

# WELCOME TO THE WORKING WEEK

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One of the most overworked clichés about today's university students is that they're all at school to get jobs, and that really, they don't care as much about getting an education as a big salary.

Many feel bad about it, but they know it's true. Today's undergrads want to do Macro, not Milton. It's ironic then, that although they worry about jobs far more than their older siblings did, they're far less likely to get them. Simply put, there are just too many grads, too few jobs.

Most students are doing their best. Increasingly, they are eschewing the humanities—the classic ingredient of the liberal arts education—and spending their time instead over economics and management. Those who might have ended up in education a few years ago, are now struggling to get into law or business.

Few students choose their field of study solely on the job market they'll enter as graduates. It's almost impossible to predict the needs of the economy four years from now, and there are more important considerations to be taken into account.

Nevertheless, it is an important aspect of any intelligent career choice. It's too bad then that reliable information is often hard to find. With the most recent government forecasts more than a few years out of date, there's a dearth of accurate information on just which careers are growing in importance, stagnating, or doing just fine.

Still, there's no need to take your uncle Solly's advice at face value. There are a number of people around the university who keep in touch with the job situation for those with various skills and abilities.

From conversations with them in recent weeks, one theme emerged. Be flexible in your approach to getting work. Be prepared to move, to use your skills in unusual ways, to pick up skills that the market needs. Certainly your education should reflect the kind of person you are, but there's nothing wrong with it also reflecting the kind of world you'll be entering when you graduate.

## education

Things are not as bad in education as you might have heard. According to Bill Phillips, an education professor who has done research in the area, the worst is over, and by the time those entering first year graduate, the situation could be a whole lot better.

A poll of graduates of the class of '78 showed that by the fall following graduation, 55 per cent had found full time teaching jobs, 24 per cent part time, and the remaining 21 per cent had found non-teaching jobs or weren't working at all. It's hardly



great news, but it certainly isn't the dead end that many people think education to be.

In fact, Phillips remains optimistic. "If you take the right things," he predicts that "you're virtually guaranteed a job." He advises training for elementary schools rather than secondary, with a background in special education or French as a second language. Teachers with these qualifications are in demand, especially in the separate schools, another good area for those looking for work.

Even so, don't expect to be TTC-ing to work. "The chance of getting a job in Metro T.O. are zilch," ventured Stuart Robbins, chairman of the department. But, he said, "there are jobs out of town, if you're willing to look for them."

## film

People who want something secure should major in business, not film production, according to Stan Fox, the Chairman of York's film department. But the growing Canadian film industry needs more and more people every year, and if you've got the drive and talent to get through York's programme and then look hard for work, you could find it.

The competition is strong. Of the sixty or so people who enter the programme each year,

perhaps as few as 20 will graduate. Of these, only 10 will find their way into film work, the others, whether by choice or necessity, usually end up in related professions like journalism, radio, or public relations, explained Fox.

Of those who do work in the industry, few end up making the feature films that play in commercial theatres. Most find work in television (often with the CBC), or making industrial and educational films.

Nor do many end up sitting in the Director's chair the day after graduation. "Initially," said Fox, "film students start low on the totem pole" on jobs like production assistant, camera assistant or assistant editor, and move up as they gain experience. But even though starting jobs don't demand the kind of training that York students are given, Fox holds that, "the people who've had the background in the film programme tend to advance very much faster."

## computer sci

Talk to a career counsellor, and they'll tell you that computers are the thing to be studying. Talk to someone involved in computers, and they'll tell you the career counsellor was right.

In fact, it's probably harder to make it through York's computer science programme than it is to find a job once you have. About half of those in first year drop out of the programme, and some more do in second and third year.

For those who do get through, "the market is very strong," according to Computer Science professor Peter Roosen-Runge. In fact, "a person would really have to be very bad in order not to get a job," he said. "We are consistently and persistently asked to recommend students."

This is, ironically, one of the department's biggest problems. Roosen-Runge complained that too many students choose to

enter computer science in total ignorance, only because of the degree's highly reputed marketability. Surprised by the difficulty of the subject, many soon drop out.

Those who don't, face endless problems in pursuing their studies. Too many students, too few teachers and far too few computer facilities, make computer science a difficult programme, quite apart from the inherent difficulty of the subject.

"What happens in these popular programmes," lamented Roosen-Runge, "is a sort of nasty survival of the fittest." His advice to those considering the programme, or already in it, "Don't worry about career options. Work on your mathematics skills." He warned that people who have trouble with math will find the programme very difficult.

## psychology

Psychology attracts many different kinds of people. It's not surprising then that York students with psych degrees often end up doing many different kinds of things when they leave school. In fact, according to a survey of '76, '77 and '78 grads conducted by Psychology Professor David Rennie, just over 20 per cent ended up in psych related careers. Many of the others entered teaching, business management, or clerical professions.



The vast majority of those in psychology related careers entered jobs broadly grouped by Rennie as "psycho-technology". These included therapists, counsellors, social case workers, psychometrists and daycare workers.

But don't necessarily expect to get these kinds of jobs right of school. Some of the York grads polled, explained Rennie did two or three kinds of work before they finally ended up in psycho-technology. "It's not a bed of roses to get into," he remarked.

A small portion of those in psycho-technology continued to pursue their education at the graduate level. Rennie said the market for university teachers, which would have absorbed many of these people in better times, has dried up. He indicated though, that flexible people will find good jobs.

Rennie described the market for Ph.D.s as "tight", but insisted, "the tightness seems to be related to rigid expectations. Some grads only want to work in Toronto, some only want to do certain things." Those interested in graduate study will be cheered by the fact that of the 84 Ph.D.s that York has turned out, Rennie found only one who was out of work.

## physics

What can someone with a B.Sc. in physics do when they leave school? "Anything," according to W.J. Megaw, Chairman of York's Physics Department.

For those choosing to do physics, jobs are not too hard to find. In Megaw's opinion, "it's

not all that difficult for a good physicist to get a good job." New grads might have to look around for a little while, but eventually they'll find their niche.

A good part of each graduating class does not, however, take this path. "Many of the ones who do best go on to business, law or medicine," Megaw remarked. "Physicists can do anything, they know basically how the world works."

But all too few people are taking up the study. Fewer and fewer students want to pursue the sciences, according to Megaw, and as a result he expects, "in ten years time there's going to be a desperate shortage of physicists in Canada." Although that's bad news for the rest of us, it's anything but for aspiring physicists.

## english

Those who teach English, like many in the humanities, are reluctant to gauge the importance of the discipline in terms of its value on a resume. English degrees do not necessarily lead to high paying jobs, nor are they meant to. The study of literature is many things, but not vocational training.

How then, will a background in English help you? It will prepare you for "any job that prizes articulate expression and cogent argument," according to John Willoughby, Chairman of York's English Department. For him, English is one of the most practical courses of study open to the student, because, "if he stays with it, he'll develop a habit of mind" that will be a valuable tool.

## business

The value of a degree in business administration has reached almost mythical proportions in the minds of many undergraduates. A cynic might greet all this talk with scepticism, but a meeting with Margaret Scandifio of the Administrative Studies Placement Office would quickly put him right.

According to Scandifio, business school is just as good a bet as everyone thinks it is. Citing encouraging statistics, she reported that 95 per cent of the B.B.A. class of '79 had found work by the summer of 1980. About half of these went into accounting, an area with consistently high demand. The rest were spread throughout sales, marketing, banking and management, as well as a number of other fields.



Herself a Liberal Arts grad, Scandifio nevertheless stressed that in Canada there is a growing need for "more and more technical skills". Business Administration, as well as Computer Science are only two of the fields growing rapidly in response to ever increasing demand.

Students who can combine these skills are especially desired she said. But most important for Scandifio is that B.B.A. grads looking for work are "able to present themselves well." Good communication skills are a must, she advised, since administrative positions involve dealing with large numbers of people.

