Rene: Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for listening to this first spring 2012 Career Cast. My name is Rene Clay, I’m the assistant director of the Career Center here in the Walton College, and here with me today is Heather Sprandel. She’s our center director. And we’ve got an exciting topic to talk to you about, and that is the Business Career Fair Express. Business Career fair express is a blend of a very traditional career fair, and a networking event. Numerous employers will provide information about job and internship opportunities with their companies, while visiting with interested and curious students, just like yourself. Each employer and organization will have a small table set up where you can talk to recruiters to learn more about their organization, and to express your interest in a position with their company. The Business Career Fair Express is an exciting way for employers and potential employees to meet. Heather, tell us when and where the Business Career Fair Express will be held.

Heather: Ok. So, the Business Career Fair Express is different from the fall fair, not just in format, but it is also held in a different location. So it’s going to be held in Reynolds Razorback Stadium, in the east indoor club level, so you’re
going to enter the stadium at gate 15. The date of the event is Tuesday, February 21\textsuperscript{st}, and the times for the event are 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., and then the event closes from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m., so they employers can have lunch during that time. It is closed between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m., and then it reopens from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. So for students to visit with employers, your times to come are between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and then 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., in Reynolds Razorback Stadium, east indoor club, enter gate 15.

Rene: Heather, who can attend the Business Career Fair Express? What students on this campus?

Heather: All current students can attend. Undergraduate, masters, doctoral students, all majors. I do want you to know that if you’re going to attend this event, we do have a dress code requirement. We ask that you dress in business casual dress at a minimum, but you’ll see most candidates who attend will be in business professional dress. Also, and you might ask about this in a minute, but I just want to touch on it now. There are limo busses that are provided by Dynasty Transportation, there are at least four of them, that will be running throughout the entire day’s event on February 21\textsuperscript{st}, from the Harmon Deck to the stadium. And they run about every 8 – 10 minutes, and
that’s the only route that they will be going. They will be going from the Harmon Deck, to Razorback Stadium, and from Razorback Stadium back to Harmon. Back and forth, every 8 – 10 minutes. So, for both employers and students traveling back and forth to the Business Career Fair Express, you can ride in style on those limo busses, like I said from the Harmon Deck to the stadium and from the stadium back to Harmon Deck.

Renee: Heather do you have any specific recommendations as to what a student might want to bring with them when they participate in the Business Career Fair Express, February 21st?

Heather: So, you should bring your good attitude, number one, and your excitement to visit with all of these great companies. We have over 80 companies and hiring organizations, and other organizations attending this event. So, you’re coming with your great attitude, your dressed professionally, and you also want to bring resumes. I always suggest that you bring 15 – 20 copies of your resume. However, understand that some employers will not accept a resume. If their policy is to first have you fill out some information on their website, or submit it through Razorback Career Link, and/or submit it on their website specifically, their company career section. So, you have to be ready for whatever the engagement will be between you and
the employer. So I would bring copies of my resume, in an attempt to make it available for those who want to take it. There are some companies who will be at this event who will be interviewing right on the spot, if they like what they see, and then there will be companies who will be setting up interviews for the days thereafter the career fair; the next day, the day thereafter, so they might be collecting resumes for those interviews that follow the career fair. So bring resumes, but don’t be offended if a company says I can’t take it right now it’s our legal policy not to do so, we want you to go online and apply online.

Rene: Since this is the major business career fair of the semester, and since over 80 companies will be the largest fair we’ve ever had, I know our students are going to want to leverage this opportunity. Do you have any specific advice for them as they prepare for leverage Business Career Fair Express to its absolute fullest?

Heather: Yes. In advance of this fair, you need to do a little homework. You need to do some research. On the Walton College Career Center webpage, if you go to waltoncollege.uark.edu/career and then you click on the career fair’s tab on the left side, you’ll get a dropdown that says
students or employers. If you click on students, it will take you to the business career fair page for students, which includes, right at the top a click here option to look at the list of attendees, or the company representatives, or the organizational representatives that will be there. You can open that list, it’s an Excel spreadsheet, and it includes 3 columns of information. The first column includes company name, or organization name. The second column includes website. Then the third column includes majors that the company or organization has listed that they are most interested in. So, I would print that list. I would look at that list, and I would start going through the list to see which companies I wanted to make sure I visited with while I was at the fair. Get a highlighter out, you know a pen, start circling those organizations. What I see students do all the time, which I suggest that you get away from, is gravitating just toward the organizations that you have strong brand awareness with. We typically tend to do that. There’s nothing wrong with going to those companies. Of course you should, they are great organizations, but I bet there are a bunch of organizations on the list that you’re not familiar with. Ok, so this is where doing your research comes into play. You need to go to their website and find out who they are. What do they do? You know, what types of opportunities do they have available to you? And, you’d be surprised at how many great organizations are on here that are new to you, new
to the Walton College, that have fantastic opportunities. Also, with that said, those companies that you are very familiar with, and are fantastic partners to the college already, go visit with them too. But you need to do some research to figure out which of the organizations attending you want to focus in on first. I would at least visit with a minimum of 10 companies, if time will permit, that you have strategically chosen to visit with. And then visit with five, or more, that you just want to connect with, you want to network with, and visit with during their time here on campus. So you figure out who you’re most interested in. You want to find out what you already know about them in their industry, and what you want to learn by going to their website, in addition to going to Razorback Career Link, and looking to see, of the organizations that are listed, do they have job postings in there that might be of interest to you; as well as, going to their website that is listed on that Excel spreadsheet, and check out any other opportunities that may be listed on their website exclusively. Some other tips, Rene, would include, once you’ve determined which companies that most interest you, and you’ve made that list, and you’ve highlighted on that list, you should also think about, are these organizations in a state of growth? Is it an area that interests you and has job prospect and opportunities? Also, job location, for those of you who have limits on where you want to live and work. You should look at the organizations that have outlets,
opportunities, business centers there, and make those priorities for yourself as well. You also should consider as you’re getting ready for this event, not only developing your list of companies that you want to visit with and learning about them before you go to the fair, you need to plan then what you’re going to say, when you approach these organizations at their tables at the Business Career Fair Express. You should plan your introduction. You need to develop what we would consider a 30 second introduction, or a short commercial about yourself. When you approach employers at a fair like this, you’re not going to have a ton of time to spend sharing your entire resume with them. You’re going to have to develop a short intro including your name, what your major is, some of your skills and interests, and really why are you there. You want to make the most of your time, so you need to come ready to express to them what about their organization interests you most so this is where the research comes into play. Let me give you an example. If you’re approaching Wal-Mart at the Business Career Fair Express, and you’ve already identified a summer internship that interests you, that’s on their website, and you’ve already applied for it, you should then approach the Wal-Mart representatives at the table to introduce yourself, and to then notify them that you’ve applied for XYZ summer internship, and then say to them how excited you are about the opportunity. And ask for some information about it; the
process for hiring. If they know, if they don’t know, if maybe you’re talking to someone in supply chain and you’ve applied for a finance internship, maybe ask that representative if they have any suggestions for you, if you’re selected for the interview process. Or what the interview process might be. Or if there is a contacts perhaps, in the department that you’re seeking an internship in that he or she could share with you. You want to get the conversation moving in the direction that’s most appropriate for your career interest, but this all needs to be done succinctly. You need to plan it out, maybe make notes on the list that you’ve printed out of employers who are attending. You will need to make the most of your limited amount of time with the employers, because obviously there will be a lot of people there, and the other students will want to visit with these people. So you might even want to practice saying what you’re going to be saying, particularly your introduction. I always tell people practice saying things out loud if you’re by yourself, so you can hear how it sounds to others, and make sure it comes out easily, and that you sound confident when you’re speaking to the visitors there.

Rene: Heather, I’m looking at the list of companies that are going to come and I see, as you said, a lot of our old friends who have been with us for a long long time, I see a lot of brand
new friends, some really exciting companies on this list. ABF Freight, Amazon. Amazon is coming back to us. Looking down the list, just a broad diverse array of different types of organizations. Everything from Arvest Bank, to AT&T to BNSF Logistics, to Colgate Palmolive, to Ernst & Young. General Mills is back with us, Hewlett Packard is coming back. Ivie & Associates coming to the fair this year as well. Lee & Thung. We’re really excited to have Lee & Thung coming to the career fair. They’re a brand new center for retailing excellence board member company. They’re an apparel supplier. Great internships with both Lee & Thung in New York and in China. I see Nestle, the Nielsen Company, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, OCC has come many many many times, Snyder National is going to be back with us. Sherwin Williams is going to be back with us. The Hershey Company, the NPD Group, Tyson Foods, and of course our friends from Wal-Mart. So a really really exciting list, an extensive list of companies, and we sure hope to be able to add even more. So ladies and gentleman, we maybe leave you with this thought: How important can that day, February 21st, be to all of the rest of your tomorrows? And the answer is very very important, so please leverage this opportunity. This has been Rene Clay and Heather Sprandel from the George W. Edwards Career Development Center in the Sam M. Walton College of Business,
and we will talk to you next time, on the next edition of Career Cast.