

04/15:

# Resume Writing and Interviewing

## The Capstone Experience

Dr. Wayne Dyksen  
Prof. James Mariani

Department of Computer Science and Engineering  
Michigan State University

Spring 2025



*From Students...  
...to Professionals*

# Resume and Interview Goals

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- Resume
  - Get Noticed
  - Get an Interview
  - Get in the Door
- Interview
  - Tell Your Story
  - Get a Good First Job
  - Start a Successful Career

# Caveats Resume Writing & Interviewing

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- Partly...
  - Science (Spock)
  - Art (Captain Kirk)
- Lots of Opinions
  - Varied
  - Sometimes Conflicting
- Always Exceptions to Every Rule
- Do what works for you.

# Resume Writing and Interviewing

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## ➤ Resume Writing

- Interviewing

# Resume Challenges

- Competition
  - 100's or 1,000's of 10,000's of Resumes
  - Lots Similar
  - Lots Qualified
- Typical Usage
  - Visual Scan (< 10 Seconds)
  - Optical (Machine) Scan
  - Often Not Read in Detail
  - Often Discarded

## MSU CTO Search

- 72 Resumes
- ~650 Pages

How will your resume stand out?

# Resume *Nota Bene*

## Every Last Detail Matters

If...

- ...cannot find relevant information quickly
- ...email wrong and bounces back
- ...phone number wrong
- ...not visually appealing
- ...not professional looking
- ...no answer and no voicemail
- ...etc...

then...

- ...pitch your resume and move on to the next one

# Resumes 101

- Exactly One (Full) Page
  - Not More
  - Not Less
- Simple Formatting
  - Black and White
  - No Graphics
  - Machine (Optical) Scan-able
- Honest
- Contains...
  - Contact Information
  - Objective
  - Education
  - Skills
  - Experience
  - Other Activities

# Contact Information

[1 of 3]

- Name
- Email Address  
(Use “Professional” Email Address)
  - No
    - [TheGamingWizard@hotmail.com](mailto:TheGamingWizard@hotmail.com)
    - [BarCrawler@gmail.com](mailto:BarCrawler@gmail.com)
  - Yes
    - [dyksen@msu.edu](mailto:dyksen@msu.edu)
    - [wayne@dyksen.com](mailto:wayne@dyksen.com)
    - [wayne.dyksen@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.dyksen@gmail.com)
- US Mail Address
- Include “Permanent” Addresses
  - Both Email and US Mail
  - What if I want to contact you two years from now?



# Contact Information

[2 of 3]

- Phone
  - Current
    - Your Mobile Phone
    - No Mobile Phone?
      - ❖ Get one.
      - ❖ Providers offer (cheap) pay-as-you-go service.
  - Permanent
    - Your Mobile Phone?  
(Make sure you transfer the number.)
    - Your “Home” Phone (Parents’)?
    - What if I want to contact you two years from now?
  - Get and Setup “Voicemail” for All Phones

# Contact Information

[3 of 3]

- Phone

- Fix your voicemail “not here” messages.

- No

- ❖ “Hey there! You’ve reached the voicemail of the funnest person at MSU. Leave your number and I’ll give you a ring but only if you’re one of the lucky people.”

- ❖ “I’m not here. Leave a message.”

- ❖ You’ve reached 517-555-1212. Please leave a message.

- ❖ “Hi. I’m sorry I missed your call. Please leave me a message and I’ll get back to you. Thanks for calling and have a great day.”

- Yes (Include Your Name!)

- ❖ “Hi. This is Wayne Dyksen and you’ve reached my voicemail. Please leave me a message and I’ll get back to you. Thanks for calling and have a great day.”

# Objective

- Very Concise (One Line)
- Indicate internship or permanent employment.
- Avoid flowery BS.
- Examples
  - To secure a summer internship as a software developer.
  - To secure permanent employment as a software engineer.
  - To secure permanent employment as a software engineer that utilizes and expands my skills in computer science.
- Be specific only if you really mean it. Why?
  - To secure permanent employment as a database administrator.
  - To secure permanent employment as a network administrator.

**School Address**

Calvin College  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
(616) 555-1234

**Bob Dyksen**

bob.dyksen@gmail.com

**Permanent Address**

2175 Burcham Dr.  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
(517) 555-1212

**Objective**

To secure a full time position as a software engineer that utilizes my skills and expands my knowledge in computer science.



# E.J. Dyksen

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

ej.dyksen@gmail.com  
(517) 555-1234

## Permanent Address

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East Lansing, Michigan 48823  
(517) 555-1212

## Objective

Secure an internship that will expand my knowledge and experience in computer science.



# Interview Tip

- Be ready to answer questions like...
  - “What do you like to do?”
  - “What kind of positions interest you?”
  - “Where do you want to be in five years?”
- Know Positions
  - Program Manager (PM) or Developer (Dev)
  - Associate Software Developer
  - Associate/Sr. Consultant
  - Etc...

# Your GPA

- Used by Companies for Screening
  - Use Varies by Company
  - If ( $\text{GPA} < \text{Threshold}$ ) then { No Interview }
  - Threshold Varies by Company and by Major
- On Resume
  - Probably, but Almost Certainly (IMHO)
  - Easy to Find
  - If GPA not there...
    - I'm thinking...
    - I'm going to...
  - Remove After First Job

# So-So GPA's

- Compute “Sub” GPA's
  - Overall vs CSE
  - Freshman vs Sophomore Through Senior
  - Freshman/Sophomore vs Junior/Senior
  - Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior
  - Etc...
- Give a Good Explanation
  - Was Immature. Grew Up.
  - Not Motivated When Freshman, Am Now
  - Worked 40 Hours/Week to Pay for School
  - Etc...



# Education

- Degree
- Major
  - Cognate
  - Minor
  - Date Expected
- Institution
- GPA
  - Cumulative
  - CSE
- Relevant Courses
  - Number
  - Title
  - Topics in Parentheses
- Non-MSU Institutions
  - May Include Other Colleges/Universities
  - Do Not Include High School

BS

Computer Science

Business

Mathematics

Expected, May 2025

Michigan State University

3.50/4.0

3.70/4.0

CSE 231

Introduction to Programming

(Python)

**Nota Bene: Use “Expected”  
on resume, LinkedIn, etc.  
until you have the degree.**



# Minor or Cognate

- Highly Valued by Companies
- Leverage
  - On Resume
  - During Interview
- “Cognate”
  - Unknown Term
  - From Latin “Cognatus” Meaning “Equivalent to”
  - Confusing Label On Resume
  - Explain Cognate Like a Minor
  - Be Careful Not to Misrepresent as Official Minor

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**Education**

B.A., Computer Science, Expected December 2002

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI

- CS GPA: 3.50/4.0, Cumulative GPA: 3.13/4.0
- CPSC 186, Introduction to Data Structures with C++ (C++, Visual Studio 6.0)
- CPSC 210, Web Site Administration (HTML, CGI, Perl, Apache Web Server)
- CPSC 230, Data Structures and Algorithms (C++, Java, Visual Studio 6.0)
- CPSC 247, Software Engineering (C, UML)
- CPSC 270, Operating Systems (C++, Java, Perl)
- CPSC 300, Computer Graphics (OpenGL)
- CPSC 330, Databases (mySQL, Oracle, Java)
- CPSC 370, Networking (TCP, UDP)
- CPSC 380, Programming Languages (C++, ADA, LISP, Smalltalk)
- CPSC 392, Ethics in Computing
- CPSC W80, Cryptography and Computer Security
- ENGR 220, Computer Architecture (SPARC/MIPS, Assembly Programming)



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- CPSC 380, Programming Languages (C++, ADA, LISP, Smalltalk)
- CPSC W80, Cryptography and Computer Security
- ENGR 220, Computer Architecture (SPARC/MIPS, Assembly Programming)

**Course Related Projects**

- Linux Kernel Network Router (CPSC 370)
  - Implemented a kernel-resident network router.
  - Routed IP network traffic across two or more NICS.
  - Optimized routing times via cached routes.
- Virtual Private Network (CPSC W80)
  - Designed a virtual private network protocol.
  - Implemented a VPN via TCP/IP tunneling.
  - Utilized DES3 cryptography for secure IP data packets.



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### Education

#### BA, Computer Science

Expected May 2008

#### Calvin College

Grand Rapids, Michigan

- CS 108, Introduction to Computing (Java)
- CS 112, Introduction to Data Structures with C++ (C++)
- CS 212, Data Structures and Algorithms (Java)
- CS 214, Programming Language Concepts (Java, Lisp, and Scheme)
- CS 232, Operating Systems and Networking
- CS 262, Software Engineering
- CS 352, Computer Graphics
- ENGR 220, Introduction to Computer Architecture (SPARC Assembly)
- MATH 161, Calculus I
- MATH 156, Discrete Mathematics for Computer Science
- MATH 256, Discrete Structures and Linear Algebra



# Interview Tip

- Be ready to answer questions like...
  - “So, what did you do in CSE 422?”
  - “Tell me about a favorite course.”
  - “Tell me about your Linux Kernel Network Router.”
- Know Your Courses
  - Topics
  - Books and Readings
  - Projects
- Know Some Projects in Depth
  - Requirements
  - Implementation
  - Complexities
  - Cool Features



# Skills

- Simple List
  - Languages
  - Operating Systems
  - Software Systems
  - Software Packages
- Avoid
  - Relative Trivialities (e.g., Microsoft Word)
  - Weak or Non-Existent Skills
  - BS (Effective Team Member, Customer Oriented, etc.)
- Possibly Classify (But Only If Room)
  - Familiar
  - Proficient
  - Certified

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## Experience

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- Java, C#, C++, PHP, CSS/XHTML, Ruby (and Rails), SQL, UML, Visual Studio 2005
- Windows Server 2003 System, Exchange Server 2003, IIS 6.0, SQL Server 2005
- Microsoft Windows Vista, Tablet PC platform, Media Center platform, Windows Mobile 5.0
- Eclipse IDE, Linux, Apache, MySQL, PostgreSQL, other open source products
- Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0, Adobe After Effects 7.0, Macromedia Fireworks 8.0



# Interview Tip

- Be ready to answer questions like...
  - “How proficient are you in Perl?”
  - “What have you written using Ruby?”
  - “Have you ever administered an Exchange Server?”
- Know
  - Your Skills
  - Examples of Using Your Skills
  - Your Limitations

# Experience

- Position Description
- Company
- Dates
- Bullet List of Accomplishments
  - Concise
  - Specific
  - Begin with Action Verb
  - One Line Per Bullet
  - Sentence Fragments Okay
- Only Most Relevant and Most Recent

What do you do if you do not have many or any computer science internship experiences?

**Skills** C, C++, ADA, Smalltalk, Lisp, Java, Perl, HTML, Windows 2000/XP, UNIX, Linux, Visual Studio 6.0

- Experience**
- Software Engineering Internship** **The Boeing Company, St. Louis, MO**
- Made corrections in T-38C cockpit software Summer 2002
  - Used System Integration Lab (SIL) to test changes to MDP software
  - Developed ACMI debrief application for T-38C aircraft (SDT, C++, Visual Studio 6.0)
  - Participated in software development processes
- Software Engineering Internship** **The Boeing Company, St. Louis, MO**
- Participated in SEI Level 3 Activities Summer 2001
  - Developed automated testing utilities for the AHWCS project (Java, C++)
  - Tested the launch control software for the *Harpoon Block II* missile
  - Managed group web pages
- Program Analyst Internship** **Mutual of Omaha, Omaha, NE**
- Designed and implemented software (Java, some C++) Summer 2000 - Spring 2001
  - Involved in a major company project
  - Worked closely with associates from other companies (Trilogy, ICONIX)
  - First telecommuting intern

## Experience

### Program Manager Intern

Microsoft Corporation

Summer 2006

Terminal Services

- Investigated solutions for a large software architecture problem
- Initiated communication with external teams for alternative solutions
- Delivered a V1 specification encapsulating the first step in the solution

### System Architect and Administrator

Michigan State University

Summer 2005

College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

- Designed and implemented a major Windows Server 2003 and Exchange Server 2003 installation to handle 2,000 users
- Maintained two concurrent Active Directory forests with trusts for migration purposes
- Recovered overnight from a university-wide security issue

### System Administrator

Michigan State University

Summer 2003, Spring and Summer 2004

Clara Bell Smith Center

- Designed and implemented a Windows Server 2003 and Exchange Server 2003 installation
- Converted from stand-alone desktops to fully managed desktops
- Packaged custom applications for group policy rollout

### Programmer

Michigan State University

Summer 2002

Men's Basketball

- Investigated ways to use technology in the collegiate athletic environment
- Developed web service for contacting players via mobile phone
- Administered desktops with Windows XP, 2000 in a mixed Windows/Novell environment

### Skills

- Java, C#, C++, PHP, CSS/XHTML, Ruby (and Rails), SQL, UML, Visual Studio 2005
- Windows Server 2003 System, Exchange Server 2003, IIS 6.0, SQL Server 2005
- Microsoft Windows Vista, Tablet PC platform, Media Center platform, Windows Mobile 5.0
- Eclipse IDE, Linux, Apache, MySQL, PostgreSQL, other open source products
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# Interview Tip

- Be ready to answer questions like...
  - What kind of corrections did you make to the T38C software?
  - What's an SEI Level 3 activity?
  - What's a V1 specification?
  - What was the university-wide security issue and how did you recover?
- Know Your Summer Internships
  - Concise Description
  - Software Systems
  - Your Responsibilities
- Know Some Specific Accomplishments



# Other Activities

- Including...
  - Clubs
  - Awards
  - Hobbies
  - Outside Interests
- Concise
- Avoid
  - Trivialities and/or BS
  - High School Activities and/or Awards
- Omit If None



<b>Experience</b>	<b>Software Engineering Internship</b>	<b>The Boeing Company, St. Louis, MO</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made corrections in T-38C cockpit software</li> <li>• Used System Integration Lab (SIL) to test changes to MDP software</li> <li>• Developed ACMI debrief application for T-38C aircraft (SDT, C++, Visual Studio 6)</li> <li>• Participated in software development processes</li> </ul>	Summer 2002
	<b>Software Engineering Internship</b>	<b>The Boeing Company, St. Louis, MO</b>
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<b>Hobbies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed Private Pilot</li> <li>• Piano &amp; Pipe Organ</li> </ul>	

## **Michigan State University**

## **System Architect and Administrator**

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- Eclipse IDE, Linux, Apache, MySQL, PostgreSQL, other open source products
- Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0, Adobe After Effects 7.0, Macromedia Fireworks 8.0

## **Awards**

- First Place, [Memories Category](#), [Microsoft Start Something Amazing Awards](#), 2005
- Choral Honor Award, Okemos High School, Okemos, Michigan, 2004

## **Activities**

- Calvin IMPROV, Leader
- Capella Choir of Calvin College

Good idea to include links.



# Leveraging the Capstone Course

**Michigan State University**  
**Software Developer**

**East Lansing, Michigan**  
**Fall 2021**

- Worked on a team of five students in MSU senior capstone course.
- Designed and implemented [Amazon Web Services: AWSome Availability Zones](#).
- Worked directly with Amazon to develop a complete project plan.
- Produced [video](#) about project and delivered software product.
- Awarded the Design Day [Amazon Sigma Award](#).

Good idea to include links.

# Interview Tip

- Be ready to answer questions like...
  - “So, what do you do for fun?”
  - “What do you do when you’re not working?”
  - “Do you have any hobbies?”
  - “What’s ACM?”
  - “What did you do accomplish as president of WIC?”



# Bonus Resume Tip

- Learn how to use Microsoft Word!
  - Use Paragraph Spacing
    - Do use paragraph spacing between lines.
    - Do not use empty lines, i.e., just hit return.
  - Use Paragraph Styles
  - Use Tabs
    - To Line Up Things
    - Do not use spaces, which won't work anyway.
  - Use Right Justified Tabs
    - To Justify Things on the Right Margin
    - Do not use default tabs and/or space, which won't work anyway.
  - Etc...
- Submit PDF, Not Word Source
- Test Print Resume (on Paper)

Tab  
Tab2  
Tab 3

# Bonus Resume Tip

- Single Page Limit

But...

- Multiple Versions Possible
  - Target For Particular
    - Industry
    - Company
  - Vary
    - Objective
    - Lists of Courses
    - Lists of Course Projects
    - Bullet Points Describing Experiences/Internships



# Resume Writing and Interviewing

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✓ Resume Writing

➤ Interviewing

# Clean Up Your Web Presence

- Facebook
- X
- Instagram
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Personal Web Pages
- Etc...

HR people will and do check these things out.

What about your 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment rights?





# Due Diligence

- Research the company.
- Research the interview.
  - Talk with others who have been interviewed.
  - Ask “What style of interview should I expect?”
- Research the interviewers.
  - Get an interview schedule with names and titles.
  - Figure out who does what.
  - Google for interviewer interests and hobbies.
- Research the dress code.
  - Ask recruiter/interviewer.
  - Ask others.
- Do not be surprised.



# Interview Styles

- Many & Varied
  - Technical (How does IPv6 differ from IPv4?)
  - Problem-Solving (In the adjacent room are three lights...)
  - Behavioral (Tell me about a time when...)
  - Coding (Write a recursive function that...)
  - Etc...
- Research
  - Types of Interview
  - Questions for Each Type
  - Type to Be Used
- Do not be surprised.
- Practice.



# Look the Part

[1 of 2]

- People do judge books by their covers.
- Research the “look.”
- If you want the “part,” “look” the “part.”
- Appearance
  - Clothes
  - Shoes
  - Hair (Style, Length, Colors, ...)
  - Body Piercings
  - Etc...



# Look the Part

[2 of 2]

- Get Advice From Someone With Taste
  - Styles in General
  - What Looks Good on You
  - Size and Fit
  - Whole Package
    - Clothes
    - Shoes
    - Jewelry
    - Hair
    - Etc...
  - View as Investment
- Do due diligence.
- Expectations for interviewee may be very different than expectations for interviewer or employee.

# Your Personal Presence

- Introduce Yourself
- Avoid Nervous Habits
- Make Eye Contact (But Don't Stare Down)
- Give "Right Length" Answers
  - Long Enough
  - Not Too Long
- Speak Correct English
  - Subjects: I, He, She, It
  - Objects: Me, Him, Her, It
  - NOT
    - "Him and I went to the basketball game."
    - "Her and me went to the football game."
- If Necessary
  - Repeat Question to Buy Time
  - Ask for Clarification
- Practice Wearing Interview Attire Including Shoes

# The First Question

- What's the first question at many interviews?
- Tell me/us about yourself.
- Be Ready
- Practice Answer
- Avoid
  - Too Short
  - Too Long
  - Too Vague
  - Too Detailed

# Bad Comments to Make

...During the Interview

- “I see you just lost that big contract to Acme.”
- “Wow, your stock price really took a hit yesterday.”
- “It sure looks like the cost of living is high here.”
- “Windows 8 was a big mistake.”
- “I didn’t do well in that course because the professor was terrible.”
- “I didn’t do well in that course because I wasn’t interested in it.”
- Etc...



# Bad Questions to Ask...

...During the Initial Interview

- “Can you tell me what your company does?”
- “How much will I make?”
- “How much vacation will I get?”
- “Is there dental coverage?”
- “Will you pay moving expenses?”
- “Will I get my own office?”
- “How soon will I be promoted?”
- “Will I have to work more than 40 hours per week?”
- “How is your work/life balance?”
- Etc...

(What if they ask you “How much do you expect to make?”)





# Good Comments to Make..

...During the Interview

- “That T-38 looks like a really cool plane.”
- “The 787 looks amazing. Passengers will really like the large structure bearing windows.”
- “I’m running Windows 11 and it’s great.”
- “I’ve been running Sequoia since it was released in beta.”

# The Last Question

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- What's the last question at many interviews?
- Do you have any questions for me/us?
- What's a really bad answer?
- What are some good answers?

# Good Questions to Ask...

## ...During the Interview

- “Are there opportunities for professional development?”
- “Is there support for advanced degrees?”
- “What career paths are available?”

## Okay Questions to Ask...

- “What’s the corporate culture like?”
- “What’s a typical week like?”

# Things Not to Do

- Don't complain about anything like...
  - ...your trip
  - ...the airline
  - ...the hotel
  - ...the weather
  - ...the interview process
  - ...other interviewers
  - ...other companies
  - ...etc...
- Don't discuss politics or religion.
- Don't drink alcohol (ever, never, not at all).
- Etc...

# Business Cards

- Be ready to handout your business card.
  - Use MSU email account.
  - Include personal URL with link to resume (downloadable).



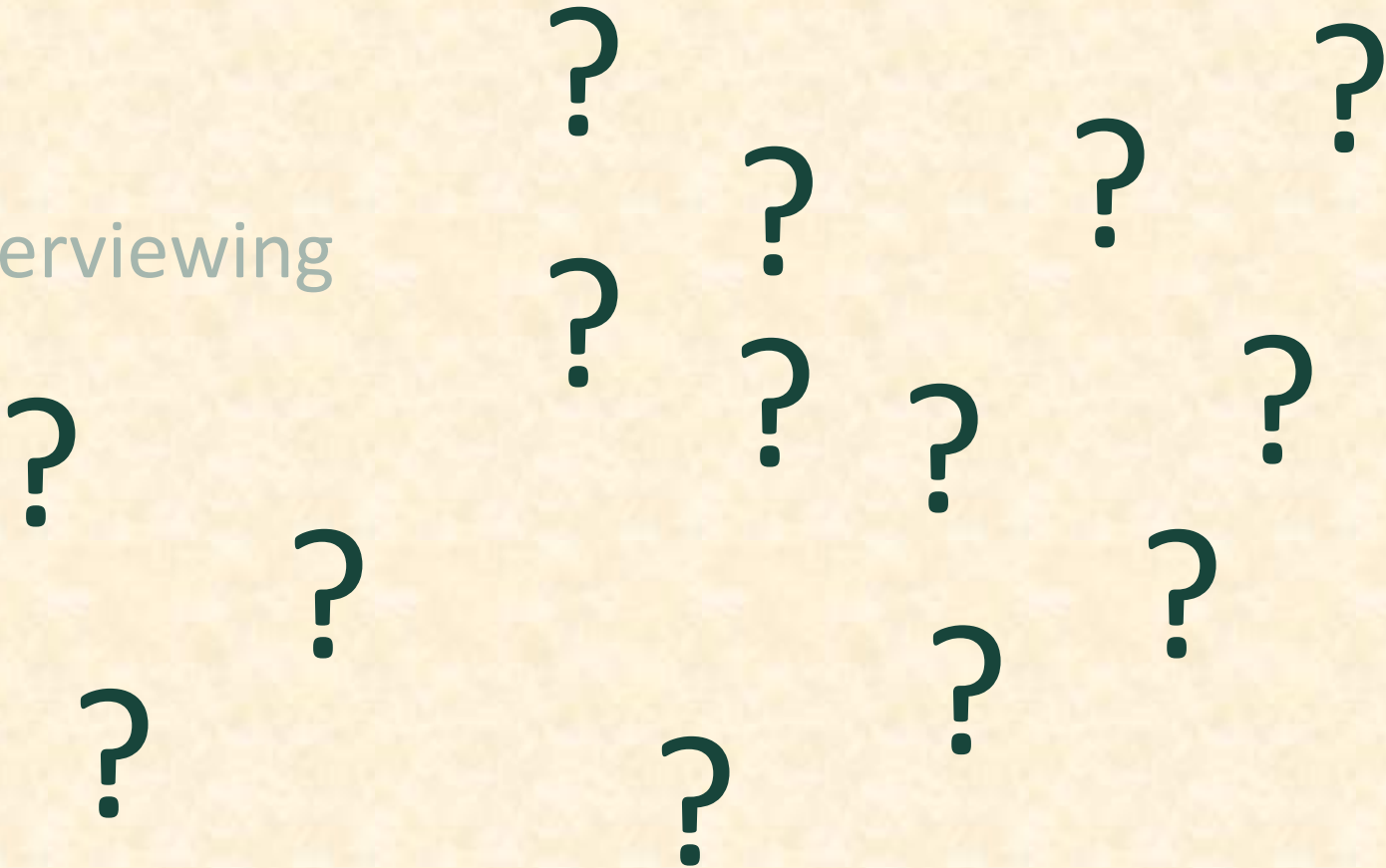
# Follow-Up

- ASAP
- Hand-Written Note
  - US Mail  
(Get Business Cards for Address)
  - Buy Nice MSU Note Cards
- Try to Include Brief Personal Comment
  - Related to Interviewer
  - Record Info on Back of Business Card ASAP

# Resume Writing and Interviewing

✓ Resume Writing

➤ Interviewing





# What's ahead?

[1 of 3]

- Upcoming Meetings

- ~~W10 10/31: Tu Design Day and the Project Videos~~
- ~~W10 03/20: Th Dr. Micah Lissy, MSU~~
- ~~W11 03/25: Tu Ethics and Professionalism~~
- ~~W11 03/27: Th Conner Bean, Stripe~~
- ~~W12 04/01: Tu Rick Grubb, RPM~~
- ~~W12 04/03: Th Beta Presentations~~
- ~~W13 04/08: Tu Beta Presentations~~
- ~~W13 04/10: Th Beta Presentations~~
- ~~W14 04/15: Tu Resume Writing and Interviewing~~
- W14 04/16: Th Project Video Status **Slide Decks Due**
- W14 04/17: Th Team Project Video Status Reports





# What's ahead?

[2 of 3]

- Upcoming Meetings

- W15 04/20: Su Project Videos Due ← **5 Days**
- W15 04/22: Tu Project Videos
- W15 04/23: We Team Evaluation Forms Due @ 6:00 p.m.
- W15 04/23: We All Deliverables
- W15 04/24: Th Design Day Setup
- W15 04/24: Th Project Videos
- W15 04/25: Fr Design Day
- W15 05/01: Th Design Day Wrap Up (5:45 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.)



# What's ahead?

[3 of 3]

- MAPP Points Reminder ← **Nota Bene**
  - Last Week of Meetings
    - Tuesday **-5.0**
    - Thursday **-5.0**
  - Design Day
    - Timeliness / Dress / Participation **-0.5 to -5.0**
    - Very Late or Skip **-5.0** and **-Team Contribution Points**
  - Capstone Wrap Up During Exam Week **-5.0**
- Was Covered
  - January 16 (Day 2)
  - Multiple Times Since January 16

