

Minority Career Fair Joins African-American Students And Employers

By Tonika M. Tillman
Staff

The Minority Career Fair, sponsored by Career Planning and Placement Services, began in 1981 with several hundred students in attendance. The purpose of the fair was to bring potential employers and talented students together in one common place to discuss future career plans and internships. Student participation has increased each year with record attendance at the Tenth Annual Fair held on Tuesday, October 16.

Over 100 employers representing 56 major corporations were present to talk with students about the career opportunities in their respective companies. It was an excellent opportunity for students at all levels to learn what majors will prepare them for lucrative careers, what jobs are in demand, and what companies look for in potential employees.

Freshmen and sophomores had the chance to discover what skills they will need for entry into a particular field said undergraduate Felicia Webster. "This was very helpful. I'm a speech communications major and this has helped me narrow down my choices and improve upon my skills."

Juniors were able to learn of career and internship possibilities, while seniors passed out their resumes, signed up for interviews, and developed contacts for possible jobs after graduation. Chester Purnell, a senior Industrial Relations and Economics major said he was especially glad he had a chance to attend the fair. "I was able to set up a lot of interviews - more than I did through the placement office. I am very confident about having a job before I graduate."

Many students have the misconception that the fair is only for business and computer science majors, but the essential criteria of a qualified applicant are broad interests, strong leadership, analytical thinking, and

good verbal and written skills. These qualifications give those students with a liberal arts degree a distinct advantage. Alisa Eaker, a representative from IBM, said, "Leadership is an important component in what we look at along with extracurricular activities, community work, student government, etc. - [these] are great places to get leadership and organizational experience."

Most companies will accept any major as long as the applicant has done some advance career planning and is willing to undergo extensive on-the-job training. For instance, with the J.C. Penney Company, management trainees must "complete a structured and detailed program in which they are evaluated weekly," said Mr. Grice, the recruiter for J. C. Penney.

Not only are companies looking for applicants with these particular skills, but they are also specifically targeting more minority students in an effort to keep up with the "diversity and multiculturalism" trends in upper management. By the end of the decade, according to experts, only fifteen percent of new entrants in the work force will be white males. Realizing this, companies like J.C. Penney's have incorporated an internship program in which fifty percent of the interns must be minorities.

"Eastman Kodak targets specific African-American organizations to support such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), The National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) and many others," said Bruce Szypot, a representative for Kodak. Black Enterprise Magazine named Kodak one of the fifty best companies for black employees in its February 1989 issue.

African-American students at the fair were highly aware of how diligent these companies were about recruiting

them.

"The representative for Merck & Co./Merck, Sharp & Dohme was really serious - he went after me." Purnell said

Many of the representatives at the fair were African-American. This provided a positive, upscale and diverse image of the companies and it served as an incentive for African-American students to keep working hard to develop the necessary skills and experience for a future career.

The Minority Career Fair not only served African-American students here at Carolina, but it also served African-American Students at other universities. Dana Small, a senior at North Carolina Central University, attended the fair to pass out resumes and sign up for interviews. He said he had very high expectations of the fair. "The Career Fair at Central was not as successful because of a poor turnout and because it did not have as many major companies."

Overall, the Minority Career Fair was highly successful in providing potential jobs and contacts for a talented pool of African-American Students. It has earned the reputation as the ideal career information/contact exchange for African-American students at UNC and at other schools.

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CALENDAR

October 22

-Publishing Careers Discussion, 4 p.m. 210 Hanes.
 -Harry Allen, hip-hop activist and media assassin of Public Enemy at 7:00 in the Union auditorium.

October 23

-Study with the Theta Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, 6 p.m. in the Black Cultural Center.

October 24

-Black Student Movement meeting, 5 p.m. Upendo Lounge in the South Campus Union.
 -Banking and Insurance Discussion, 4 p.m. 210 Hanes.

October 25

-Brothers, A discussion group for and about African-American male students at UNC. 6 p.m. in the first floor "Green Room" of Ehringhaus Residence Hall.

November 2

-The film "House Party" will be shown at 7 p.m., 9:30 p.m., and 12 a.m. in the Union auditorium. Admission is \$1.50.

Miscellaneous

Purchase your tickets for the Performing Arts Series showing of Sarafina! \$6 with a BSM membership I.D.

Also, purchase your BSM sweatshirts for only \$13.

To place an announcement in the events calendar call Raquel Bushnell (933-0609) or leave the announcement in writing at the *Black Ink* office, Suite 108-D of the Carolina Union.

Think *Black Ink*...

Black Ink will hold a staff meeting today in room 226 of the Carolina Union at 6:30. All interested UNC students and staff are welcome.

Today!!

