

RESUMES

Facing Job Facts

Penn teaches realities

There are things about life on the job that they just don't teach you in school—ordinarily. But at the University of Pennsylvania, career counselors are trying to make sure that students prepare for some harsh new realities. After an undergraduate was denied employment last year when corporate recruiters gave his handwriting sample a negative evaluation, the Penn placement office began asking interviewers to fill out an information form, stating which pre-employment tests they would require of students. IBM, International Paper and General Electric have already informed the school that they will be testing for drugs.

Penn won't allow recruiters to test on campus. But counselors are warning all students who attend placement seminars to expect drug testing at off-campus interviews with large companies. A positive test result could cost them a job. "The risks are too great to waste on an evening of fun," says one senior.

At the graduate level, Penn's Wharton School of Business now offers a noncredit, yearlong course called Career Planning. About 85 percent of the first-year M.B.A. students voluntarily attend the biweekly sessions. For the most part, the course tries to show students that they are not just looking for a job, they're planning their lives. "We try to teach them that a career is over a lifetime," says Suzanna Miller, associate director of career development and placement. "Even if they had jobs they

could leave at 5 p.m., these are people who wouldn't."

Spurred in part by the insider-trading scandals that have engulfed several young investment bankers, the classes start with an effort to help students assess and uncover their own value systems. In one technique, instructors conduct a hypothetical values auction. Each student gets an imaginary \$1,000 to spend in the auction of 50 values—which range from "a world without prejudice" to "a chance to exert power." The results have been surprising: money and power have not fared as well as self-respect.

No matter what the goals are, however, the important thing is that students understand what they want. Once they have established that, the course moves on to the more practical tasks of preparing a résumé and getting interviews.

CONNIE LESLIE with ROBERT MAHLOWITZ
in Philadelphia

Grad Skills

In a job market where there are no golden passports to success, the liberal-arts degree has taken on new luster. "Life After Liberal Arts," a career survey recently published by the University of Virginia, demonstrates why. UVa queried more than 2,000 of its liberal-arts alumni who graduated between 1971 and 1981 to assess how well their courses of study had prepared them for the working world. The results are encouraging—and edifying.

From the '80 mathematics major who is now a veterinary pathologist for the National Zoo to the '73 Russian-studies major who is now a special assistant to President Reagan, UVa's liberal-arts alums are thriving. Most now work in the fields of law (20 percent), medicine (9 percent), financial services (9 percent) and education (7 per-

NAME: Benjamin J. Castle

AGE: 31

OCCUPATION: Merchandising manager, Stereo Village in Atlanta, a retail audio outlet with 25 locations in the Southeast.

EDUCATION: B.A., Brooklyn College, economics and financial-analysis major.



Q. What best prepared you for your job?

A. Learning about accounting methods really didn't help in the position I am in now. I started selling stereo equipment to friends in junior high school. Rather than buying blind, they would come to me for advice. I established sources and sold at a lower markup than the stores, and they got a better product.

Q. What personality trait helps you the most?

A. Organization. That's important when you're juggling numbers for 2,000 to 5,000 models—from about 13 manufacturers. You have to make instant price comparisons and be able to tell what is competitive.

Q. How do you decide what to buy?

A. I spend a lot of time on the sales floor to maintain contact with the customers. I also read a lot of trade journals—but they're sometimes biased. Sometimes I have to go by instinct.

Q. What do you enjoy most about your job?

A. There are a lot of challenges involved in working for a growing company. Also, the audio business is a fairly small industry. It's possible to establish some long-term friendships.

Practice makes marketable: Video gives instant replay of mock interviews at Penn

DAVID H. WELLS



cent). Alumni reported a median salary of \$30,000, with 21 percent earning \$50,000 or more. And fully one-third said that their degree gave them a leg up on others in their career area. "A liberal-arts background provided me with an overall understanding of people, politics and society, which is most important to the understanding of marketing," said a '71 biology major who is now a vice president for marketing at a bank. The message from UVa alums is clear: there is a good life after liberal arts.