

# OUT for Work: 2011 National LGBTQA College Student Career Conference

Program Notes

## “Is that a Rainbow Tie You’re Wearing?”

There were a number of panel discussions which offered extremely helpful employment information for members of the LGBTQA community. Resources identified for helping students with researching employers:

- [The Corporate Equality Index](#)
- [Out For Work Directory of Jobs and Internships](#)
- [Diversity Inc. Magazine](#) Includes lists of companies and how they are rated for a variety of groups.
- The Company’s own website
- Trade Magazines
- Community Events – Who is sponsoring PRIDE events?
- Current employees
- Facebook company pages often reveal openness to diversity through mission statements/activities.
- Internships offer an excellent way to assess a company’s culture.
- [National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Affiliated local chapters](#) across the USA
- [Maryland Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#)  
Chair: Gary Day | President: Ted Hart  
930 N Charles St./ Baltimore, MD 21201  
<mailto:info@marylandglcc.org>
- [Jobitorial](#)  
Employees speak about their company

## Applying for Jobs and Dealing with Interviews

In an interview situation recruiters and human resource staff are looking for a balance of “I” and “We” in the candidate’s response. Too much of either is not a good sign. Inclusion of both “I” and “We” statements shows a capacity for individual effort and team work.

Recruiters who come to campus or who participate in job fairs like to see that the candidate has some knowledge of the company, a snapshot of what the company does.

Should members of the LGBTQ community include LGBTQ activities on the resume?

Tailor your resume to the employer. Is the employer liberal or conservative? What was the activity you participated in? You have a choice to identify the experience as LGBTQ or to use the broader “diversity” category or to describe it as a minority group activity. Some students opt for leadership in a student life club.

Be prepared to answer how you have achieved your past goals. Describe how you established yourself at work with your work.

When applying for a position, don’t use a generic cover letter. Show your research about the organization.

Do all companies investigate a student’s presence on social media? Some companies do so routinely and others do not. But all human resources staff warned to avoid carelessness. Don’t leave red flags on Facebook or LinkedIn.

Also, make sure your email address is fully professional even if it means creating a new account just for your job search. If employers will be calling a number, record a professional greeting and avoid loud or offensive music.

## Keynote Address



**Maria E. Ruess, Vice President of International Business Development and Strategy** for Lockheed Martin Mission Systems and Sensors (MS2). In this position, she is responsible for all aspects of business development and strategy for the international markets. She has engaged in disciplined management of the business capture process, customer relationships, leveraging an understanding of market domain and competition, and bringing a complete LM solution portfolio to secure new business.

I attended the Out for Work national conference in D.C. on September 24. While the conference is aimed at supporting the career decision-making and job search for the LGQBT community, much of the advice offered by speakers and round-table panelists was useful to all students. This is a brief summary of tips that seemed useful to all students getting ready to step out into the job market.

Create a card with your “elevator pitch” and keep it in your wallet. Check it from time to time to be sure it continues to be current and relevant to the jobs you are pursuing. On that card, include your “promise,” what you are assuring your potential employer you will be able to offer in that work setting.

Your preparation should also include a statement of who you are, what you can do, what it is that you do to make a difference, what will be there after you leave. When you are in an interview setting:

- Make you interviewer feel important and comfortable.
- Use excellent listening skills.
- Use great caution with humor – what might be funny to you could be offensive to others or just miss the mark.
- Be sensitive to another person’s understanding. There is no need to be right.
- Be yourself.
- It is helpful to remember the names of people to whom you are introduced. Try to repeat it soon after you have heard it. A person’s name is precious to them. *(These tips were modified from a list provided by Bill Lampton.)*

Dressing for an interview is industry related. If the environment is “business casual,” then dress simply. Be comfortable. Women must observe the no cleavage rule. Female candidates do not want to be in an interview worried about what is open or closed. You want people to pay attention to what you are saying.

Use your network. Don’t underestimate the importance of sponsors. You want to create the feeling in the potential employer, “I want her on my team.” When you deliver on your commitments, your sponsor will fight for you. Your mentor will guide you.

Humility in the interview process is a valuable quality. In the beginning a job might offer awful pay, but give you an opportunity to strengthen areas of weakness. For example, if you are in business, but have not had a lot of experience in finance, strengthen your knowledge base in finance as this is the language of business.

Self-confidence helps overcome what cannot be changed. Focus on educating one person at a time. Ms. Ruess says she cannot hide that she is a Hispanic woman. She talks with a bit of an accent and uses her hands to add emphasis. In a predominantly male work environment this could be construed as a disadvantage, but she educates people she works with about her work ethic and competence. She arrives at meetings prepared, professionally attired with a professional, no-nonsense hairdo and make-up. Help people understand your skills and interests. Help people believe in you.

Maria leads the Hispanic Leadership Council at Lockheed. She pays attention to her personal branding.

A brand is a promise of what you do, what you can deliver. First impressions are made in 7-17 seconds. Non-verbal language, body language, may account for 55% of that first impression. You want to communicate that you are relevant; that you offer commitment to company goals and that your approaches are innovative.

Be proud of your uniqueness.