Stony Brook University

The Hunt for…

Jobs and Internships

Erez Zadok, Interim Graduate Program Advisor

Department of Computer Science

Outline

- **Before You Apply**

- **During Job Interviews**

- **After Job Interviews**

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Before You Apply (1)

- **Update your resume/CV**
  - Resume advice, run by adviser
  - Order of items
  - List level of skill by months/years
  - MS with work experience: 2 pages (last page >80% full)
  - Page numbers, 1" margins, 11pt font min size
  - Some details about classes, class projects, work projects
  - Lab affiliation, adviser
  - Papers, publications, theses (planned)
  - Honors, awards
  - Guest lectures, talks, posters, WiPs
  - Funding status: TA, RA, GA
  - Languages spoken/written, Citizenship status

- **More details in http://www.cs.stonybrook.edu/~ezk/grad-res**

Before You Apply (2)

- **Prepare/update your professional Web site**
  - E.g., lab affiliation, adviser
  - Avoid dependencies on Java, Flash, etc.
- **Clean up social sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)**
  - E.g., embarrassing stuff, strong opinions, politics, religion, etc.
- **Take the right courses for your expected industry**
  - Do well in courses
  - Relevant research projects help
  - Lab affiliation
  - Thesis and papers help even more

FAR BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

How to Find Out Where to Apply?

- **SBU Career fairs**

- **CS Tech Day**

- **Special industry visitors**

- **Attend conferences: industry recruits there**
  - CEWIT/AERTC annual events
  - Other conferences/workshops your adviser can send you to

- **Ask advisers, faculty, current/ex-students**

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

When to Apply?

- **Summer Internships**
  - Early in Spring semester (e.g., February)
- **Full-time jobs**
  - Early in graduating semester (e.g., October if graduating in December)
- **Don't apply too early!**
  - Companies will try to pressure you
  - You get few and worse offers
  - You don't have all your grades, projects, papers yet
  - If they like you, they'll be back
- **Submit as many applications as you can at once**
  - Usually by email
  - Some have online HR systems (web upload)
  - Apply to few "safety" jobs just in case

FAR BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

What to Expect Next

- **Wait to get contacted**
  - Nice to have confirmation they got your resume
    - Emails do get lost
  - Best: you have a friendly "contact" inside the company (e.g., ex-SBU student)

- **Start to "pre-study" in anticipation of interviews**

- **Some companies contact you quickly**
  - Some can take weeks/months

FAR BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Outline

- ~~Before You Apply~~
- **During Job Interviews**
- After Job Interviews

Handling Initial Industry Contact

- **You may get a "cold" call or email**
  - Asking you to interview "on the spot"
  - Resist: politely ask for 1-2 days extension
    - Maybe you have deadline – this will give you time to prepare
    - Be flexible: offer weekend times
  - Pick a good time for initial phone interview
    - Minimal stress, good night sleep
- **You may apply to several top choices and a few "safe" choices**
  - Consider all of them very seriously
  - You may be surprised how much you dis/like a company after doing the full interview process.

Preparing for Initial Interviews

- **Study the company harder than you ever studied for any exam**
    - Little time, lots to study
    - Company people, group interested in you, products, white papers, manuals
    - Company's relevant technologies, key research papers published recently
    - Brush up on programming skills
        - Especially those you claim to have expertise
    - Brush up on algorithms and data-structures
        - Often 1st filter (e.g., Google "scalability" questions)
    - Know your resume (especially school and work projects)
    - Research labs and R&D company divisions focus more on research
    - Be prepared to ask interviewer a couple of questions about company
        - Demonstrates your interest

FAR BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

During Interviews

- **Take notes**
  - You won't remember everything weeks later

- **Listen carefully to questions**
  - Ask for clarifications as needed
    - "So what you're asking me is … , right?"
  - Think for 1-2 seconds before starting to answer
  - Compose your entire answer in your head before you speak
  - Don't interrupt interviewer (over-enthusiasm)

- **OK to ask questions at end**
  - Shows you're interested in company

- **Keep a bottle of water next you to**

- **Don't get distracted (e.g., TXTs, phone calls)**

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Interview Process (1)

1. **One or more phone interviews**
   a)   Have a good headset for your phone, good connection, quiet place

2. **Likely followed by a Skype/GTalk video interview**
   a)   Have a good headset for your computer, good connection, quiet place
   b)   Do a mock test of A/V quality
   c)   Be presentable visually (dress, shave, hair)

Interview Process (2)

3. **On-site interviews (often for jobs, not internships)**
   a) Intense, long multi-day series of interviews
      i. Each day 10-12 hours straight
      ii. Stay alert: good rest/travel (12+ hours min to settle in)
      iii. Food/drink choices: plain, known, light
         - http://www3.cs.stonybrook.edu/~ezk/grad-res/eating.html
   b) Don't let your guard down
      i. Many people will ask you same questions: don't get bored
         - Some companies give all interviewers "veto" power
      ii. A "casual lunch" is still an interview
         - Assessing your personality
   c) Study the facilities and people (e.g., do employees seem happy)

FAR BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Outline

- ~~Before You Apply~~

- ~~During Job Interviews~~

- **After Job Interviews**

Job Offer Packages

- **Base annual salary**

- **Health benefits (more important in your future)**

- **Stock options**
  - Quantity, strike price vs. market price
  - Vesting schedule: 4 years, 1st year vested after 12 months, then 1/48th
  - IPO plans

- **Year-end bonuses (guaranteed, merit based, etc.)**

- **Day-care facility, transportation/parking, meals/snacks**

- **Green Card sponsorship (and covering costs)**

- **One time benefits**
  - Sign-up bonus
  - Relocation costs

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Evaluating Offers and Companies

- **Consider entire package, plus**
  - Study location of company (housing/rental prices, transportation/gas)
  - Study company's market success/plans (public vs. private)

- **Consider size and growth of company**
  - "Google" size vs. 10-person startup
  - **Big company**: Job security, lateral movement, but narrower focus
  - **Startup**: more "excitement", potential, and ability to work on everything, but no "working hours"

- **How long do you plan to stay?**
  - Minimum one year (stock options, resume)

- **Advancement possibilities**
  - Options to move to different location and/or group

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Handling and Negotiating Offers

- **If only one offer, "easy" choice**
  - Take it, or stay in school longer, then try again
  - One more semester in school: significant impact on lifetime earnings

- **Multiple offers?**
  - Discuss with adviser pros/cons of different offers
  - Consider entire package (e.g., health benefits, location, more)
  - Usually 2-week deadline to accept offer
    - Can ask for one short extension, no more
  - Ok to negotiate one offer against the other
    - No more than once
  - Resist pressure to accept offers too quickly

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Accepting an Offer

- **Inform company by email, phone call, or signed contract**

- **Wait for acknowledgment**
  - At this point, you have **committed** to the offer!

- **Then politely tell all others you "decline"**
  - "It was a hard decision"
  - "I really liked you"
  - "I will consider you in future"
  - Cancel any pending interviews/trips

Reneging on an Offer

- **Reneging: go back on your word, back out, break agreement**
- **Some companies may pressure you to break signed contract**
  - Even if you just accepted a company's offer by email
  - Working for a company that encourages you to break the law?!
- **NEVER, EVER, RENEGE ON AN OFFER YOU ACCEPTED!**
  - **Even if it was over the phone or email only (i.e., no signed contract)**
- **Reflects poorly on you, advisers, department, school, and university**
  - You/dept./all could get black-listed
- **You can get legally sued for breach of contract**
  - Possible visa problems
- **May impact your graduation**

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Turning Internships to Jobs

- **A foot in the door for a full time job offer**

- **Show you're a team player, willing to work hard, long hours**

- **If you do well, your boss will call you in your last week and ask "So, when are you graduating?"**
  - that means: we want to give you a job offer now

- **Unless you love the company, politely tell them you need more time**
  - If they like you that much, they'll hold your offer open for months

- **Even if you're almost sure about one company, good idea to interview elsewhere**
  - Often a pleasant surprise
  - Get to meet more people, impress them, future connections

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science

Long Term

- **2-3 years later, ask adviser for:**
  - Green card support letters (confirm studies and employment)
  - H1B visa support letters ("exceptional merit")
- **Lifetime earnings correlate strongly with amount of education you have**
  - Ph.D. >> MS with Thesis >> MS >> B.Sc.
  - Get through economic downturns better
  - Improved promotion chances in long run

FAR
BEYOND

Stony Brook University
Computer Science