

SPOTLIGHT

BEEP classroom visits / what the BEEP happened?

By John Caldwell
Voice Staff Writer

Chances are if you were in class in at least one of six buildings on March 16 or 17 at Fayetteville State University, you had a "BEEP" experience and likely missed an entire class. Some students missed several classes throughout the day.

During that "BEEP" moment you may have heard, "we don't need to see your boobs hanging out which does nothing for us," or "have a short-term and a long-term plan incorporating action steps, written down for your life," or "pull up your pants, we should not see your under garments," or "you are your own brand, always on display, so market yourself appropriately because you never know what opportunity will present itself."

So what the BEEP was going on? The National Urban League's (NUL) Black Executive Exchange Program (BEEP) visited FSU's campus at the behest of the Office of Career Services March 15-17. The BEEP corporate executive volunteers came from the CIA, Enterprise Holdings, The Hershey Company, Time Warner Cable, Unilever, and UPS, as well as two National Urban League Vice Presidents. They descended upon 39 different class sessions to reach out to more than 1,000 students during the two day operation, according to Director Helene A. Cameron, of the Office of Career Services.

If you were "BEEPed," rather than hearing your professor's lecture, you may have heard "professor" Keith Butler, an executive from Unilever, tell you that "your resume presented to prospective employers not only represents you, but also represents your school, leaving a lasting impression impacting every FSU graduate in the eyes of that employer, so make sure you do it well."

Maybe the BEEP you heard was "professor" Terri Moore, a human resource manager from Time Warner Cable tell you "there are some great materials out there that will help each and every one of you in answering or formulating your answers when in an interview - one of the best things you can do is a mock interview, and your being able to do

that at Career Services gives you an opportunity to be in a lab almost."

"There is a big no-no to remember. You can use the social network sites - facebook, twitter - it's the type of things that you are putting out there that's a no-no. Because not only is the Federal Government looking at that during background checks, but more often, so are the private industries. How you present yourself matters and when you do delete it, it is still out there, forever," were the words of another BEEPing moment that happened when the CIA executive "professor" Lisa Gardner addressed a class.

BEEP was created 42 years ago according to their website, making it NUL's longest-running program, and has reached more than 750,000 students on the campuses of 84 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). BEEP's mission is "to share learning and experience across generations, cultivate new leaders, and inspire achievements 'beyond the possible' through committed involvement and operational excellence by placing African-American volunteers on Colleges and Universities as visiting professors."

This "visiting professor" role answering questions is what impressed Jalisa Seward, a sophomore accounting major, the most.

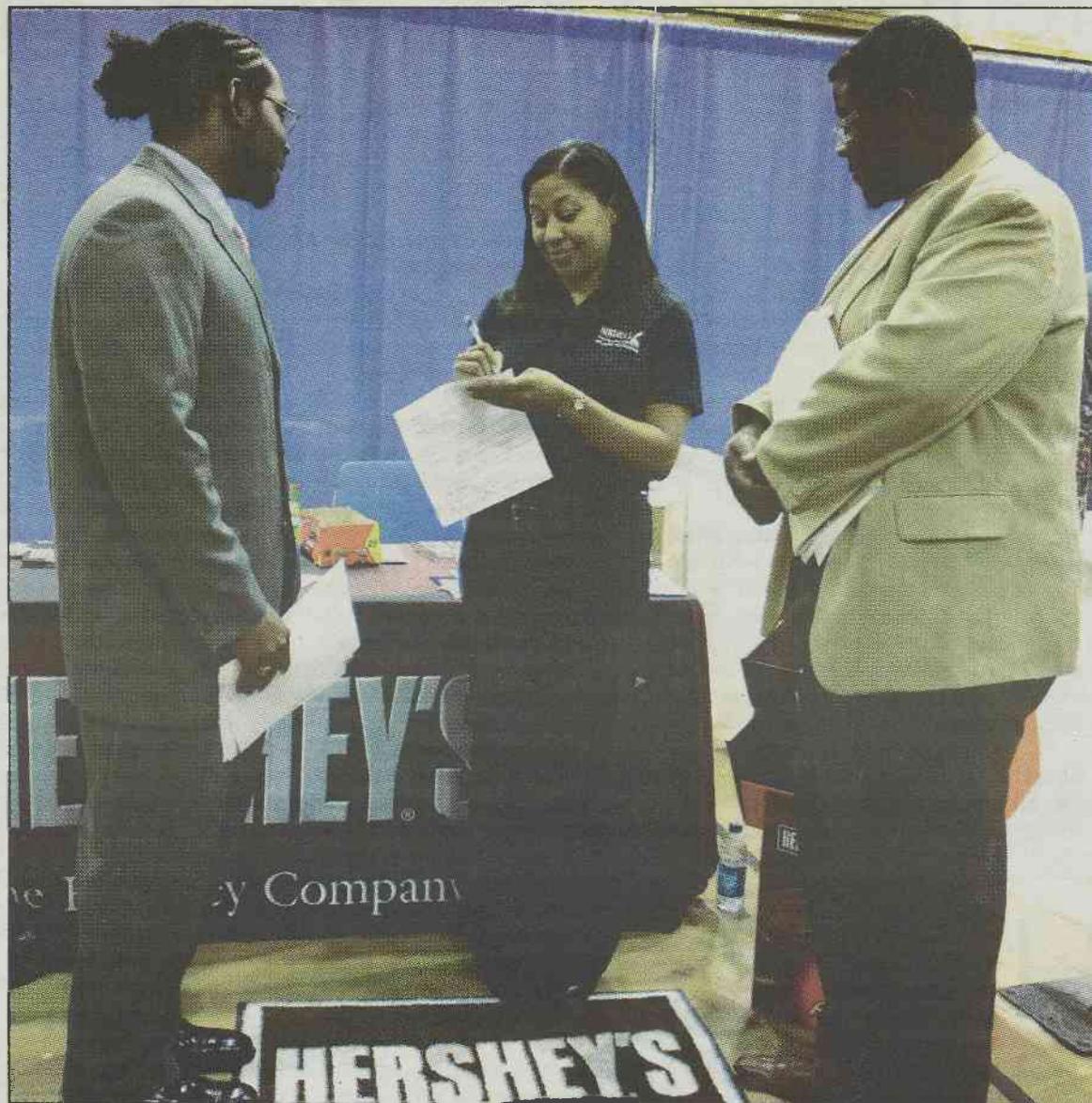
"Having corporate executives answer any questions we had, and then to tell us what not to ask about like pay rates during an interview, as well as what to ask,

helped me realize the importance of doing research to ask good questions of a prospective employer. The idea of asking the employer questions to see if they are a good fit for me had not really occurred to me," says Ms. Seward.

"The best facilitators shared stories that were relatable, that we could connect to because we could relate to the experience they were sharing," said Freshman Jeffery Pearson, business administration major.

What stuck in Mr. Pearson's mind most, he said, was the need to get to Career Services as soon as possible, so he could take full advantage of all they provide.

Quite a few students favorably recalled The Hershey Company



Voice photo by John Caldwell

Senior Arthur Williams III (left), and junior Garrott Harris (right), both business administration majors listen to College Recruiter Coren Burton (center) of The Hershey Company as she explains the best practices to position themselves for opportunities before graduation, during the Career Fair on March 17, in the Capel Arena

executive Coren Burton - who used the slang term for women's breast.

"She stood out," said sophomore Anna-Alicia Leggett. The business administration major said she "really liked Mrs. Burton's style, keeping it down-to-earth without all the corporate jargon, sharing her real life failures and how she turned them around was very inspiring."

Seth Adams, a sophomore, said Mrs. Burton stood out most to him "by being forward, being bold, telling the students what they really needed to know." The business administration and general biology major said that is what students remember most after being BEEPed.

Ms. Leggett and others expressed concern that there was not enough "diversity" of employers. She would have liked to have heard

from health care industry, or entrepreneurial firms during the classroom visits.

To this point Mrs. Cameron explained while her office casts its net broad to get a variety of participants, BEEPers' volunteer to come to this campus. Nevertheless, Mrs. Cameron, who was instrumental in reviving BEEP at FSU in 2008 said it, "exposes students at four-year HBCUs to working professionals in their fields of interest, and through that direct contact familiarizes them with the demands and expectations of those industries."

Another goal of the BEEP visits is to "prepare students to become the sophisticated and well-prepared employees that corporate America and its global competitors are seeking," said Mrs. Cameron.

"Most employers will tell you that they are not interested in a student with a 4.0 who has not done any internships and has not been involved as a student leader, co-curricular activities, volunteering and does not have a professional presence to include effective written and communication skills," she said.

You don't have to wait until next year to be BEEPed if you missed it this time around. Mrs. Cameron insist that, "students need to visit their career counselor, follow the four-year plan, attend the numerous programs and seminars that we host throughout the year, access the Career Services website for resources and by all means 'READ ALL' campus email daily." You have just been officially BEEPed!