

GPA plays bit part in hiring, say employment specialists

By Stan Nelson
Of the Emerald

Grades.

For some, a grade point average will make the difference between acceptance or denial to post-graduate studies. But for the recent college graduate seeking initial employment, a high GPA is not a large consideration, according to employment specialists.

"You can't downplay the importance of a good GPA...yet we haven't seen a trend (of GPAs) as a major consideration if the other factors are there," said Dan Shankle, a professional placement representative for the state Employment Division.

Employment Division counselors stress transferable skills and the quality of personality as well as the quantity and quality of the education, Shankle said. Interpersonal and communication skills, along with how well the person will fit the company's group dynamics, also are large considerations, he said.

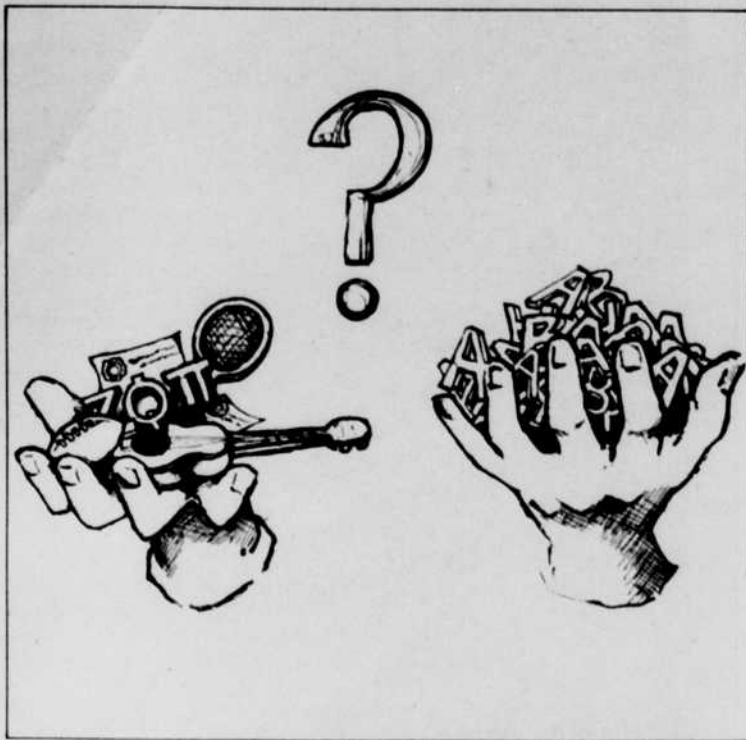
"Employers are looking for individuals who can demonstrate they can be successful in a number of endeavors," said Lawrence Smith, director of the University Career Planning and Placement Service. Smith emphasized leadership experience, success in competitive situations, and speaking and writing skills as characteristics employers desire.

Communication skills have become increasingly important in the banking industry now that automation has shifted the emphasis of most banking jobs to personal service, said Pat Stoll, regional service officer of the southwest region for First Interstate Bank.

A grade point average alone will not tell an employer what type of person the applicant is, and the subject is not brought up in an interview unless noted in the applicant's resume, she said. Most interviews last between 30 and 45 minutes, and if a good rapport cannot be built during that time, it is a good indication the applicant will have difficulty building rapport with a customer in an even shorter period of time, she said.

"You can be a technical whiz, but if you can't relate to customers and employees, you won't have a very high success rate," she said.

An applicant's experience and presentation during an interview are emphasized by The Oregonian, said Mary Crook,



Graphic by Lorraine Rath

Oregonian assistant personnel manager. Applicants also are tested for skills required for the position, she said.

"We are interested in what (the applicant) can bring to the job from the first day," she said. Transcripts are not required, although Crook said they are appreciated.

"The University environment provides students with innumerable opportunities to demonstrate success," Smith said. From participation comes a mature personality, and that is what employers want, he said.

"If you sit in the library and crack books for four years and get a 4.00 (GPA), it makes one wonder if you can even speak," Smith said, noting the need for outside interests.

Accounting and engineering firms often use GPAs as a form of screening potential employees, but they are not representative of most other career areas, he said.

A high GPA becomes a deciding factor when two applicants are equally qualified for a position, but otherwise are not requested often by employers, said Lillian Stewart, employment counselor for Young's Employment Service.

The East Coast places more emphasis on academic credentials, Shankle said, but on the West Coast, it has all but died away.

"You don't see that kind of snobbery in the area," Shankle said. No more than 25 percent of the total emphasis is placed on a GPA during an interview, he estimated.

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to pay about 73 percent of the cost of teaching 14,343 full-time equivalent students, and tuition covers the remaining 27 percent of the cost.

The number of FTE students is determined by adding the total number of credit hours for which all students are enrolled, then dividing by 15.

However, the 1986 fall-term enrollment at the University was actually 15,304 FTE students. That number exceeds the University's corridor and also exceeds the 15,030 FTE student enrollment ceiling the State Board has established for

the University.

"We originally weren't to arrive at that point for another year or so," Sunderland said.

To meet this dramatic increase in enrollment, the State Board asked the governor to raise the University's General

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