

Student job-seekers flock to career fair

BY LAYLA GARMIS
THE CHRONICLE

Hundreds of students flocked to Wake Forest University's Benson Center last week, hoping to land jobs, internships or gain networking experience during the school's Spring 2013 Career Fair.

A Wake Forest tradition for over two decades, the fairs, which are held in the spring and fall, afford students the opportunity to come face to face with potential employers without ever having to leave the comfort of their own campus. Mercy Eyadiel, executive director of Employer Relations for the university and a 16-year veteran of the field, said staging the fair on campus is convenient, and it allows the employers to get a feel for the campus culture and academic rigor that is required of students.



Eyadiel

Many professors use the fair as a resource to inform and enhance what they're teaching in the classroom by interacting with employers in their field of study, Eyadiel added.

Professor Roger Beahm, executive director of the Wake Forest Center for Retail Innovation, said the career fairs present a welcome opportunity for him to market the Center as well as identify valuable resources his students can tap into.

"I want to learn as much about the opportunities that are out there as possible," said the University of Colorado at Boulder alumnus. "Companies that participate in this fair demon-

strate their interest in our students and obviously, the best place for our students to look (for employment) is with companies that are interested in them."

Beahm said he encourages all his students to attend the fairs whenever possible.

"The students are a brand they have to sell to their future employers and the first thing they have to do is build awareness," remarked the four decade veteran of the marketing field. "By going to the fairs, they can introduce themselves in person. That is so much better. They

can get through the first and even second stage of the qualification process, and accelerating that process — especially this time of year — is critical. It really is to their advantage."

Nearly 60 employers were on hand for the spring fair, an increase of roughly 30 percent, Eyadiel said. The Nashville, Tenn.-native said she was hopeful the fair, which was intentionally diverse in its offerings, would help the students that participated get a jump on their careers.

"I'm proud of the fact that Wake Forest is really making an investment into the post-graduation outcomes of our students," she said. "You will see that is a really big part of our culture. We really value and care about what happens to our students once they leave here."

Cincinnati, Ohio native Wesley Lenear will be completing the school's



From left: Justin Stevens, Sucheta Desai, Jessica Reynolds and Mark Generalovich of United Technologies.



Allscripts' Nickey Owens chats with a student.

Master of Arts and Management program in May. He came to the Jan. 23 fair in search of his next move.

"The career fair is part of our coursework," explained the Indiana State University alumnus. "We're required to come out here and get in front of the employers. I think it's a good thing as well to kind of get us some exposure."

The Spring Fair was the fifth Lenear has attended and he said he is

learning the lay of the land. Wednesday's fair had a broad sampling of employers, which was appealing to him, Lenear added.

"I think it's a very good selection," remarked the 22 year-old, who added that he was considering applying for positions at at least two of the companies he encountered that day. "There's lots of big name brand companies like Pepsico and GE and you also have smaller businesses as well. It's a

good mix."

It wasn't long ago that Connecticut native Justin Stevens was trolling career fairs himself, looking for the right fit. Now Stevens, 23, is working to bring other bright employees into the fold at United Technologies, a multinational manufacturing company. Stevens and three of his colleagues from United's Charlotte office represented the company in its first appearance at the WFU career fair. The group was recruiting candidates for United's Financial Leadership program, a two year rotational program that gives participants a taste of every aspect of its varied business ventures.

"It's a great way to experience a lot of career areas very quickly," said Stevens, who is in his second year with the program. "It's been a great experience for me, just the networks that I've established and the work experience that I've been able to gain over this time period."

Nickey Owens and her team of recruiters are



Wesley Lenear

looking to fill more than 100 full-time positions at Allscripts Healthcare Solutions, which specializes in electronic medical records. Owens, who is based in Raleigh, travels up and down the East Coast looking for strong candidates to satisfy the growing number of positions in the field.

"We're really trying to target specific schools so that we can get the best quality and not quantity," explained Owens, who plans to attend 20 fairs during the spring semester. "I made sure this year that this was a target school because this is an active school. I've had interns from here working with me in the past, so I know how good the students are."

Owens said she was not disappointed by the caliber of potential employees she encountered last week.

"This is the best career fair that I've been to all year, hands down," she declared. "The students are way more professional and a lot more prepared. I am highly impressed."

School

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The school, which will initially be open to grades K-5, will offer North Carolina standard course of study, in addition to lessons on important components of the Islamic faith, making time for daily prayers and honoring Islamic holidays, Mrs. Griggs said. In a post-9-11 world, the need for such a supportive community is real, she added. While some Muslim children fare fine in public schools, others grapple with harassment from other students and teachers who refuse to learn the correct pronunciation of their names or honor their Calls to Prayer.



Griggs

"Islam has been linked with terrorism and it's hard on our children," remarked the city native, who has taught at the mosque for 30 years. "Parents want their children to be in a safe environment where they can practice their faith. We want what all parents want for their children: a good education and a safe environment."

Muslim children in public schools face a volley of obstacles to observing their faith, from cafeteria food that sometimes doesn't adhere to Muslim diet restrictions, to secular and Christian cultural ideals and practices that Muslims don't share, such as dating, Mrs. Griggs said.

"They're living in two different worlds and they're having to adjust to that," she remarked. "... I'm not sure parents really understand what their children are going through in public schools. They can't really be Muslim in public schools."

The house will need renovations in order to be brought up to code and made suitable for a school, a task that will require considerable time and money, Griggs said, but the com-

munity's response to the project leaves no question in her mind that the effort will not be in vain.

"It's a tremendous undertaking and it would not happen without help of the parents, the existing staff of the part time school and the entire Community Mosque community," she remarked. "Everybody has been so wonderful. We're trying to raise funds right now to close on the property and everybody's chipping in, even the children."

Academy officials had considered another location for the school, but the project never came to fruition. Having a site that can be encompassed into the mosque's campus is quite literally a godsend, Griggs said.

"It's from God, it's from Allah," declared the grandmother of six. "... It's a wonderful experience. It's an adventure, it's a nice adventure. I'm tired in the evenings when I lay down, but it's a good tired. It's a peaceful tired."

The school will charge a monthly tuition of \$450 for one child, with discounts for each additional child a given family enrolls, and Academy leaders say they are already working to secure some scholarship funds for families who need them. Mosque member Shaid Chaudhary said he's already picked up applications to enroll his seven-year-old daughter and four year-old son, who is slated to start kindergarten in the fall.

"I think it's really great because we need to teach our kids about Islam because there are so many distractions here every single day," said the Rawal Pindi, Pakistan native. "I struggle with that with my kids too. It's hard to kind of teach them the right way, which is Islam."

Chaudhary said he worries about the influences his children are exposed to in public school. The father of three is a member of the

Board of Directors and a teacher at the Academy, but he says the weekend academy simply isn't enough.

"I'm trying to teach kids about Islam — that's all I want to do — but it's challenging in this environment," said the Volvo Financial Services IT professional. "They go to public school everyday ... they're getting knowledge about other things a lot more than about Islam so I think it's really important to have a full time school."

For more information about Community Mosque Academy Inc., visit www.communitymosque.com or call (336) 650-1095.

Williams named emergency nursing director

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Debra Williams, RN, has joined Cone Health as nursing director for Emergency Services at Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro.



Williams

Williams will oversee operation of the 54-bed, 156-employee emergency department. The newly constructed department will see more than 48,000 patients this year.

Williams has spent much of her nearly 30-year nursing career in emergency services.

"There are few places where the Cone Health value of 'Caring for our Patients' comes into such sharp focus as in the emergency department," she said. "People come to us hurt and scared, and we provide the comfort and care they need."

Williams comes to Cone Health from Garden

City, Mich., where she worked in progressively responsible positions, including vice president of Operations, chief nursing officer and director of Emergency Services.

"Williams brings invaluable experience to our fast-paced emergency department," says Annette Smith, RN, vice president of Nursing and Patient Services at Wesley Long. "We look forward to her talents and leadership further improving the service and care that we bring to every patient who visits our new Emergency Department."

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