

## **HPIM-EPH Career Event 16th March 2016 – A review by Ashley Aitken, MS Challenger on behalf of HPIM**

A full day was set aside on Wednesday 16th of March for the HPIM-EPH career event. As we are coming towards the end of our Master's program, this event took place to assist us in preparing for the labour market. It also allowed us to get an overview of the career opportunities available in healthcare, and enabled us to start thinking about the direction we want our future career to take. Considering that exam period is only two weeks away, there was a great turnout of students on the day. My thoughts prior to the event were that it might not be relevant for me, as I do not plan to work in the Netherlands after completing my Master's program. However, the advice and skills that I gained during the day will definitely assist me in the upcoming months when I begin to apply for my first healthcare job.

The day began with an expert panel session. Representatives on the panel included a PHD candidate, employability co-ordinator, corporate recruiter, consultant, former director of the State Institute for Public Health NRW, and professors from Maastricht University. As members of the panel had expertise in many different areas, it allowed a hot discussion on the topic of recruitment to take place. Students were initially asked to use their mobile phones to vote on the question: Which resource/capability do you think is most relevant to secure a proper job? The results showed that 59% of students thought that networking was most important. The panel also agreed with this and discussed the importance of networking and making contacts via LinkedIn. Another major topic of debate during the session was the influence that an individual's social media account can have on their recruitment opportunities. The panel members were divided in their opinions on this topic. Some members stated that the occasional "party" picture was not an issue that would affect your application. However, other panel members emphasised that many employers would not hire people with such pictures on their social media account.

After the panel session we moved onto our first workshop. The options of workshops to attend were: Personal Branding and Networking; Job Search Strategies; or The Right Job Application. I chose The Right Job Application because I wanted to learn more about how to make a great C.V. and covering letter. I found this workshop the most useful of the day. At the beginning of the session we were asked to describe ourselves in three words; I chose organised, adaptable and attention to detail. Other students chose words such as creative, decisive, information seekers, relationship builders; this really helped identify the many different qualities that people competing for the same position may have. Next we discussed C.V.'s. We were advised that descriptions of previous work experience on a C.V. should be kept short, to the point, and describe only what your main roles and responsibilities were. The importance of adapting your C.V. to the organisation, and only including relevant work experience on your C.V. was also identified. Students were advised to do their research about the organisation prior to tailoring their C.V. and covering letter. Also, a C.V and covering letter should aim to meet all the requirements stated in the job description. The importance of describing hobbies and interest in a C.V.

was also highlighted, as this enables your personality to shine in an application. It was debated whether it is appropriate to include a picture in your C.V.; it was agreed that in the Netherlands you should, however in the U.K or USA you should not.

After some soup, a sandwich and some informal chats with fellow students and professors during lunch, I then moved on to my second workshop. There was again a choice of different workshops to attend covering topics such as lobbying, optimising operational excellence, and negotiating in the arenas of government. I chose the workshop on “how to lobby for your organisations interests” as I have often wondered what working for an NGO, or lobby organisation would entail. Professor Helmut Brand provided us with an overview of activists’ vs. advocacy, and made us brain storm on what defined an NGO. He provided examples of lobbying 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 each describing different roles that a career as a lobbyist can take. It was a very informative workshop, and great to gain detailed information from an expert in the field. The workshop enabled me to conclude that a career as a lobbyist is probably not a direction that I wish to follow.

Finally, students moved on to the final session of the day the “double strike”. The atmosphere during this session was great; everyone was networking and enjoying some food and drinks. There were 15 different tables to visit at the double strike. Each table was represented by an alumni member including; consultants, policy advisors, analysts, clinical researchers, business consultants, project managers, care sales specialists, and PHD students. I am contemplating the possibility of doing my PHD after my Master’s program so I went to visit Maike Tietschert. I wanted to ask some questions in regards to the application process, the workload, and day to day activities of doing a PHD. Again, networking was identified as important in the application process, and Maike also emphasised the importance of selecting a research topic which is of great interest to you; as you will spend the next four years focused on this topic. Inge van Putten (another PHD student) was also present at the table and highlighted that her workload is 40+ hours per week, and she works independently most of the time on her research. It was recommended that a job as a research assistant can be a good way to see if you enjoy research, prior to committing to a PHD.

All in all, I found that the HPIM-EPH career event provided me with a great deal of information that I was unaware of prior to the event in regards to recruitment do’s and don’ts, and future career opportunities available within healthcare. A recommendation for next year’s event could be to include a workshop on “job interview skills”. Such a workshop could include some mock situations to practice answering interview questions, and to learn the skills required to portray a positive impression during an interview.

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