

The interview: what to expect, how to react

by Jonathan Bender
DTH Contributor

So your 16 years of education preparation is nearly at an end. You may have already begun interviewing with prospective employers, or maybe the inevitability of getting a job hasn't hit you yet. You can be assured, however, that you and the 998,000 other American college students scheduled to graduate in May will have to go through a series of personal interviews in the search for gainful employment. The individualized contact of the interview is most often the factor which determines the candidate to be offered the desired position.

The most acute problem students face in the interview is self-inflicted; that is, they "tend to go in cold," according to Jane Smith, a co-director of UNC's Career Planning and Placement. To help you warm up, here's a set of those questions most often asked.

As you enter his office, Mr. X of the XYZ Corporation rises and extends his hand to greet you. You give him your favorite dead fish handshake and make an innocuous comment about the Tar Heels losing again. These perfunctory niceties finished, you sit and await the first question. It generally is something like this:

Q. In what type of position are you interested? Why do you want this position? or What are your job skills?

A. Well, I like to work with people...

Harry A. Rainey, a vice president and personal manager with North Carolina National Bank, singled out the "I like to work with people" response as a particularly insipid and meaningless answer. The cognitive oversight many students make "is the non-realization that in any type of position one will have to 'work with people', whether you like it or not," Rainey said.

Q. What appeals to you about our company?

A. Well, you seem to be a nice person...

"Being prepared for an interview is the single most important factor determining the success of the interview," Smith said. Rainey mentioned a corporation's stockholders report as "required reading." Preparation involves both researching the company and establishing the points you wish to make about yourself. To Rainey it was the interest displayed in his firm by a prospective employee which distinguished one candidate from another. Such preparation, Smith said, coupled with "a knowledge of your strengths and how to play them" will often make the deciding difference.

Q. How do you spell 'University'?

A. U-N-I-V-E-R, uh, C-I-T-Y

How about a remedial spelling course for college seniors? No misspellings or typo's should ever appear on any form or resume. As Dr. Paul D. Brandes of the speech division said, "Students are not aware of the degree to which their papers are held to be representative of them." In one case a student appeared qualified in all respects, but his resume had a red mark; a spelling error had been circled by another professor, Brandes said. The error literally negated any chance the student may have had.

Q. Why do you value your years at UNC? or What is important to you about education, or Why did you major in English?

A. 'Truth for its own sake.'

The interviewee will usually get a leading question of this type, where he must take the lead. A pithy response such as 'Truth for its own sake' will not suffice. The interviewer is studying how you make decisions and what those decisions are based on. You can do a lot with these questions, for they are open to virtually anything you might want to say about your career. Beth Burriss, an assistant director at Career Planning and Placement, emphasized the need to take advantage of such questions and outlined several 'control techniques.' Among these are the ability to describe your work skills effectively and being able to demonstrate the benefits of previous employment. The key to interview control is the ability to anticipate the questions the resume may present to the interviewer.

You also must be ready to answer the negative aspects of your life history. A defensive attitude or excuses will damage your chances, Burriss said. One must be poised and maintain integrity. You might also mention your new found maturity and changed ways and so on... Next question.

Q. Hmmm

A. I think it is important to take note...



"A student must be ready to say what he wants without the interviewer saying anything," Smith said. Brandes also expressed a dislike for passive interviewees, stating that the interviewees should "pursue" the position and "should be expected to provide some of the impetus" of the interview.

Q. How do you see yourself ten years from now?

A. Hmmm

A good answer. Reflect for a moment; the interviewer will see that you are a serious young person and are carefully formulating your response. "Interviewers like to think that they ask good questions," Brandes said, "and so you score on both fronts."

This question was Rainey's favorite. He said students should have a clear idea of the direction they foresee in their career. So be sure to construct a well-ordered speculation about your future. And remember that it's not legally binding.

Q. Why should we hire you for this position?

A. I can do the job, B average, nice, blah...

Dr. Robert Pense, current director of the UNC speech division specified the central issue in any interview as being "not - I am competent; but rather 'what I can contribute that is uniquely me.'" Oftentimes an interviewer will see as many as 15 hopefuls in one day, so you can see the point.

Q. Are there any further questions you would like to ask, or anything you would like to add?

Interviewers will usually give the candidate an opportunity like this toward the interview. Take advantage. If you have researched the firm, you should be able to come up with a question or two. It shows interest. If not a question, you might introduce or emphasize relevant points as you feel appropriate.

The interview begins to slow as it nears its designated end. Brandes mentioned the skill of making a 'graceful exit' from an interviewer. One assumes that after 30 minutes in the heat, fish and interviewees begin to stink. Inquire as to further correspondence, thank the interviewer for his time and leave.

Ultimately, Smith said, the interview hinges on "how well the student presents himself." Beyond preparation, one's personal judgment and discretion are the main determinants of skillful interviewing. Developing those qualities is what the last four years have ostensibly accomplished.

The Vanderbilt University Center for Health Services

is soliciting applicants for the position of **Student Co-director**. The position allows a person to design and implement a program that would address a problem of health—defined broadly, social, political, economic, legal—and actively involve grass-roots community and student groups. Applicants must be students or recent graduates; the job lasts one year. Applications should include experience in community organizing, outline of proposed program and three references. These should be sent to the Center for Health Studies, Vanderbilt Medical Center, Nashville, Tenn. 37232, by Feb. 25, 1977.

Bus future discussed

by Elliott Potter
Staff Writer

The future of the town transit system will be discussed Wednesday at a joint work session of the Chapel Hill Board of Aldermen and the Transportation Board.

Chapel Hill Mayor James C. Wallace said Tuesday that it is unlikely that any concrete decision will be reached at the meeting. "We are going to do a lot of catching up," Wallace said.

"What we plan to do is take an overall look at the town's transportation program and discuss what directions it might take in the coming year."

Wallace said the boards will consider possible service changes and the cost of services.

"We are a long way from coming up with a transportation program for next year. I

expect that job will take all of February and most of March."

Paul Arne, student liaison to the Transportation Board, said Tuesday he would like to see many campus transportation concerns aired at the meeting. "A lot has been said on campus recently about transportation. This meeting will be an excellent opportunity for students to insure their views are properly represented."

Arne said students and faculty will be the groups most affected by any future decision concerning transportation made by the Board of Aldermen.

Mayor Wallace said work sessions are usually kept informal and he would be glad to recognize anyone who cared to offer input at the meeting.

The meeting will be held in the meeting room downstairs in the Municipal Building at 7:30 p.m.

CCC pushes campus action

by Mary Gardner
Staff Writer

The Campus Concerns Committee, begun last semester, strives to get students involved in different campus affairs and to promote interaction between faculty and students.

The committee is made up of student representatives from each residence hall on campus, according to committee member Princess King. "Our purpose is to talk with the students in the dorms and give them an outlet to tell the administration what they want done in their dorms."

The committee was formed last November through the YMCA and an initial steering committee. According to King, freshmen and sophomores were especially sought out as members in order to get them more involved.

A survey was done last semester by the committee and distributed among dorm residents to determine what needed to be changed in the dorm, King said. A compiled list was made of project ideas and committees were formed to research the possibilities for action.

The main project for the committee this

semester is the Coffee Klatch. The Coffee Klatch is held each Wednesday and

Thursday morning from 9 to 11 in the Pine Room and is open to faculty and students alike, King said.

The committee is also discussing current topics that concern students, such as the drop-add period and the bus system, King said.

Funeral set

Funeral services will be held Friday in Chapel Hill for Harry A. (Tony) Bernard, who graduated last year from UNC. Tony died suddenly Sunday afternoon in his hometown of Smithfield.

While at UNC, he served as a Granville Towers Residence Adviser and as a North Campus Assistant Residence Director. He was also the commander of the 590th AFROTC cadet group.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. at the Methodist Church in Smithfield prior to the funeral service, which will be held at 2 p.m. Friday at Walker's Funeral Home on W. Franklin Street. A graveside service will follow in Old Chapel Hill Cemetery.

Public Hearings by Chapel Hill Planning Board

7:30 p.m., February 3, 1977

Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 306 N. Columbia

Proposed Bikeways Plan

The Planning Board is interested in citizen comments on the overall plan as well as on priorities for construction. The proposed plan is on display in the Town Planning Department in the Municipal Building.

1977-1982 Capital Improvements Program

The Planning Board is interested in suggestions for projects involving major capital expenditures to be added to the fifth year of the Town's Capital Improvements Program.

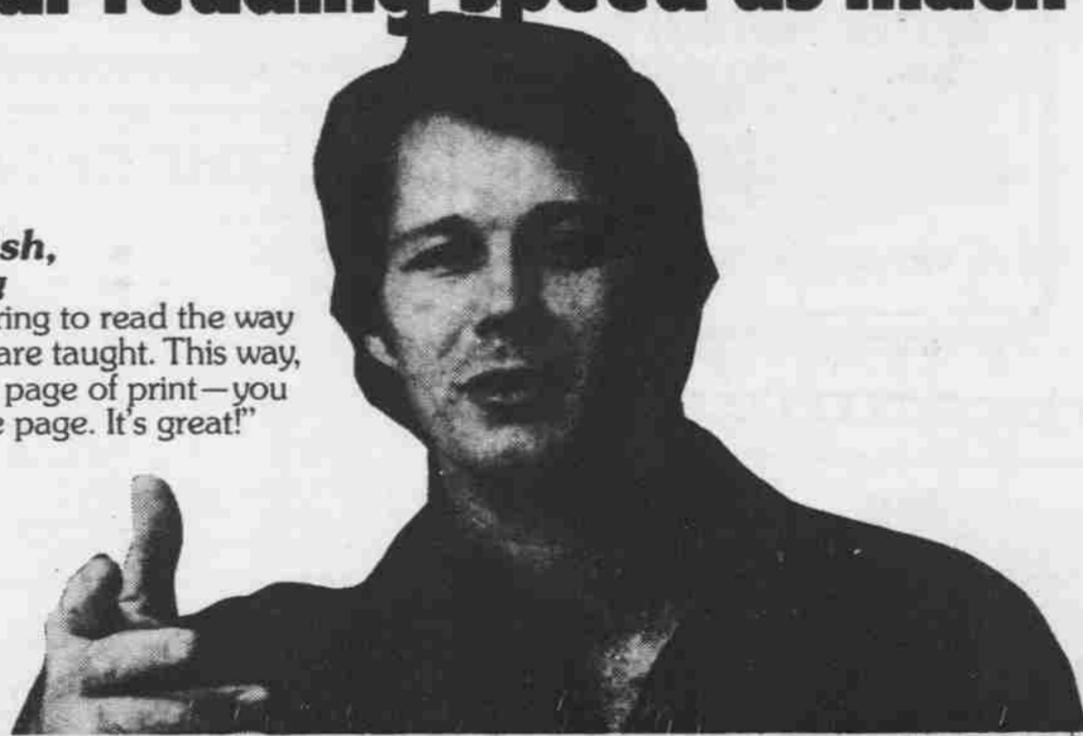
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