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ISM 2A

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Research Assessment #6 - Business Symposium

10.5 was the date of Business Symposium circa 2022—and JV Tennis Final District round—and Yom Kippur. It was a hectic day with stress, joy, awe, learning experiences, and victory. For the sake of this assessment, however, I will only be discussing the symposium itself and my takeaways (along with subtle complaints about how unfair Panther Creek's infrastructure is to Wakeland's).

The symposium started with a meeting in the school gym (which was surprisingly small for the size of the school itself) with a keynote speaker, Brad Herrman. Brad is the CEO of Text-em-all, a mass texting company located in the Dallas area. He has a background in marketing and is very familiar with the ISM program, as his son went through the curriculum, and he currently has another kid at Wakeland. Brad talked mainly about the workforce environment and the importance of communication. His primary focus was the cultural environment of his company, and he started by explaining why it was so important to him. Brad initially worked for his dad at a small family company. However, it was soon bought and taken over by a larger company. Time went on, and eventually, Mr. Herrman found himself hating the job and family business he once loved, not because of the work itself, but due to his bosses and the environment they had cultivated over time—he left. This lesson became crucial when

creating his company, as one of the founding principles of Text-em-all is a communicative and connected working environment.

Furthermore, Brad discussed the other side of hiring—the business perspective—looks like and how we can best stand out from the competition. The main focus was on how much effort you put forth in the hiring process and how you present your thoughts. Specifically, he talked about cover letters. How they're something that shows you genuinely care about the company and are willing to put in a little more time—a thing that will catapult you ahead of the competition. Moreover, he admitted that he sometimes baits people into saying bad things about others—mainly to see how well they communicate their issues with others. Also, he discussed the importance of exerting confidence in yourself. Overall, I was very engaged in what he was saying, and I later ran into Brad at a football game. He remembered my name and said I was very good with eye contact and looking engaged while he was speaking.

Afterward, we got time to chat with the business professionals in the library (which was in this open-ended layout concept, but lots of room. Not many books, though). Most notable was Mark Figuerola, an individual who works at AT&T and is the CEO of his own company. I continued discussion with Mark and set up an interview Monday (10/17) at a Starbucks near us! Then, we went to a panel room for Q&A, and afterward, we got to chat with past ISM students. Lastly, we did one-on-one interviews (they have little study areas around the library, including conference rooms—clear glass conference rooms...). Mine went very well, he only had a few suggestions for my resume, but other than that, he was very impressed.

Ultimately, I had an enjoyable time at Business Symposium (although I became increasingly jealous throughout the day), and it significantly reminded me of a DECA convention. I think I learned that I need to get a little better at conversation—mainly thinking quicker and vocabulary usage. Besides that, I have gained a little more confidence from Business Symposium, and I believe I can start looking around for other business or marketing-related events.