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Local expert faces risks, foretells job market trends

By Steven Van Hook

Of the Emerald

Predicting the future of the fickle job market is a highly speculative affair at best.

Any sudden change in international relations or some wonderful discovery of a does-it-all product can cast entire professions the way of such dinosaurs as telegraph operators and Frisbee salesmen in Iran. So anyone daring to foretell job prospects must have the foresight of a prophet and the fortitude of a weatherman.

But Larry Smith, director of the University's Career Planning and Placement Service, not only tallies statistics on the kaleidoscopic job market, he also provides insights into the shifts and turns that make some occupations more promising than others for the future-oriented student.

Smith received a doctorate in higher-education administra-

tion from UCLA and worked there for nine years in career counseling. He's been director of the CPP office on campus for four years.

Relying on figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that contrast the growth potential for different occupations into the 1990s, Smith connects the dots to form a larger picture of emerging employment patterns.

A growing population will be a major factor in changing job trends, Smith says. "Society is compacting, with many more people living per square mile," he says.

As people move closer together they need to become "better at cooperating and interacting and dealing with the stress of daily life," he says.

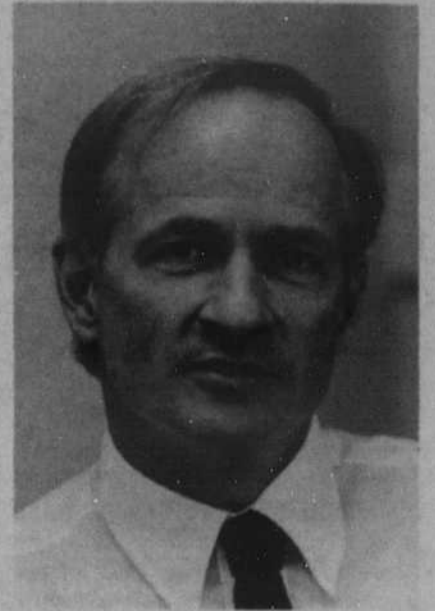
The job horizon looks bright for psychologists, political scientists, sociologists and pharmacologists, Smith says.

Another emerging trend is the growing number of households with more than one working member, he says. With this increase in family income, more money will be spent on leisure time and entertainment, Smith says. He predicts the resulting growth will be beneficial to the television, motion picture and performing arts industries.

This "portends well for actors, dancers, composers and musicians," he says.

Smith also predicts that as the baby-boom generation grows older, demand will grow for providers of health care, such as physicians, dentists, registered nurses, dieticians and those who service the health care industry.

Another benefit of an aging society is the fairly strong need for kindergarten and elementary teachers to replace those who will soon retire, Smith says. He adds that, although secondary and college-level educators



Larry Smith

won't be in large demand, teaching opportunities will be available in math, English, science, business, engineering and computer science.

Noting the rising complexity of the financial industry, he predicts an increasing need for well-trained finance and investment consultants, as well as economists, accountants, auditors, purchasing agents, actuaries and statisticians.

Smith says good opportunities also will exist for advertising agents and public relations people.

Expecting a large growth in demand for salespeople, Smith says this kind of work goes beyond the common conception of pushing cars and insurance policies at reluctant consumers. The greater goal of most sales jobs is simply to "help interested purchasers do their jobs quicker, better and cheaper," he says.

Smith says the upcoming employment trends are affected by population growth, increas-

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