

# Alumni Connections, Reputation Aid UNC Graduates in Job Market

By Rachel Leonard  
Staff Writer

Some people say it's not what you know but who you know.

Others say both are important. But one thing is certain: for UNC-Chapel Hill graduates wondering how their diplomas will help them find jobs, the University's good reputation and extensive alumni network throughout the state can be a blessing, especially in a lagging economy.

"It never hurts to be the top university in the state," said Tim Stiles, an associate director at University Career Services. "We have the brand-name recognition. We have the reputation."

But simply graduating from the state's flagship university isn't enough to secure a job. Networking has become even more important in light of the recent economic downturn.

"A degree from any good university isn't enough to get you a job these days," said Linda Conklin, manager of UNC-CH Alumni Career Services.

About 70 percent of all jobs are "hidden" jobs, or jobs that aren't advertised, Conklin said.

These jobs are found through networking. Employers would rather hire a person recommended by a friend than sift through piles of resumes, she said. "Networking is crucial to tap into

that hidden job market."

In times of economic downturn, job-seekers have to "dig a little deeper and work a little harder," she added.

That's where alumni contacts can help. Tapping alumni resources also is a valuable skill, Conklin said. "They are a wealth of knowledge."

UNC-CH alumni often feel a special loyalty to UNC, which doesn't always exist at other universities, Conklin added, and the network of UNC-CH fans isn't limited to North Carolina.

"They're all over the world," she said. "There is a network in place."

Alumni often help with on-campus recruiting, give students advice or do networking sessions, Stiles said. "They want to come back to Chapel Hill themselves."

Carolina alumnus Homer Duncan, now CEO of the Raleigh accounting firm Lynch & Howard, said he considers UNC-CH graduates over graduates of other N.C. universities when hiring.

"We know that the students there are generally very capable people," he said.

Duncan said UNC-CH graduates receive a more well-rounded education than students from other schools — an essential quality even in the business world.

"How do you deal with a business problem if you don't understand the

underlying world?" he said.

Wayne McPeters, a 1998 UNC-CH graduate who works for the (Raleigh) News & Observer as an online sports producer, said the School of Journalism and Mass Communication's good reputation gave him an immediate advantage in the job market.

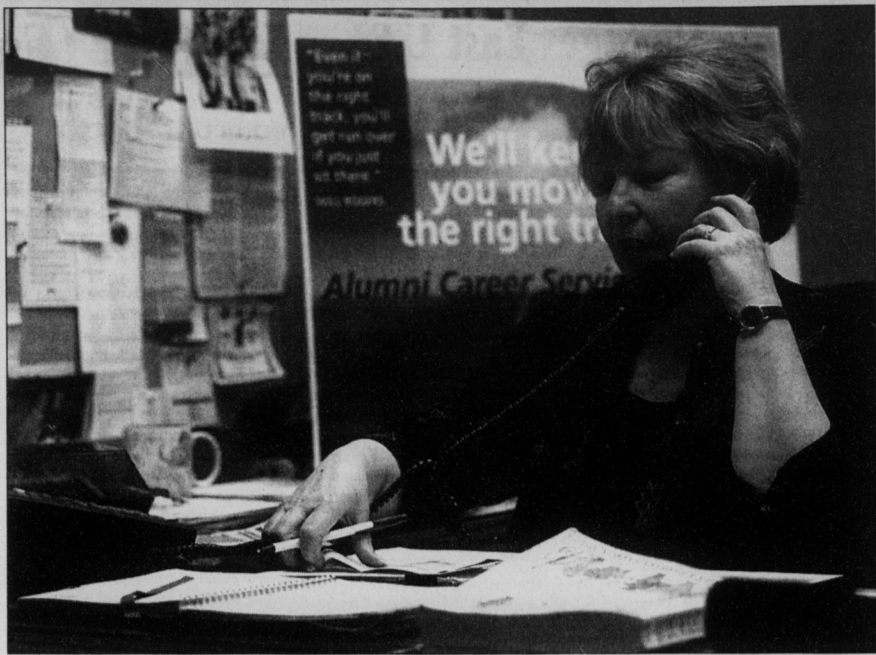
"Automatically I had an advantage because everyone knew (UNC-CH)," he said. "I thought that gave me credibility." McPeters said the University's prestige has helped him through the economic downturn. "I've been able to stay in the field without having to compromise what I want to do," he said. "I think a lot of that is because I graduated from (UNC-CH)."

Rajal Patel, a 2001 UNC graduate of the Kenan-Flagler Business School who works for the Bank of America in Charlotte, said the company's close links with the University "definitely" helped him get his job.

"There are a lot of Carolina alums that work here," he said. "There's a good relationship between the University and some of the big companies as far as the business school goes."

Patel was part of a team sent to recruit UNC-CH students for Bank of America this year. He said his superiors told him to "recruit hard at Carolina."

Brad Dellinger, a 2000 UNC-CH graduate who also works for Bank of



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Linda Conklin, manager of UNC-Chapel Hill Alumni Career Services, works in her office in the George Watts Hill Alumni Center. Conklin directs the program that helps match graduates with prospective job openings.

America, said UNC-CH graduates are usually given priority in the N.C. business community over alumni of smaller UNC-system schools.

Dellinger said that although the "good old boy" network of UNC-CH fans is out there, it's not as prevalent in urban areas or in large corporations. "In

small towns, you definitely see Carolina graduates grouping together more than you would in a big city," he said.

Sara Batten, a 2000 UNC-CH graduate in English and psychology, now works as a production editor at Oxford University Press in Cary.

Although she found that UNC-CH wasn't an especially well-known name when she worked in Boston directly after graduation, the climate is different in North Carolina. "Around here, it's well-known enough it's considered an advantage," she said.

But the University's reputation might not be as important in fields requiring specific skills, such as medi-

cine or computer science.

Heather Graff, a 2001 UNC-CH graduate in computer science who now works for IBM in Raleigh, said her academic performance and internship experience was what was most important. "That's what's going to matter, not so much where you got your degree."

But a UNC-CH degree can't hurt, she added.

Neither can alumni connections. Stiles noted that many alumni feel an affiliation with UNC-CH. He said, "Maybe it's nostalgia."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

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## Art Group to Give UNC A Taste of N.Y. Flavor

The performance art group **Jump Arts** will showcase jazz music, poetry, modern dance and painting May 1.

By Jenise Hudson  
Staff Writer

With all the changes New York has gone through since September, it seems one thing will never change — its reputation as one of the country's biggest performing arts centers. Spectators have long flocked to the city, hoping for a taste of its lively arts culture.

But with the New York-based arts group Jump Arts coming May 1 to Hill Auditorium as part of the first Jump Arts American Road Project, local residents might not have to travel north to experience Manhattan's arts scene.

A nonprofit organization, Jump Arts works to promote awareness about emerging artists in New York's downtown arts community.

"It's about giving artists a chance to widen their audience," said Tom Abbs, Jump Arts' founder.

Abbs, who has been involved in New York's arts community for more than five years, said the American Road Project is an opportunity for people to experience New York's unique style. "Here in lower Manhattan, the music is really free jazz, avant-garde," Abbs said. "It's about freedom and love."

A four-hour long concert, Wednesday's performance will feature jazz bands like The Transcendentalists. But music won't be the only art form audiences are exposed to. Abbs said the

concert, which is being sponsored by the Carolina Union Activities Board, will also include modern dance, poetry and live painting.

The reed player for The Gold Sparkle Band, Charles Waters said he is excited to be coming to Chapel Hill with the American Road Project.

"The students (in Chapel Hill) are smart and interested in new music," Waters said. "It's a diverse campus, and one of our main tenets is to preserve a diverse style."

Waters said that after Sept. 11, audiences will be refreshed to see the diverse group of artists being featured on the tour. "We have African-Americans touring, white dudes, Asians," Waters said. "To put that on the road after Sept. 11 is a big triumph. It's a celebration of life."

Abbs said that after everything that has happened in New York City, the tour is a chance for artists to share how they've been coping. "Writing, music

*"Here in lower Manhattan, the music is really free jazz, avant-garde. It's about freedom and love."*

**TOM ABBS**  
Jump Arts' Founder

and playing is the only way we've been able to deal with what happened," Abbs said.

Yet Abbs said the ultimate goal of the tour is to simply give artists an outlet for expressing them-

selves that will hopefully touch audiences.

"All artists have something to say," Abbs said. "We all have an opinion and we want to tell it to people and get different reactions so we can expand our horizons and hopefully expand yours."

For more information on the Jump Arts American Road Project, contact CUAB at 962-1157.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk.unc.edu.



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