

# Emphasis

## Approaching the job search

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In a recent issue of *Business Week's Guide to Careers*, an on-campus report from the University of Colorado gave readers a look at how graduating seniors there approach the job search. Charles M. Lillis, dean of the College of Business and Administration and the Graduate School of Business Administration of UC-Boulder, says that students there are looking for challenging positions where they can gain a responsible role in a company quickly.

Lillis, a former General Electric official, suggests that students prepare themselves well for job interviews by identifying companies they are interested in and learning about them. "Then, go to the company and say 'Here's what I want to do.' I was always impressed with students who aggressively came to us," he says.

Gordon H. Gray, director of career services at CU, says that some students take the view of "I'll see what's available, then pick and choose." That approach, says Gray, can leave a student empty-handed when it comes to job offers.

### Formalizing plans

Betsy Savage, director of career planning, offers a credit course to groups of students, "College and Careers: Making the Connection" (COE 171). Though her work is primarily with freshmen and sophomores, Savage helps any student through individual testing, a library on colleges and universities and a computer software program where students can work independently in self-assessment of careers and occupations.

Upperclassmen who are preparing for graduation are closer to the firing line: the first interview and bridging the gap from classes to the job market. To afford Elon graduates the opportunity of job interviews with companies, Placement Director Karen Thompson spent a large part of the summer recruiting companies to consider hiring Elon graduates. "When I came here in January, there hadn't been anyone doing that," says Thompson. "Last semester I

spent all day with students so I couldn't go out and recruit."

Thompson spent time in Virginia and North Carolina talking with representatives from Digital, Duke Power, Sovran Bank, NCNB, Belk's and Ivey's. She found that, while many were looking for students who have had some business courses, they would consider any major.

"Time will tell how successful this will be with the

interview. The third choice available is a competency test for non-traditional students or a student who has co-oped or participated in an internship.

"People who have prepared by taking one of these three will get priority," says Thompson. "We want to reduce the time between graduation and getting that first job. If they have prepared, then they'll be ready for the job market."

of career planning at Elizabeth State University before coming to Elon. Here, he works with students in experiential learning.

"The average student who goes through an interview is going to be nervous," says Reinhartsen. "The interviewer knows that so they'll start talking to you about something to make a comfortable atmosphere." Like Thompson, Reinhartsen believes that

for a student who wants some experience in his field. For one credit a semester at 10 hours a week, a student has a learning experience and documents what has been learned on the job. "We had about 45 people work part-time in their field last year and about 25 students in the summer," Reinhartsen says. "It has been here for four years and it is getting bigger as more people find out about it," he adds.

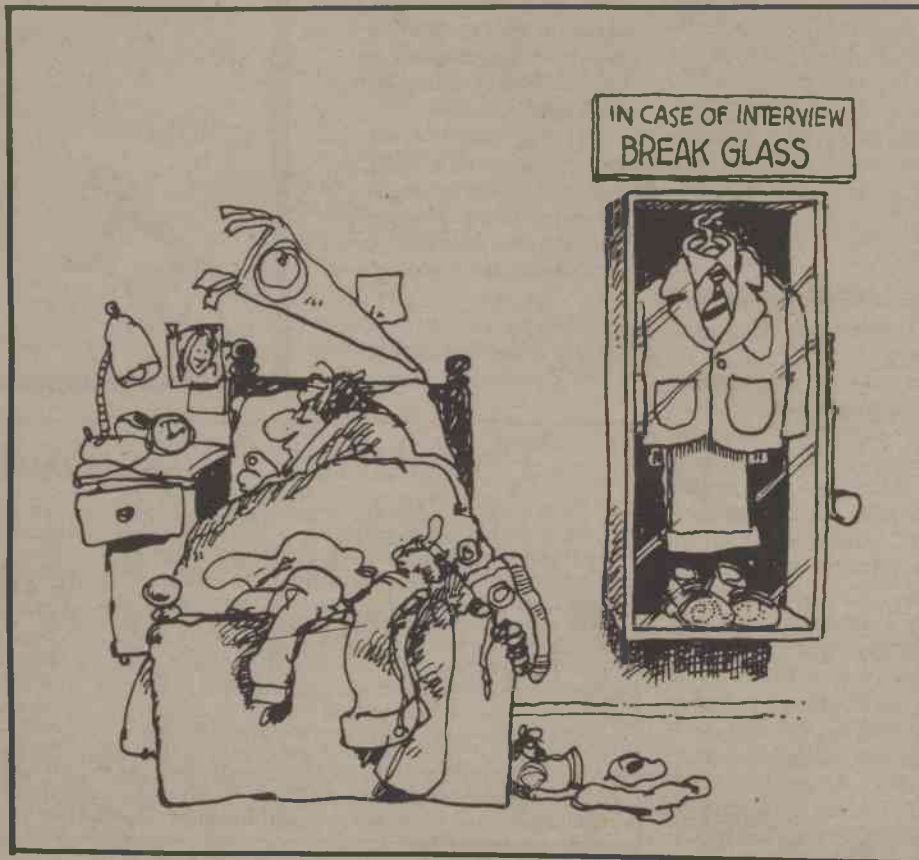
Cooperative Education receives funding from the federal government while career planning has gained strength here over the past few years, their federal funding has been cut off this year. "We'd like to have federal funds," says Reinhartsen, "and we're still eligible for another year but after that it's gone anyway."

The federal government will underwrite Cooperative Education programs for eligible schools for the first five years of the program. After that, schools are on their own. "You've got to have a strong program," says Reinhartsen. "Ours is strong, but it isn't all that big." Reinhartsen says that after this year, if the program continues to grow, Elon will put in for another year of funding.

David Genshaw, an economics major from Seaford, Del., worked at Wilmington Savings Funds Society (WSFS) this summer for college credit. "I started looking for a summer job back at Christmas," says Genshaw. "Working at WSFS narrowed down a lot of things. It showed me what I didn't want to do. Through the bank, I met a lot of people whose jobs I wouldn't mind doing."

Genshaw wants to get into stockbroking and has made contacts in that area for next summer. "I learned a lot about what types of opportunities are available," he says.

What of the infamous college-year summers, filled with the beach, sun and an inexhaustible list of fun times? "When you get a job in your major, you won't be working with people your own age, so it won't be a wild summer," says Genshaw. "If you want to get into your career you have to sacrifice that. After school the wild times are over so it is important to have prior contacts."



1986 graduates. A lot of it depends on how well the student prepares for the interview. I can coach a student all day long, but he or she will ultimately reflect on Elon's reputation," she says.

For a student to have access to the placement services they must participate in one of three programs offered. One option is the six-week mini-course "Preparing for the Job Market" (COE 371). This course which gives one semester-hour credit includes self-assessment, resume preparation, interviewing, critiquing and tailored job leads.

A second option is workshops that meet throughout the semester. These hour-long workshops examine resume writing and how to in-

Last year over 200 out of 410 graduates were listed with Career Placement, a figure that Thompson hopes will increase. "We're putting more effort in this year through mailouts and meetings," she says.

### On the firing line

In learning how to handle the stress and anxiety of a job interview, Thompson says many students are misinformed. "If a student investigates a company, they can match up their needs compared to the company. It is easier to be in control when they actually go on the interview," she says.

Director of Cooperative Education Steve Reinhartsen received his master's degree in career counseling from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and was director

researching a company is crucial to any interview. "If you haven't done any research there really isn't anything to talk about," he says.

In an interview, two questions arise, says Reinhartsen: "Can you do the job?" and "Do I like you?"

Above all, Reinhartsen stresses the importance of obtaining an interview and having the employer meet you. "You have to get through the interviews to make it work," he says. "After the interview, make sure you know where you are in the process and send a thank you note." Reinhartsen stresses the importance of developing other leads and possibilities while waiting to hear something.

Elon offers a Co-op program