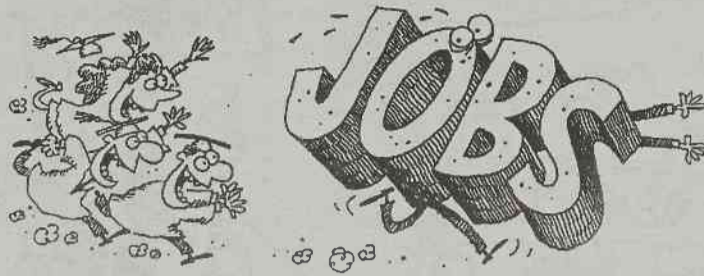


Graduates facing mixed job market

By JOHN WILLIAMS



(CPS) — Despite an improving economy, college graduates face a mixed job market this spring. More job opportunities may be possible, but expectations for salaries are lower, according to a leading employment report.

“There is widespread anticipation that the new administration and Congress will put programs into place to stimulate the economy,” said Victor Lindquist, associate dean and director of placement at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill. He is the author of the 1993 Northwestern University Lindquist-Endicott Report.

The 47th annual survey of business and industrial firms nationwide found that corporate America is “relatively optimistic,” but that the outlook for 1993 graduates is only slightly better than 1992, the worst market for graduates in the past 20 years.

Most of the 248 businesses surveyed are cutting back on recruitment on college campuses and are reducing hiring in several disciplines, including most non-engineering graduates.

“Students will have to market themselves more effectively and have more flexibility,” Lindquist said. “They must realize that their ‘dream job’ may be in another location or at a level less than desired.”

Some other findings of the report include:

- Students with degrees in computer science will find an 18 percent increase in job opportunities.
- Demand for students with master’s degrees in accounting will fall nearly 66 percent.
- At the bachelor’s level, 47 percent of the firms will need more personnel, but 42 percent will need fewer new employees. For students with master’s degrees, 42 percent of the firms will hire more graduates, but 34 percent will hire fewer students.
- A majority of the firms conduct drug tests and many check education and past employment references. Many firms are now using psychological testing.
- Students with degrees in engineering can expect salaries .2 percent higher than 1992 graduates; liberal arts, 1.3 percent higher; and mathematics or statistics, one percent higher.

Patrick Scheetz, director of the Collegiate Employment Research

Institute at Michigan State University in East Lansing, found in a national survey that employers are projecting a decrease in the hiring of college graduates for the fourth straight year.

The results were reported in Michigan State’s 22nd annual national survey, which said the most serious problem facing campus recruiters is the limited number of minority and female job-seekers, and the need for more applicants with work experience. Graduate students also have unrealistic expectations, the report said.

Among the major findings:

- Employers are becoming more selective about their new hires, and some firms won’t consider applicants with a grade point average less than 3.0.
- Job availability, while competitive nationwide, is better in

the Southeast and North Central, and more competitive in the Southwest, South Central, Northeast, and Northwest.

• The qualifications employers are looking for in college students include flexibility, teamwork skills, and the ability to provide customer satisfaction. Computer knowledge is considered mandatory, the report said.

• The estimated beginning salaries for 1993 college graduates range from \$40,173 for chemical engineers to \$19,114 for journalism majors. For students with master’s degrees, the average is \$35,289, and for Ph.D.’s, \$37,755.

College graduates are also competing for jobs with people who have job experience but have been laid off or are switching companies or careers. During the past five years, 240 of the 540

businesses surveyed by Michigan State have lost an estimated 24,454 salaried positions.

“Another factor affecting new graduates is the change in corporate hiring practices,” Lindquist said. “Students face more competition from experienced person-

nel in the job market.”

Lindquist estimates that firms in 1992 hired 55 percent of new employees from people with previous job experience, and 46 percent of the firms now use contract personnel to fill professional positions.

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