when talking with you? That can be to anyone.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: I got it. Please don't be on your phones. I know that that's everybody's best friend. It's easy when you feel awkward, and you're nervous, and you're not entirely sure how to approach people-- that's the worst thing that I can see is that somebody is just engrossed in their phone.

And so put that in your pocket. Put it in your purse and hang it up. If you don't have it with you, you may feel sad because you don't have that safeguard. But it's going to be easier to actually walk up to people, introduce yourself, and force yourself to get to know them a little bit.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: Kind of going off of that, the buddy system-- I know sometimes it's easier to walk into a career fair with your best colleague from one of your classes. But at the end of the day, the interview will just be you and a recruiter. And if you come up confident, by yourself, ready to take on the conversation-- because it's easy to be with your best friend from class, but at the end of the day, I would just want to have a conversation with you.

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, I second that for sure on both ends. And I would say another piece of that is just not talking to somebody just to talk. You know, find somebody-- find a good company that you're interested in. Find the people that make the most sense for you.

If I can tell you're kind of just coming up to me to exchange a couple words, and you're not really necessarily listening to what I'm saying, you're not taking notes, you don't have your resume on you or you're not prepared, it's just a big turnoff for a company or for a professional.

Any seasoned professional values their time. So make sure, again, that you come prepared. Know-- maybe have a hit list of who you want to talk to and get after it, and that'll save you a lot of time, energy, and that'll come off pretty impressive to the professionals as well.

ALI RUTHER: Yeah, I think those were all great answers, and just make eye contact and smile. I think that can get you a long way.

ANDREW POULTON: There any other questions?

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I have a question. Hey panelists, so what could happen if a student accidentally makes a bad impression with you on the first day? Are there any methods that that student can use potentially on the next day, during the actual career fair, that could mitigate those problems or just help them actually make a better boost?

GARY BARQUET: I am a firm believer in life that you can always redeem yourself-- always redemption. Any video game, anything I play with my friends, or anything I do, I'm always under the impression of, hey, I can redeem myself if I don't make it that first game or first round.

So having that mentality of, hey, I made a mistake, owning up to it, or maybe I didn't present my best self this time around, I want to give it another go. Just make sure that you come prepared the next time. Maybe you would even acknowledge that, hey, yesterday I wasn't in my zone. Yesterday I was a little distracted, but I just wanted to make sure that I approached you again, and you really presented my best self in front of you guys.

And any professional will respect that because not everybody is perfect, and you're not going to get it on that first go, every round, but do you have the retaliation and redemption to get yourself back into the game?

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: That's such a good and thoughtful question. If I think back, I put myself through school by serving. And on the occasion that I made a mistake on an order, or if I forgot to put something in, or something happened with a table, every time that I redeemed myself and apologized up front and followed through, I swear, that client at the end of the day had a way better experience with me than if I would have given them totally perfect service the whole time.

So by doing that, if you're somebody who is willing to follow up, you give them a phone call the next day and say, hey, I really enjoyed meeting with you. I was really nervous that day, but I would love to sit down with you in a more personal setting-- that says a ton to me. And so never-- if you feel like you didn't get off on the right foot, never ignore somebody later. Always follow up, and make sure that you can make that connection a little bit better.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: Identifying that you may have got off on the wrong foot also kind of speaks volume, as far as you're aware of your surroundings. You're aware of reactions. You're in tune to the conversation and really listening and addressing it, and both those being great examples. Addressing it also shows accountability, which is a huge thing that we as employers are looking for with our candidates. So I would say just follow back. Keep confident and pushing through.

AUDIENCE: So thank you.

ANDREW POULTON: Got some more.

SUZI BILLINGTON: We have a question from online. When should people start thinking about networking in college? Should it be sophomore year, junior year? What are your suggestions?

ALI RUTHER: I think everyone up here would say as soon as you feel comfortable and are ready. If you can land more internships earlier on, or if you can just start building those relationships, that's going to greatly impact you when you're ready to find other jobs.

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, I definitely would say as soon as possible. It can start as soon as you have your first set of classes. Again, as we mentioned, networking with your professors is a very powerful tool. Start off simple. You know, I consider myself somebody who's kind of out there, somebody who took risks, but a big part of networking is getting outside of your comfort zone.

So realize that you networking or building those relationships, you may not be comfortable with it initially. But starting off simple and, again, building relationships with, for example, a professor could be a good way to kind of segue-way yourself into, again, building relationships with other professionals in the right places.

So start as soon as possible. I would say freshman year, in your classes. You're already going to be networking with people around you, as well as your professors. So really, I would say as soon as you can. Even if you don't realize you're networking, you are, as soon as you step foot on the campus.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: From day one, too, something to think about, I think when people think of networking, you're thinking about going to really specific networking events. If you're a freshman and you know that you may not qualify for an internship this next summer, that's OK. If you're looking at a specific career path, reach out to professionals in that career.

I, at one point, ended up getting a job from a local cab company-- I went to school right around here-- because I was in a group project through my school doing public relations. I really connected well with the business owner. He was just then starting a business, and I ended up doing marketing for him.

And so if you can reach out, again, do that follow-through. Start talking to people really early on that are in the actual positions that you are interested in taking on after graduation. That speaks volumes, and that's a way that you can get in the door earlier on.

ANDREW POULTON: We have another question in the middle, if we get a mic right there.

AUDIENCE: Hi. In terms of the resumes that we would hand you at the Career Networking Night or at the career fair, if we have two versions of the same thing-- one's a little more colorful, and one's, like, black and white, which would you prefer?

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: I like color.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: [LAUGHS]

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: That might depend on the industry that you're looking at. I like to see color. I like to see specifics about you. If you have things outside of the workplace that you're really passionate about, I would love to know about that. That's a great way to get to know you on a more personal level.

Now, not everybody may agree with me there, but I would love to see a little of you. I would love to see a head shot on that resume. Make sure that you have your mission statement. That might be a personal preference, but that's where I come from.

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, I second that. Give me some color on that resume. I like that.

[LAUGHTER]

Even-- I was doing some-- I was sending out an email, sending out weekly recaps to my team, and even trying to figure out creative ways to get them to read my emails, I did some research on that, and including color in your email is actually a way to capture some eyes.

So now I got certain text that I'll highlight and make it red and make blue, and it seems to be getting a little bit more traction. So I think that color, just for even cognitive reasons like that, it's stimulating to most people's minds, and it'll draw their eyes to certain things. So I think that could work in your favor.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: Just make sure content is there as well.

GARY BARQUET: Right.

MEREDITH SANBURN: That's my only thing because--

GARY BARQUET: It has to be--

MEREDITH SANBURN: --as mission statement--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

MEREDITH SANBURN: --groups you're a part of, because we also-- the color, of course, is very memorable, but we look past and look in and see what you've done, what organizations have you been a part of, any leadership positions you've taken on, in addition to your already large schoolwork, so yes.

ALI RUTHER: And I think I'd be OK if you handed me either.

ANDREW POULTON: We've got time for a couple more questions if anybody wants to get one out. Yeah, right over there.

AUDIENCE: Hi. So on a resume, do you care what people put for, like, in high school, do you care what they were involved in in high school? Or would you prefer something more recent, involved in college and things like that?

MEREDITH SANBURN: I think it depends how far back in high school you're going because I know, with a resume, we can't look at your history of everything you've ever done. We really want the most either recent accomplishments or your greatest accomplishments, so whether that's your senior or your junior year of high school, but we still want to keep it to a pretty succinct one-pager if possible.

It's also a good speaking point for you of, when you hand someone a resume, what are you ready to share about-- how does that experience maybe lead into what you're looking for in your career path? So I think that's a very subjective way to look at it.

ANDREW POULTON: A question over here.

AUDIENCE: Hello, panelists. I just had a quick question. What are some effective ways to research a company, or what are some good things to remember besides the positions available, the industry, and the company values?

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: One thing that I've always looked at is community involvement, but I think that what that really comes down to are what are the-- excuse me-- what are the things that are really important to you? If you're not that adamant about being involved in your community, maybe that's not what you look for.

But I think that more of the key answer there is that you need to first figure out, OK, what are the things that are really important to me in a company? And then, that's what you should be looking for on somebody's website. Look on their website. Look on their Facebook, on their LinkedIn. A lot of pages have Instagrams now that might show you a little bit more of their company culture, as opposed to just the black and whites online.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: I think to also get into-- yes, do your research, and look at websites. Look at any material they have out there to tell you about our company and our values. And then at the career fairs, at these networking opportunities, that's a great time to have a human connection, and then talk more and ask those tougher questions of, how would you describe your culture?

That's a great question, and really digging into if it's a good culture fit for you, and then it goes both ways. We want it to be great for you, and you want to work here, so those are some of the best conversations.

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, I mean, doing that research is-- it is critical. It's going to-- it's a way to help you stand out. And it's almost like your ammunition. You know, do that research, and then it's how you apply that research. You know, what stood out? You know, just like you were saying, what stood out to you? Take what stands out to you, and then bring that to that conversation.

And, again, ask those questions to the right people, and if you're asking about their culture, everything should match. You know, what that person says is what is on their website. It'll show you how strong that culture truly is. So it kind of comes down to what's most important to you. I second that.

ALI RUTHER: And anywhere that you might see things about them in the news-- maybe new things have happened. So being able to be up on that, you could, like you said, ask questions on that, if anything stands out.

ANDREW POULTON: Are there any last questions before we move on? All right, one final question we want to ask all the panelists. If there's one thing that the students could take away from this discussion, what would you say that is? So if, Ali, you want to start?

ALI RUTHER: Yeah. If there's one thing that you could take away, I would say be genuine and be yourself, like Meredith talked about earlier. And then, make sure to follow up. It really does make you stand out.

MEREDITH SANSBURN: Take advantage of the opportunities that are provided to you. For instance, a panel like this was not available when I was a senior or junior, or even earlier in college, so this is just such a great opportunity to meet and network with employers. And just remember, we're human, and it's just a conversation. Be yourself, and let's see where the conversation takes us.

GARY BARQUET: Yeah, and, I mean, my biggest takeaway or message for you guys is realizing that the time starts now. You know, it's now for you to take control of what your future looks like. This is one of the few times in your life that you're going to have just thousands of people around you that have similar aspirations and goals. Take advantage of that because you're only in college once.

My dad told me that when I came freshman year, and, sure enough, four years later, it went by in a flash. So take advantage of this time in your life. The time starts now, and go from there. So take advantage.

MICHELLE WILLIAMS: A key here is that you just need to put yourself out there. Networking may not be your thing. You may not feel completely natural in a networking setting. That's OK. At the end of the day, if you still put yourself out there, and you have really great conversations, and you take yourself out of your comfort zone, you're still going to feel really good about what you've accomplished that day.

And it's going to feel a lot better than if you decided ultimately not to go to something because you just felt too nervous. Nothing exciting ever happens in your comfort zone, and so put yourself out there is really the best thing, I think, you can take away from something like this.

GARY BARQUET: And you can skip class for events like this, just saying.

[LAUGHTER]

ANDREW POULTON: All right, thank you, panelists, for all this valuable information. We're going to welcome back Suzi back for some closing remarks. Suzi coming back-- I'll pass on this.

SUZI BILLINGTON: I would second that. You can skip class for events like this because it is very important to keep in mind, you know, when you're going to school, it may just be four years of your life, and what's going to happen afterwards? You're going to be in your career for 20, 25, 30 years, so put that into perspective.

You know, what you do here is only a blink of an eye, and those four years that you're in college will go by quickly. And so we've got some really great information and advice that we have learned from all of our panelists here. I want you to think about that, and internalize that, and how is that going to come out and manifest in the way you network?

And so I want you to make sure that you're reflecting on all of the things that you've heard, and you're going to be making goals for yourself as you go through the next few days. You know, we have our Resume Refresh event that's going on in the Carson Center. So do you have your resume? Is it ready to go? If not, that might be something that you'd want to look into.

We've got tonight's Career Networking Night at 5 o'clock tonight. Do you have an internship? Do you need practice networking? Do you need some connections in the industries that you want to go to? If not, that's something that you'd want to go to.

And then, tomorrow is the Career Expo over at Beasley Coliseum. It's one of the largest career fairs in the Inland Northwest, so why not take advantage of something like that? You've got hundreds of employers at your fingertips that are here on campus. And so that's something that you'd want to make sure that you take advantage of as well.

So they encouraged you. All of our panelists encouraged you to take advantage of all of your resources. And if you think about that, very few students are willing to put themselves out of their comfort zone. I mean, look around. We don't have that great attendance, right? And so the people that did show up are the ones that these employers are going to think a little bit more highly of because you took the time to show up, and that in itself is huge.

Think about all your classmates who didn't take the time to show up and how much further you are ahead of them. So it's an advantage to you, but also a disadvantage to all of the students who didn't show up. So I appreciate all of you coming out, and I know it's a really busy time. I know there's classes going on at the same time as this, so the timing and all wasn't ideal, but it was the time that we were given. So I'm glad that those of you who are able to join us were able to do that.

So again, thank you for being here, and I'd like to also thank you-- thank our panelists as well-- Ali Ruther, who was one of our beloved ambassadors when she was here as an undergraduate student, from Highspot; Meredith Sansburn, who is from Fisher Investment, also an alumni. And also, by the way, Fisher Investment is one of the top employers of Carson Cougs, from what I understand.

And then Gary Barquet from Cintas, who is also-- his company is also tabling down at the Carson Center, so if you're interested in learning more about opportunities for internships and career opportunities afterwards, make sure you talk to his colleagues at Cintas.

And then, again, Michelle Williams from Northwestern Mutual, who provided really, really great insight to all of you. And I'm hoping that you think about her words of wisdom, because a lot of that you'll hear from our career consultants and our career advisors, but when you actually hear it from an employer, it shows that that's what they're looking for. And so I hope that you think about that and figure out, how do you present and portray that when you go out and you network with Michelle and her colleagues from Northwestern Mutual?

So with that, if we can give them their thank you gifts. Oh, you got them already.

AUDIENCE: I did it back then.

SUZI BILLINGTON: Awesome, very good. Again, we've got a lot of events going on around career events that the Carson College of Business and the Carson Center sponsors. We are located in Todd Hall, room 101, so if you're not familiar with all of the resources, especially the career-related resources, make sure you come and visit us.

So thank you again. We're going to close a little bit early, but is there any final questions that you have for either our panelists or about our career events coming up? And if not, have a great afternoon. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

[MUSIC PLAYING]