

Update: Employment Prospects Good for Women, Minorities

Women, blacks and other minority college graduates can expect an improvement in the employment outlook for the remainder of 1979, according to an update of Northwestern University's 33rd annual Endicott Report.

More than 90 per cent of the 102 major national firms surveyed said they planned to hire as many or more females and minority graduates as they employed last year.

At the same time, however, firms indicated problems in hiring these graduates, citing the lack of candidates in science and engineering fields and the intense competition for such employees.

The May, 1979 update, conducted by Frank S. Endicott, retired director of placement at Northwestern, showed the original Endicott Report for 1979 to be 96 per cent accurate. The report forecast increased demand for college graduates despite some apprehension about the economy. Along with confirming the Report of last November, the May update dealt with prospects for women and

minority graduates. "It is clear that these companies are strongly committed to the employment of college women," Endicott said. Fifty-one per cent of the firms said

they planned to hire more female graduates this year than last, while 43 per cent said they would hire the same number. Only six per cent will hire fewer women.

"Almost without exception, the responding companies plan to continue to employ black and other minority graduates," Endicott said. Forty-one per cent of respondent said

they would hire more minority graduates, and 54 per cent said they would hire the same number as last year. One five per cent plan to hire fewer minority graduates.

Only 15 per cent of the respondents thought the supply of well-qualified blacks and other minorities was improving significantly, although 74 per cent responded affirmatively to the same question about women grads.

Moreover, when asked if employing such graduates involved special problems, 72 per cent of the firms said yes with regard to minorities and one-third (33 per cent) responded affirmatively with regard to women.

While Endicott received a number of reasons for the difficulties, a major one seemed to involve supply and demand. There are too few female or minority graduates, especially in technical fields, and as a result competition is fierce. High starting salaries, some corporate spokesmen noted, placed desirable candidates out of reach and also led to a high turnover rate.

As one firm responded, wryly, "This (seeking minorities) is the most competitive aspect of college recruiting. It's almost as competitive as the recruitment of high school athletes by colleges."

Endicott said lack of qualified women in science and engineering; competition and high salaries; high turnover and unwillingness of some to relocate are the major difficulties firms encountered.

Comments by employers on problems encountered in hiring women graduates include:

—"Insufficient numbers (of women) in engineering and scientific disciplines. Too many are in social science and teaching."

—"Well-qualified women are heavily recruited by many companies. Competition is fierce."

—"Locating qualified or qualifiable women without having to offer them overinflated salaries."

—"Women tend to have a higher offer rejection rate. Also, they tend to look for non-manufacturing positions."

—"Women are less likely to relocate and accept transfers."

—"It appears that marriage is a prime geographical factor for more women engineers than for men engineers."

—"Location is the problem that takes the biggest toll in recruiting, promoting and retaining females."

—"Other companies are raiding our professional women."

—"Turnover is much higher for reasons which do not apply to male employees. It is very discouraging when they are not around to cash in on promotions for which they can qualify."

Commenting on the firms' difficulty in finding female engineers to recruit and their observation that the pool of women college graduates is significantly improving Northwestern University Director of Placement Victor Lindquist said, "The number of women graduates in the technical fields at Northwestern has doubled in the last five years."

Many women, he said, enroll in biomedical engineering, computer science and chemical engineering curricula and, "to a degree" in chemistry.

"There is a real falling off in civil engineering," Lindquist said.

"Women seem more inclined to look at jobs that will put them in a staff position or in the laboratory," he said.

When it comes to hiring

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Brigadier General

WASHINGTON — Brig. Gen. Winifred Johnson, the U.S. Army's first black women general, tells a Pentagon news conference she hopes she was selected on the basis of competence and not race. A native of West Chester, Pa., she will replace Brig. Gen. Madeline Parks as head of the Nurse Corps. UPI Photo



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