

COLLEGE DEGREE MYTH

It once was true that a college education meant a good job and plenty of money. That is the myth many students find out often too late that it is untrue.

A college career must be planned and before graduation a plan to get oneself hired is more than useful.

"I had 50 Ph.D.s apply for a file clerk job in Alaska," said Rae Sessions, career placement director at the University of Portland. Sessions said one of the applicants did not know how to type very well, which made him unqualified, even with his advanced degree.

That does not mean a degree is of no use. A check of many job openings reveals very specific degrees necessary for an applicant in order to be considered.

Many sales jobs require a college degree. It does not matter what the degree is in, just so long as the degree was completed.

Sessions said accounting and engineering graduates are in short supply.

"We've placed all 38 of our accounting graduates this May and we still have phone calls," she noted.

H.K. "Chik" Erzurumlu, dean of engineering at Portland State University, said opportunities in all areas of the field are excellent.

"All of our graduates find jobs immediately," Erzurumlu remarked.

With the demand for engineers outstripping the supply, one would expect all engineering schools to grow. In fact, the opposite is true, Erzurumlu said.

"With the state's current budget situation, we are being forced to hold the line. We have proposed minimum standards to get into the program."

Another problem engineering schools are facing nationwide is a lack of teachers. Erzurumlu said there are 2,000 unfilled teaching positions in engineering across the country.

"Industry is offering much higher salaries," Erzurumlu said. Already universities and industry are seeking solutions including having engineers with higher degrees loaned to universities to teach.

Locally, the Portland Advisory Committee on Engineering Education is working on a loan program to allow engineers to go to a school for an advanced degree. When the degree is completed, the loan could be forgiven if the student stays to teach.

In Oregon, engineering graduates make up seven percent of all graduates, but receive 63 percent of all job offers. Business graduates do fairly well with 21 percent of the graduates and 25 percent of the job offers. Science, math and computer science graduates do respectably with 10 percent of the graduates and eight percent of the job offers.

Other graduates, primarily liberal arts and education graduates fare worst with 62 percent of the total graduates and only four percent of the job offers.

Father Richard Berg, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Portland, said the school has done follow-through studies to find what the liberal arts student does with his degree.

"Our graduates who also take some business courses do better than those who have not," Berg said. "Almost all I have talked to tell me speaking and writing skills are very important."

Berg said students in the "professional" types of majors such as education and communications are usually able to find some kind of job.

"The pure liberal arts type of major is either not interested in a job immediately or pretty much has something lined up, usually a family business," Berg said.

Although the market for liberal arts graduates is not as good as for other types of graduates, there are some jobs out there.

"I have a bulletin board full of job notices," Sessions said. "Some jobs don't pay enough for some graduates."

The career counselor said many college graduates think they should be able to get a good paying job right out of college, but that is not always true.

Advanced degrees such as masters and doctorate degrees can often lead to promotions and other advancement, but are no advantage to finding a job with no experience.

"There are many employers who do not want to interview masters degree graduates unless they have some experience," Sessions said. "Employers say a person with an advanced degree isn't worth the extra money they have to pay them unless they've got some experience."

Sessions advised that students should not go straight from earning a bachelor's degree into a masters degree program. Instead they should work for at least a few years before coming back.

Kent Collings, dean of business at the University of Portland, agrees that a student should not get an advanced degree in business without some work experience.

For that reason, many schools hold M.B.A. programs at night. That way, students do not have to give up their jobs for an advanced degree.

A college degree is still the way for many to get a better job, but it is not always enough to be a college graduate to get the job.

CHICAGO, ILL. — An organization committed to increasing the number of Blacks, Hispanics and American Indians in the field of engineering has received a \$150,000 grant from Amoco Foundation, Inc.

The National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc., is the center for a collaborative effort by industry, universities and local programs. Amoco Foundation, financially supported by Standard Oil Company (Indiana), gave \$125,000 to the council in 1982 and \$100,000 in 1981.

"With the growing need for a technically trained work force, the National Action Council's activities are more vital now than ever," said Walter F. Hoeppner Jr., manager of personnel development for Standard and the company's liaison with the council. "It is important for private corporations to increase their support to ensure that minority youth are given the opportunity to take their place in tomorrow's high-tech world."

Through its Incentive Grants Program, the

council provides scholarships at colleges and universities that make special efforts to recruit and graduate minority students. For 1982-83, it has allocated \$2.7 million in grants to 3,500 students at 125 engineering schools.

In addition, the council's summer engineering employment program provides valuable work experience as well as compensation to students.

Assistance is also given to more than 50,000 secondary school students through pre-college programs such as science fairs.

The council recently completed a retention study that points to ways of significantly increasing the number of minority students who successfully complete their engineering education.

The study said retention rates improve if promptly warned of problems; if there is a high degree of interaction among minority engineering counselors, students and the engineering faculty; and if there is a summer pre-freshman orientation to help determine strengths and weaknesses and provide assistance.

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