Welcome to the "Interviewing Café."

I'm Denise Pranke, a Walden Senior Career Services Advisor and I'm going to be presenting today's session.

So our objectives for our session today are to go over interviewing tips to help you have a successful interview.

I'll also point out resources on the Career Services website to help you prepare for interviews and we'll take time for questions as well, during the session.
So to start, let's go over the big picture of the interview process, moving from left to right you want to research the organization.

And then reassess your qualifications for the position, look at that job description and then look for that match, where do you match the qualifications? And then prepare relevant stories about your previous work and other experience such as community service and your academic work and then prepare answers to some of the most common questions.

And then practice.

And then during the interview, show how you're the best candidate for the job and then, finally, be sure to follow up so you can see that preparation is key.

So much more happens before the interview.

By following these steps, you'll be able to maximize your chance of receiving an offer, and we're going to go over these steps in more detail in the next few slides have the so the more prepared you are for the interview, the more confident and relaxed you'll be.

So to begin your preparation, research the organization's history, mission, their products, services, brand and strengths.

Know the trends in your field opportunities for you to contribute.
Also research the salary range for the position in your geographical area.

Salaries can change -- vary widely from one location to the other so you want to do that research for your geographical area, and you can use, for example, salary.com or payscale.com or glass door, those are all good sites to research salary.

And then next, reassess your qualifications for the position.

Know your strengths and compare your skills, achievements, knowledge, experience, your education and values against the job description and the mission of the organization.

How are you a good fit?

And as a reminder, for each job you apply for, remember to keep a copy of the job description and any notes from your research, and the application materials you sent.

Because sometimes you might not hear back from them for quite a while and you don't want to lose track of oh, what job -- what was that job that I applied for there?

Especially if some of you are in a very active job search.
And then after reviewing how you're a good fit for the position, prepare at least five relevant examples from your previous experience that illustrate your top qualifications.

If you're making a career transition, you might want to look to some of your academic work for those stories.

And then you can also think about focusing your stories on your transferable skills, as well, if you're in -- if you're making a major transition.

So to craft your stories, use what we call the cart formula, so you want to include a challenge, an action you took and the results, and then how does it apply to your future role?

So think of a challenge or problem you faced in your previous experience, and then the action you took to address the challenge.

What did you do?

Did you take a leadership role in finding a solution?

Did you take initiative?

And what was the result, who or what was impacted? And quantify whenever possible.

And, for example, number of people served, processes improved, test scores increased, goals met, risk reduced.
Money saved.

And then, finally tie your story into what you can do for the organization in the future.

For example, a story that illustrates how you take initiative to solve problems could be, for example, the number of accidents in my department was increasing so I analyzed the accident data to find the causes.

I took the information that I learned from my analysis and created a new safety training program which reduced the number of accidents by 60% in a 12-month period.

So that's a short, compacted example.

And so then you might want to tie it in, if it's -- you know, if this position is a training position, how you would be able to analyze data for them and use that data to improve their training materials.

Or if it's a management position, you could talk about how you took the initiative and how that also saved -- saved money, as well.

And another example might be, I increased my employer's social media presence which resulted in an increase of sales of 15% over a three-month period.

So, again, the challenge, the action, the results and
then think about how you would tie it in.

So let me pause here and see if there are any questions.

So a question about back to the control panel, there should be up on the upper right, it might be hidden but there might be a small arrow on the upper right where you have to click on that to show the whom control panel.

So, Brenda try to see if you can find that small little arrow, it's probably hidden, right un-- it should be at the upper right but it might be on the upper left.

So any other questions so far?

Okay.

All right.

Let's continues on here.

So after you create your stories, practice telling them, so by practicing, you're going to be able to build your confidence.

The interview prep feature in the optimal system on the Career Services website is a great tool to help you practice and we're going to take a quick look at this feature before we conclude our session today.

So, also, screening interviews and even the main interview itself may be held over Skype so you want to
make sure you're prepared to use Skype.

So next we’re going to look at some common questions, so when responding to common questions such as "Tell me about yourself," keep your answer to less than three minutes and stay focused on your relevant strengths and experience related to the position and you want to show that enthusiasm and confidence for the position.

And then if you're asked a question about salary, you want to defer that discussion until after you've had a chance to describe your qualifications.

But sometimes might be presented to give an answer to that question so you want to do the research and be prepared to give a range, again, you can answer something, based on my research, this is the range of salary that I would expect, and then depending on your qualifications, you might want to say and based on my experience, I would be looking for a salary in the higher end of that range.

And then when you’re asked behavioral type of questions such as tell me about the process you used to solve a problem or tell us about how you successfully managed a project, use the cart stories you prepared, again, that challenge, action, result
and tie-in so you want to provide specific examples in this case, not real general answers.

You can make a general statement but back it up with, for example, I -- and then you're going to have that cart story.

Also prepare for difficult questions such as tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a colleague.

Always answer in a positive way and include how you successfully resolved the issue, and what you learned, as well.

With the question, what is an area you can improve or describe a weakness you have.

Describe an area that's not essential to the job and include what you're doing to improve our compensate or work around that weakness.

So how you work through it and stay positive so, again, you want to choose something that would not be definitely related to a major qualification of the position.

Let me just check and see if we have any questions yet.

Okay.

Not yet. Again, if you think of a question, you can put it in and then I'll pause periodically here.
Also as part of the interview, you may be asked to give a short presentation on either an assigned topic -- an assigned topic or a topic of your choice.

For example, if you're applying for a teaching position either in K-12 or higher Ed, be prepared to give a short teaching presentation on a relevant topic.

You may know about the presentation ahead of time or you may be asked on the spot.

I recently heard that an applicant for a data analysis position was asked to choose any statistical topic of her choice and explain it on the spot to the interview panel at a white board so you want to kind of think ahead.

In that case, you want to keep something fairly simple that you can do fairly quickly.

But employers want evidence of an applicant's communication skills and ability to think under pressure.

So if you're asked ahead of time, be sure that you create the presentation with enough time to practice and then also be prepared that you might be asked something, you know, on the spot and just, you know, do your best if you're asked, try to keep it fairly
simple.

Eye contact, you know, have fun with the assignment if you're asked on the spot.

Another situation that's becoming more common during the interviews is to be given a hypothetical problem or scenario and asked to provide recommendations. For example, an applicant for a business position may be given a scenario such as costs related to product X have been going up and revenue is going down. What steps do you recommend that we take?

Employers use these questions to get an idea of your problem-solving ability and, again, how you think on your feet.

In these situations, you want to carefully listen to the question and the scenario and realize that it's okay to ask clarifying questions, and then next organize your approach and describe your thought processes as you think through the problem.

The interview panel is more interested in how you approach the problem than in an exact right or wrong answer.

So manage your time, be enthusiastic and try to close with a brief summary for a scenario type of question.

And then you might be asked about Walden University or about your online education.
Prepare to communicate the benefits of your Walden education, including the social change mission, accreditation, the quality of Walden's faculty, your curriculum, the extensive writing you need to do for your courses and the global perspective.

And you can find information about accreditation by going to the WWW.waldenU.EDU website, under the "About" tab, and you'll find all the Walden accreditations listed there.

So that is something you should take a look at, as well, in preparation.

And then next be sure to plan logistics ahead of time, such as what you're going to wear, the directions, your transportation, if you need -- you know, if there are any parking concerns.

About what to wear, as a rule of thumb, dress one step above or up from the professional attire of employees in your role.

Also, be sure you know how to get to the location and that you plan your route and the time it will take you to arrive about 10 to 15 minutes early, and if it's a Skype interview, you want to check your camera and then simplify whatever is visible in the background.

Do a check on what's behind you so there's nothing
distracting.

And so now it's time for the interview, so you've done all the preparation and you want to think about just prior to the interview, breathe deeply and visualize yourself in your future role.

We've heard back from students who shared that visualizing themselves in that future role helped them build confidence, which led to a successful interview and job offers.

It really minimized that nervousness that sometimes we all can feel walking into an interview.

And then remember, your goal is to educate the potential employer on what you have to offer and how you can add value for them.

And then next it's the interview, so bring copies of your application documents and references.

Pay attention to your body language and remain positive and enthusiastic.

Remember, if you have a cellphone to turn it off, and then you want to have a strong -- you want strong eye contact and a firm handshake.

And then, also during the interview, be ready to ask meaningful questions.

This is your opportunity to engage your interviewers
in a conversation.
Show genuine interest in learning more about the
organization.

This is also a chance for you to determine if the
organization is a good fit for you.

Use your judgment to determine what questions would be
appropriate for a specific interview.

You might want to close with asking, you know, about
what are the next steps in the process, so you leave
and you know kind of their timeline for when they plan
to make a decision.

Sometimes it might be very quick and sometimes it
might be, you know, quite a ways -- a ways out so
that's helpful for you to know.

So here are a couple other questions.

What are some of the greatest challenges your
department is facing.

What does success look like six months into the
position?

So have some questions prepared and, again, you want
to engage them in a conversation.

And then after the interview, be sure to send a prompt
thank you, either email or a card.

You want to think about the industry and what would be
appropriate.
And you want to get that sent off within 24 hours, and you want to express your interest in the position and briefly restate your qualifications.

If there's anything that you thought about, oh, I wish I would have added this, you know, in an answer to a question, you could very briefly address something that came up during the interview.

And then allowing yourself time to reflect on interview experience and reward yourself for your efforts, and then next, we're going the take a quick look at the interviewing resources on the Career Services website, but I'm going to check and pause and see if we have any questions yet.

Okay, a question just briefly, again, what is cart.

What does cart stand for again?

Cart stand for a way to craft your stories, it's a framework for preparing stories about your experience for interviews, so the C stands for a challenge, so think about in telling a story, you want to express what was the challenge, what action did you take, and what were the results and then tying it in for what you can do for the organization.

A lot of times when we think of stories, we forget to add the results and the results are really an
important part of this story.

And even if something went wrong, you can talk about, you know, what was -- these were the results and this is what I learned.

And a question about the Skype.

We do have, on the Career Services website, I'm going to show you how to get to the interviewing -- the interviewing tips, and another question, you can get to the Career Services website by doing a search for "Career Center.waldenU.EDU" and I'll have that information on a slide here as well.

So great questions, thank you.

So here are some of our interviewing resources, and so under the "Interviewing" tab, there are some more resources on using Skype and we're going to talk briefly about the optimal resumé and the archived webinars we have related to interviewing, as well.

So in the optimal resumé system, we have an interview prep feature, so you can sign up using your Walden email address and if you're an alum and don't have a Walden email address, you can send an email to Career Services@waldenU.EDU, and we'll guide you on that.

So -- and this is free and -- but you want to create an account to use the interview prep feature and then you can choose the type of interview, and it's like a
mock situation.

So here you can select -- on the left it will show you the behavioral type of interview, panel interview, kinds of a pressure interview, a screening interview, so if some of you have that initial Skype, you know -- it may be more of a -- it may be a screening interview, it may be the main interview but if it's a screening interview, you can look here and you can practice, and record yourself and that will help you in terms of preparing for that Skype interview because you'll be able to see the angle that your computer is showing you at, and -- because you can record yourself and then you can watch yourself through this system so it's really an excellent tool in terms of preparing for an interview, and I've worked with some students and they've used this and they've really credited the practice that they did using this interview prep feature in the optimal resumé system for the job offer that they received.

So you can choose, you know, what type of interview and then you can see here, the type is behavioral and then there are some sample questions, and you can click on "Record" and answer those questions and then you can go back and review and look at how you did.
Under that -- the system, and you can just delete it
and practice over and over again.

So here's a sample of how it would look. 
The person comes up and, for example, here on the left
is the mock interviewer and then I was the person
doing the interview so you can see I'm in the middle
and then I would be able -- you can see the little red
button, I'm recording myself so I can watch it
afterward, and then there is a little coach feature
that will come up and give you some pointers, as well,
so it's really an excellent, excellent tool preparing
for live interview or Skype, as well, but, you know --
and Skype, you can see when you look at me, like the
background, so take a look and see like what is
showing in the background, is that distracting?
Maybe I should reposition my computer.
So let me see if there are any other questions here.
Okay, yeah, if you're an alumni, send an email to
Careerservices@waldenU.EDU, and ask -- and just let us
know you're an alumni, you would like to get an email
account to use the optimal resumé system and we
will -- we'll help you with that.

And I have a slide showing those email addresses
coming up here, as well.

So any other questions?
Let's see.

Do we have any other questions?

All right. Not at this point so I'm going to show you -- I'm going to talk briefly about if you want one-on-one help with interviewing or, really, any career-related topics, you can set up a career advising appointment and that's for all students at any point in your program, and alumni, as well.

It's probably a good idea if you can attend a Career Services overview session but it's not necessary to do that, and there is also a recorded Career Services overview on the Career Services website, as well. And you can schedule a 40-minute appointment, it's one on one.

The Career Services advisor will call you at the time of the appointment.

The schedule in Eastern Time and you can access the appointments under your academics tab on your MyWalden portal.

The advisor will call you and it's very helpful sometimes to have that one-on-one appointment and talk about, you know, your unique career-related questions.

And then here is some information about how to connect
with us.

At the very bottom, you see there's that email address that I mentioned, CareerServices@waldenU.EDU, so if you're an alum and you want information on how to get Walden email address, if it's been a while, and we will guide you on those steps, you can -- and there's the Career Services website, you can do a search for Career Center.waldenU.EDU and you can access the website from there and you can join the Career Services LinkedIn group, you can follow us on Twitter and on Facebook.

We have a number of really wonderful Walden student success stories on our blog, and so really take advantage of everything that is offered here.

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