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Campus recruiting rises Economy falters, but jobs are there

Lane County's unemployment rate is hovering around 13 percent and "help wanted" ads in the local paper have shrunk to a third of their former number — so it follows that there must be fewer recruiters visiting the campus, right?

Wrong. The number of businesses and firms coming to the University this year to find employees is actually up slightly over the number who recruited here last year, according to Larry Smith, director of Career Planning and Placement.

"We have good students at the University of Oregon, and recruiters continue to be impressed by them," he says.

That may be partly because Smith's office has been recruiting recruiters.

"From my point of view, we have been relatively aggressive in contacting companies this year, to a greater extent than in years past," he says.

Also, the business school has invited 80 employers to visit the campus this May to learn more about the master's of business administration program. Business faculty are traveling to San Francisco and Seattle this spring to talk to potential employers.

But finding the right job in the right place at a good salary still takes a lot of work on the part of the graduate, Smith says, emphasizing that the graduate should have a job goal firmly in mind and be willing to spend several months aggressively pursuing that goal.

"It gets very discouraging. My sense of a major part of the discouragement is the 20-20 hindsight of saying, 'Gee, I wish I had done something different in my undergraduate program.'"

Smith says students need to overcome such psychological hurdles and get on with the business at hand. Remember, he says, that 45 percent of all University graduates typically aren't hired until three or more months after they graduate.

"The marketplace is tight. I think that makes it more critical for people to be prepared to conduct a comprehensive job search, utilizing as many resources as they possibly can," Smith says.

The career planning office is one place to start. The office offers career counseling, lists of major employers, a placement register where students can list their availability, workshops and placement seminars.

Ken Rocco, a labor economist for the state employment division, was surprised to hear the number of recruiters still coming to the University. He speculates that the tight job market may be working in favor of college students. Employers can afford to be

choosy, so they may choose students with formal training, he says.

"Businesses are always looking to the future. They know things are going to get better eventually," Rocco says.

He advises students to hold out a little while in the job search, and not take the first job of any type that comes along.

"There's a trap you can fall into of getting a job that's a little bit lower than you were aiming for and getting trapped there," Rocco says. If that happens, take the job and keep looking for a better one during time off, he says.

Another piece of advice Rocco passes on is the bigger the labor market, the better the job opportunities. Rocco and Smith agree that students willing to locate anywhere in the United States probably are going to find the job they want.

Of course, career planning and the state employment division cater mainly to business-related jobs. Many students from the University's professional schools and colleges aren't going to find jobs through his office, Smith admits, but rather through the "well-developed" networks that exist in most professions.

A man who has his ear to the communications "network," Journalism School Dean Ev Dennis, reports that for students willing to go anywhere, "Yes — you'll find what you want." It may take two to three months, if you have a good strategy, he says, but he urges students to tie into networks at the University by letting anyone who can help know they are job hunting. Make yourself as distinctive as possible in your resume and your contact with possible employers, he says.

Business College Dean James Reinmuth predicts that "better students" will have no trouble finding jobs.

"It's worse than it has been, but it's a heck of a lot better than the traditional areas," like sociology and English, Reinmuth says.

Bob Berdahl, deans of the arts and sciences college, is keeping tabs on those "traditional areas." The chances that liberal arts graduates will find jobs depends totally on the field, although he says an amazingly high percentage of liberal arts major typically end up in a job related to their field of study. But the primary goal of arts and sciences isn't vocational training, he points out.

"We're not training people, we're educating them, and we believe bright people will sooner or later find jobs."

By Ann Portal

A SALUTE TO THE '82 GRADUATES

from the
Oregon Daily Emerald
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