

MENTOR

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tive experience with her mentor. Although he was a busy executive, she said that he "bent over backwards to help me."

Kim Sapp, director of the Mentor Program, said mentors are enthusiastic and continue to help their students after course is over.

"We have alumni members calling up and saying, 'How are you doing,'" Sapp said. However, even if students only talk to the mentors for a half hour, they can gain confidence and a good connection in their fields.

The other emphasis of the program is on real world job-hunting skills. Students are taught the essentials: how to type a good resume, appear confident and knowledgeable

in an interview, and gather information in the job market.

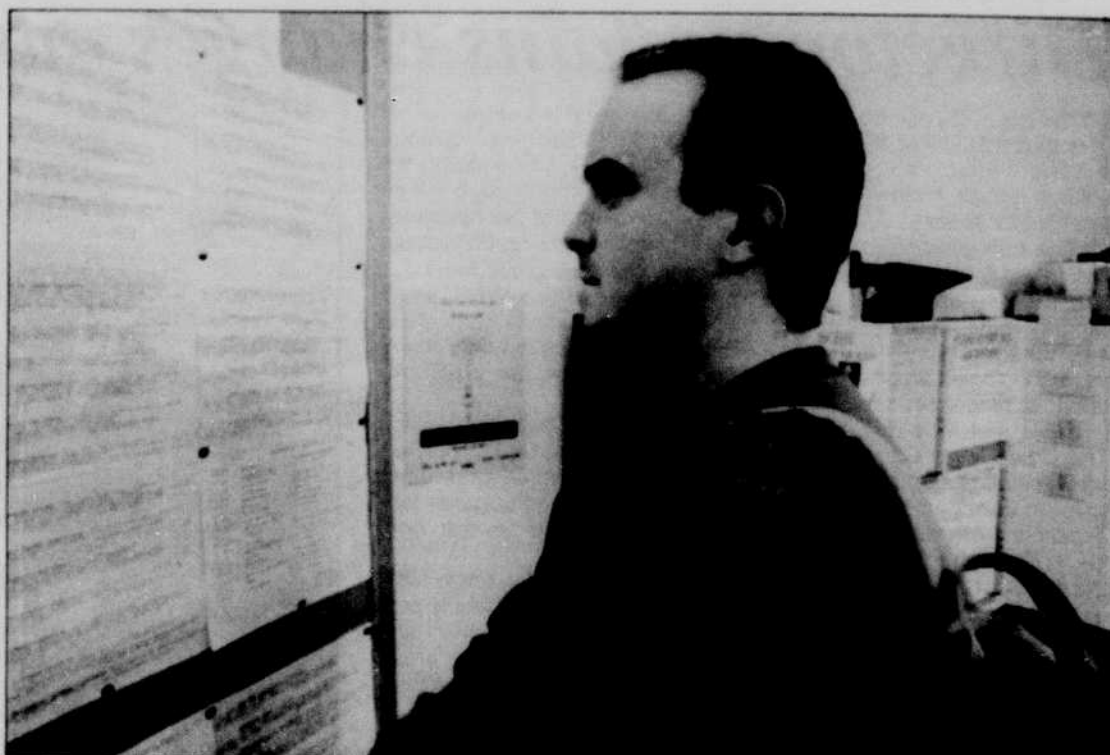
Sapp called these skills "critical...because of the competition in the job market today."

Larson warns all potential employees, "Don't look green coming out of the gate" and believes the Mentor Program gives students practical experience.

In many cases, Larson said, "it's not what you know, it's how you present yourself." Through resume-writing and interview skills the program improves how you are perceived by employers.

If you are interested in the Mentor Program and would like to find out more about it, visit the Career Center's booth during the Career Fair. Courses will be offered winter term and are open to all majors.

— Brian Vanneman



Steve Johnson, who graduated from the University with a degree in finance, reads the job postings at the Career Center. A 1993 study reported 84 percent of college graduates are employed after one year.

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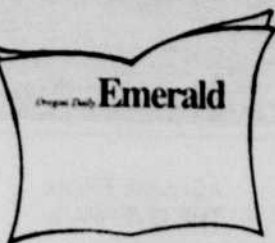
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Graduates struggle to find jobs

Mary Ann Petersen sends her friends homemade newsletters instead of cards. Designed like miniature newspapers, the letters keep Petersen in touch with her career objective, which has eluded her so far.

Petersen, a 1989 University graduate, has been unable to parlay her degree in journalism into a career in that field.

"I missed an important step," she said, referring to her lack of preparation for post-graduate life. "I worked hard in school, but didn't do the networking and career planning necessary to get the kind of job I really wanted," Petersen said.

Now five years later, after a vacation to southeast Asia, a partnership in a small business and a stint selling tile, Petersen is a retail salesperson for a company in Portland that sells turn-of-the-century light fixtures to the likes of Robert Redford and Madonna.

A 1993 National Education Statistics Center (NESC) report indicates that Petersen is one of about 40 percent of recent college graduates who are working

in jobs that do not require a four-year degree.

Perhaps the best news contained in the study is that 84 percent of college graduates are employed after one year. Mere employment, however, is not the goal of most grads. Finding a job related to their major is.

Successfully converting college majors to jobs varies widely according to major.

Statistics kept by the University's Career Center show that within their first year, business graduates found jobs related to their field about 79 percent of the time. Liberal arts majors, on the other hand, were successful at getting into their field only 50 percent of the time.

Not all graduates look for a job right away. The NESC report shows that 35 percent of recent grads eventually opt for furthering their education.

Ken Zientara, a 1992 graduate of the University, quit his job as a lab assistant on campus in 1993. Zientara, a chemistry major, decided that what he really wanted to be was a pharmacist.

Although he was in an occupa-

tion related to his major, he strapped on his backpack again and headed for Corvallis to Oregon State's School of Pharmacy.

"The lab job was better than working in a grocery store," he said, "but I knew early on that I wanted to change careers."

The NESC study indicates that the average starting wage for a 1991 college graduate was \$23,000. Zientara's career switch may net him double that salary when he graduates next year.

U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that health related careers are expected to be the fastest growing in the next ten years. Computer science and personal service occupations rank second and third.

The national outlook for employment has been shaky for several years. In 1992, IBM laid off 40,000 employees. General Motors sacked 74,000 workers.

Despite these numbers and complaints that a college degree no longer comes with a job guarantee, the NESC reports that only 4 percent of the study's graduates

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Classes help students define skills

It's fall term of your senior year. After three years of studying towards your degree, you realize that you still have absolutely no clue what you'll do with yourself once you have it.

Although many of us find ourselves in this situation, there are people available who can help. The Career Center at Hendricks Hall is offering several different programs and classes throughout the year specifically designed to answer the questions above.

"It is really important for students to figure out their focus and then figure out what they're doing for their life," said Beth Swank, of the Career Center.

One of the classes is titled "Career Discovery Program." Its course number is CPSY 199. The class is designed to help students understand their likes and dislikes through various interest inventories and activities. Although it's a good idea to take the class early on during your academic career, it's better to take it late than never.

The Career Discovery Program is a one-credit seminar that meets a couple of nights during a term and is offered every term.

Once you've figured out what your interests are, the next step is to enroll in "Success Skills," CPSY 408/508. Success Skills is designed to discover what a student's particular strengths and skills are, and how to effectively communicate them on paper or verbally.

Traci Sheffield, a former student of the class, said she learned insight into herself.

"I really learned about how to sell and advertise myself," she said. "It made me think more about what

type of person I am. It was an extremely valuable experience."

Success Skills is an upper-division class, meeting five times during a term. This class is also offered every term and can be registered for by using Duck Call. "College to Career," course CPSY 199, is another class the Career Center offers. The class is designed to combine students' skills with their interests and practically apply them towards a career. Aspects of the class include developing the student's practical skills and confidence, characteristics that are crucial to a successful job search.

The class also teaches you strategies in how to write "eye-catching" resumes and how to properly conduct yourself during an interview. College to Career is a three-credit class that is offered every fall and spring term.

Sephra Oare, a public relations intern of the Career Center and a past student of the "Success Skills" class, was quick to point out that the Career Center classes and mentor programs can be beneficial to the students participating in them.

"If you are truly confident with who you are and what you want to do, then an employer is going to feel that same assurance and want to hire you," Oare said.

The classes the Career Center provides can be a tremendous benefit when taken advantage of. An impressive resume in today's world can be the deciding factor in an employer's decision of who or who not to hire.

— Brent Boothby