

Foot gives lecture on career futures

by Janice McConnell
Brunswickan News

Dr. David Foot depicted a successful, retired executive, sitting in a beautiful house, wondering why his 29-year-old son is still living at home.

'Take some responsibility. Work hard and you will be rewarded,' thinks the executive.

But Foot, a renowned futurist from the University of Toronto, believes nothing could be further from the truth.

Foot specializes in demographics - he uses them to explain and predict everything from drug abuse to transportation.

He detailed his theories about the changing workforce of the 1990s in a speech here Tuesday. This was an initiative of the Transition to Employment Program, which is offered to both UNB and STU students who are in their final two years of study.

The program aims to broaden the traditional focus of career counselling to more adequately prepare the graduating student for the reality of entering today's workplace.

Foot said the career path of the 1990's will be spiral, not straight. He said workers should expect as many lateral moves as promotions and will have five or more occupa-



Dr. David Foot told students to expect many career changes in the workforce of the 1990s. Photo by Mark Bray

tions. They should also expect continual re-education and retraining over their career life.

"These are career paths, not career ladders," Foot emphasized.

He noted that men have traditionally thought vertically, which worked in the now outdated power structure. He explained that since women have typically thought more laterally, this could be a potential advantage as the 1990s workforce increasingly rewards that kind of

thinking.

Foot gave advice to students.

"It doesn't matter what you study," he asserted, recommending that students pursue what they find interesting.

"This is the age of the generalist not the specialist," Foot said.

He advocated doing a Masters degree in a field other than one's undergraduate and warned that doctoral degrees are too narrow and limiting.

Foot said the worker of the future will be a contributor on many work teams.

"We need followership not leadership courses," he said.

According to Foot the caveat is that the graduating student needs to bring transferable skills into the marketplace. Good analytic, communication and interpersonal abilities will all be necessary.

He explained that the executives of today were born in the Great Depression of the 1930s when parents could not afford to have many children. When they, as youths, entered the workforce 20 years later in the 1950's, they did not find much competition.

Foot said jobs were plentiful and promotion commonplace. Success was all but guaranteed.

The career path of the baby-boomers and all those older was a straight road. The average worker would have had two occupations and were promoted up the corporate pyramid. They were rewarded with power or at least a title.

Why are prospects so limited now?

"Traditionally, Canada's population was a pyramid with few elderly people at the top and many young people filling out the bottom," he explained.

"However, Canada has had a stable birth rate now for many years which means that the same number of babies are born each year. Canada has a population rectangle," he added.

Foot explained that the corporate hierarchy is a pyramid of executives, middle-management and workers that is based on our now outdated population pyramid. He said this structure used to work so well because it reflected the population of its workers.

"What happens when you try to promote a rectangle up into a triangle?" asked Foot.

The answer: it doesn't fit.

"Job plateauing and career blockage occurs. There are too many employees in their 40s, so some are fired. The employees that are lucky enough to keep their jobs are forced to do a 20-year-old's job for the rest of their lives," he said.

Sound familiar?

Grad Project, from page 3.

print," said Austin.

"Another suggestion might be to improve markings on elevators or on outdoor steps for those with visual concerns," he said.

A third project, called Campus Beautification, would improve the seating area outdoors between Harrison and Bridges House.

Another project would involve an adopt-a-book program for UNB Libraries, similar to one carried out successfully by the Grad Class of 1993.

Two other projects would focus on building a new outdoor stairway from Memorial Hall to the Phys-Ed

Building or improving the pathway through the wooded area from the SUB to the Wu Conference Centre mainly with better lighting.

To finance the project chosen, each graduate, or the family of a graduate, is being asked to contribute \$25. Special looney coin rollers that hold that amount are now available from the Grad Class Executive.

Further fundraisers this year include Grad Class hats now available for \$18 and sweatshirts that are to be designed and sold later this year.

Meanwhile, Class Vice-President

Brooke DeLong said several social events are being planned throughout the year.

"We plan to hold one event before Christmas and another before March Break," DeLong told those at the Grad Class Meeting.

"We also plan a grad brunch and formal during graduation week as well as a gathering between grads and alumni members. We also plan a brewery tour during Grad Class Week," DeLong said.

Secretary-Treasurer Erica Gomez has announced plans for the Grad Class to take over production of the UNB yearbook.

"Volunteers are needed if this is to be successful," she said. "Last year a yearbook was not produced and the year before two yearbooks were compiled into one. We should like to make this year's book a success."

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