

Job market better this year...

By JEFF DAVIES
Features Editor

College seniors who have been watching the papers — including this one — the past few months could hardly say it's been an encouraging winter. They've been confronted with seemingly endless stories concerning high and rising unemployment rates, particularly for young people, and often giving discouraging prospects for college graduates.

A review of the attitudes among the faculty, students and staff at UNB, the university placement office, and at the downtown Manpower Centre reveals just about every possible view of this year's job market for college graduates. Many are quite optimistic, and consider this year's situation to be a decided improvement over the last few years. Some aren't sure, or feel it's too early to hazard a guess. A number gave rather discouraging reports.

It is a fact, though, that the number of companies recruiting employees at UNB is up this year. Ruth Spicer, director of Accommodations and Placement, told us that last year, 93 companies were on campus. This year there had been 74 by Christmas and the placement office is dealing with about 20 others. Spicer said there had been a general increase in recruiting activity in all fields. Although the major recruiting is done in the fall, companies will be asking for names from now until September and students wishing consideration should file an application with the placement office and perhaps go in for a talk.

Few of the employers inform the placement office of how many of the students interviewed were eventually hired, so there are no figures to show just how many people get jobs through the placement office.

Spicer said that there was often a great apathy among students and that there were few applicants for some positions.

Asked to give his assessment of the job situation, Harlow Hollis, director of the Manpower Centre on Campbell Street, said "We think it's going to be as good as last year or perhaps a little bit better."

Why the improvement? "That's something I've been thinking about myself," said Hollis. He offered the suggestion that the companies had more money to spend and needed more staff. Hollis said that graduates in Engineering or Business Administration were always in a good position while those with a B.A. or B.Sc. were less specialized and had more of a problem.

Steve Chappell, the Manpower Department's economist for New Brunswick, was not optimistic. He said that the effects of the "baby boom" would not be muffled out for a couple of years yet and that the labor market would continue to be competitive, at least until then.

Chappell said that the areas that would most likely absorb university graduates were community, business, and personal services. These would include such fields as education, health and welfare, recreation, business managerial services, personal, accommodation, and food services. He added that there might also be more openings with the public service.

Asked which degrees would provide the best chance of a job, Chappell said "the employers are going to have the upper hand"; they're the ones who do the choosing. He added that people with B.A.'s would be at "the bottom of the heap." Chappell said that those majoring in English or Sociology would be in a less advantageous position than those specializing in Economics or Sciences.

In terms of what employers are hiring what graduates, this year's Employment Opportunities Handbook, published by the University and College Placement Association of Markham Ontario, indicates that Business Administration graduates may be in the best position. Sixty-two of the 72 employers listed in the handbook are hiring people with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. The number of employers hiring graduates with other bachelor's degrees is as follows: General Engineering - 14, Chemical Engineering - 30, Mechanical Engineering - 42, Electrical Engineering - 31, Civil Engineering - 27, Mining Engineering - 13, General Honours Science - 14, Biology - 7, Bio. Chemistry - 9, Chemistry - 18, Computer Science - 38, Geology - 12, Geo. Physics - 9, Math - 31, Microbiology - 8, Physics - 11, General Pass Arts - 24, Honours Arts - 23, Economics - 36, Political Science - 13, Psychology - 14, Social Sciences - 13, Forestry - 6, Law - 8, and Education - 5.

Dr. Frank Wilson, the Dean of Students, says he thinks the overall job market looks better this year because of an improved financial situation. He also expressed the opinion that the situation would improve further as university enrolment across the country levelled off and the supply of graduates became equal to the demand.

Wilson said that once Canada Manpower has taken over the UNB placement office, it will make a "vital difference" in the Social Sciences because of improved links with the federal government.

The reaction from faculty members to our inquiries concerning the job situation was

mainly favourable, with the only pessimistic view being expressed by a forestry professor. A number of the people we spoke to said they thought the media had seized upon the issue of unemployed college graduates and made the situation appear worse than it actually was.

Dr. P. G. Kepros of the Psychology department said that the job market for graduates in the social sciences was "quite good," and that the only area in which there was a problem was university positions. He said that many positions were available with the federal government and with private enterprise.

Kepros said that Social Sciences was a recently developed field, and that as it continued to open up, new jobs were being created. He did note that most of the students graduating from UNB in this field would have to leave the province to find jobs, with a large proportion going to Ontario and Quebec.

Margaret McPhedran, the Dean of Nursing, felt it was still too early to make a forecast of the job situation for nurses but said she was "quite hopeful." She said there was a problem with the distribution of nurses in the province and that some areas did not have enough. Nurses, she said, were not mobile. Where they work often depends on their husband's job.

Professor Alan R. Laughland of the Business Administration department said that the job situation in that area was good, or at least better than last year. He said that the students in the upper 10 percent of the graduating class probably would have a number of offers although those at the bottom might not have any yet.

Laughland said that every year,



Many graduates find they don't get the sort of job they had been expecting...

Photo by Ken De Freitas

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