

Majors change with job market vicissitudes

By TOM WOLFE
Of the Emerald

When registration is over this week, 1,200 University students will have selected specific courses without choosing a major. Hundreds more will choose a major and then abandon it after a few terms.

University administrators suggest changes in the job market are one reason students hesitate to select a major or select one and then change it.

Baccalaureate degrees are no longer wild cards in the job market, and registrar figures indicate that University students are following a national trend away from majoring in social sciences and humanities.

"Employers who used to hire liberal arts majors are tending toward favoring more specialized degrees," says Neil Murray, career planning and placement director.

Overall, one result of that change is a decline in University enrollment — a decline typical of other U.S. liberal arts schools.

At the same time, schools specializing in technical programs have had an easier time maintaining steady enrollments or growing.

For the last two years Oregon State University has been turning applicants away through the use of strict deadlines, according to OSU Registrar Walter Gibbs.

OSU offers several more technical degrees than any other school in Oregon and is the only institution in the state higher education system to have a Legislature-imposed ceiling on enrollment.

"There are still jobs in every field and at least some people from every department or school at the University are finding employment related to their majors," says Murray.

Murray says employers seem especially fond of hiring University students with degrees in accounting, business, computer science or "harder sciences."

Students interested in finding out more about the kinds of jobs available to people in a particular field of study and their chances for employment should contact the Career Planning and Placement Service for an appointment in 246 Campbell Hall, 686-3235.

Academic Advising in Room 164 Oregon Hall, 686-3211, provides similar counseling services and will schedule appointments with faculty members who can tell them more.

Honors College—

(Continued from Page 6A)

The Honors College also has a program of independent study in which 12 to 20 students are usually enrolled, according to Kimball. All University requirements are waived for those who qualify, but they must still pay full-time tuition, he adds.

"We ask students wishing to enter (the program) two questions," explains Kimball. "Can you accomplish what you wish in the regular program?" and "Why can't it be done completely outside of the University?"

Students must answer the second question convincingly to qualify. Persons who qualify for the Independent Study program submit

written proposals to a three-member faculty committee, which monitors their progress.

When a project is completed and approved the student is granted a B.A. (Honors College) degree.

Kimball says his dream is to have the whole University operate at the same level as the Honors College, but he adds that state funding won't permit it.

Kimball recognizes one flaw in the program itself; of a recent class of 80 Honors College freshmen, only 40 stayed in the program through graduation. The rest transferred into majors within other University departments.

"I don't think that's a good thing," says Kimball.

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