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## MARKET

continued from page 1

school, said that when the economy is not doing well, there is still a significant need for lawyers who can help solve problems.

"Employers are still cautious and state budgets are still tight," Loya said. "The market in general has been tougher in the Northwest and Northern California, but it is steadily getting better."

Loya says the median salaries between 2002 and 2003 graduates have also increased by more than \$3,000.

The range of salaries for graduates varies greatly with the type of work chosen. According to the survey, salaries for 2003 graduates employed full time ranged from \$22,800 to \$140,000.

Of the 138 graduates surveyed only 79 were employed in-state. Other states that garnered a large number of graduates were: California (14), Washington (14) and Nevada (8).

Gabriela Sanchez graduated in 2003 and found the local private-firm market to be extremely competitive but eventually landed a job with a private firm, Hershner Hunter of Eugene.

"I limited my search to the Portland and Eugene area," Sanchez said. "It's very tough in the local market. There are a large number of qualified applicants."

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— Merv Loya  
 Assistant Dean and Director of Career Services

Sanchez estimates that the ratio of applicants to available jobs in Portland and Eugene is roughly 10 to one.

Sanchez credits her persistence and initial willingness to do something besides working in a private firm as the reason she was hired.

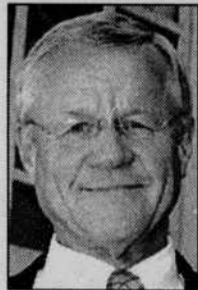
Sanchez was hired as a judicial clerk for Lane County Circuit Court not long after law school graduation on May 2003 and was hired by Hershner Hunter, a 25-attorney firm that focuses primarily on business law, in January 2004. Sanchez's area of specialty is bankruptcy law. "A lot of people work as a judicial clerk for a year to gain experience and make contacts," Sanchez said. "That strategy worked for me."

Third-year law student Sarah Sabri may also seek a position with the

Lane County District Attorney's Office after graduation.

"Private practices want litigation experience," Sabri said. "It's nearly impossible to get that kind of experience anywhere else."

The exorbitant cost of law school has been cited as a major deterrent for students seeking lower-paying work in the non-profit or public-service sectors.



**Merv Loya**  
 Assistant Dean and Director of Career Services

According to the law school Web site, touting its Loan Repayment Assistance Program, University graduates face an average debt of \$50,000.

"Debts of this size can prohibit even the most dedicated public servants from taking low-paying public-service jobs."

Tuition and fees for the 2003-04 school year were more than \$15,000 for residents and more than \$19,000 for non-residents. The projected yearly increase is approximately three percent.

Loya said the law school has been actively working with student groups to reduce the burden to future lawyers if they choose to pursue a career in community service.

A fund-raising campaign for the LRAP has been started for people going into lower-income positions that benefit the community, Loya said.

The LRAP is run by a six-person student committee. The fund-raising board for LRAP comprises notable law professionals, including Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers.

Only 4.3 percent of the class of 2003 is currently employed in public-interest or non-profit positions. The national average, according to the NALP Web site, is 3.1 percent.

Loya said the Career Services Office is committed to helping students and graduates find the jobs they are looking for. On-campus interviews are held in the fall and at the University Portland Center in the spring. Mock interviews, job-search strategies and invited speakers round out the most popular services.

"We not only have bright students, but quality people who are interested in helping the community," Loya said. "We'd like to be able to help them achieve those goals."

Michael A. Booth is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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