

A graduate degree can bring better pay in many job markets

By **CLAY THORP**
Staff Writer

A graduate degree is slowly becoming essential in numerous careers. In many cases, a doctorate or master's degree can increase job salaries and opportunities, said Marcia Harris, director of University Career Planning and Placement Services (UCPPS).

"It is hard to generalize," she said. While a graduate degree is required in some areas like medicine and law, in others, such as sales, a graduate degree will be of no assistance, she added.

"(A graduate degree) is particularly important, depending on what you want to do," said William Little, professor of chemistry.

If a person wants to teach or do his own research, a doctorate is a requirement, he said. A graduate degree is not always essential because

people with a bachelor's degree can work as technicians and in some special cases do research, he added.

"If one wants to work as a practicing economist, one must have a graduate degree," said John Stewart, associate professor of economics.

The graduate degree can also open doors in business. "In general, it (the effect of getting an MBA) depends on the person," said Rankin Harris, director of MBA placement at UNC.

There are certain career paths, such as investment banking, which require a graduate degree, he said. Many people do well without an MBA, he added.

Harris said that people with MBAs usually start at a higher salary because they have more experience. People with undergraduate degrees usually receive the same salary at the same time as a comparable MBA student because they have been gaining experience while the masters student attends school, he added.

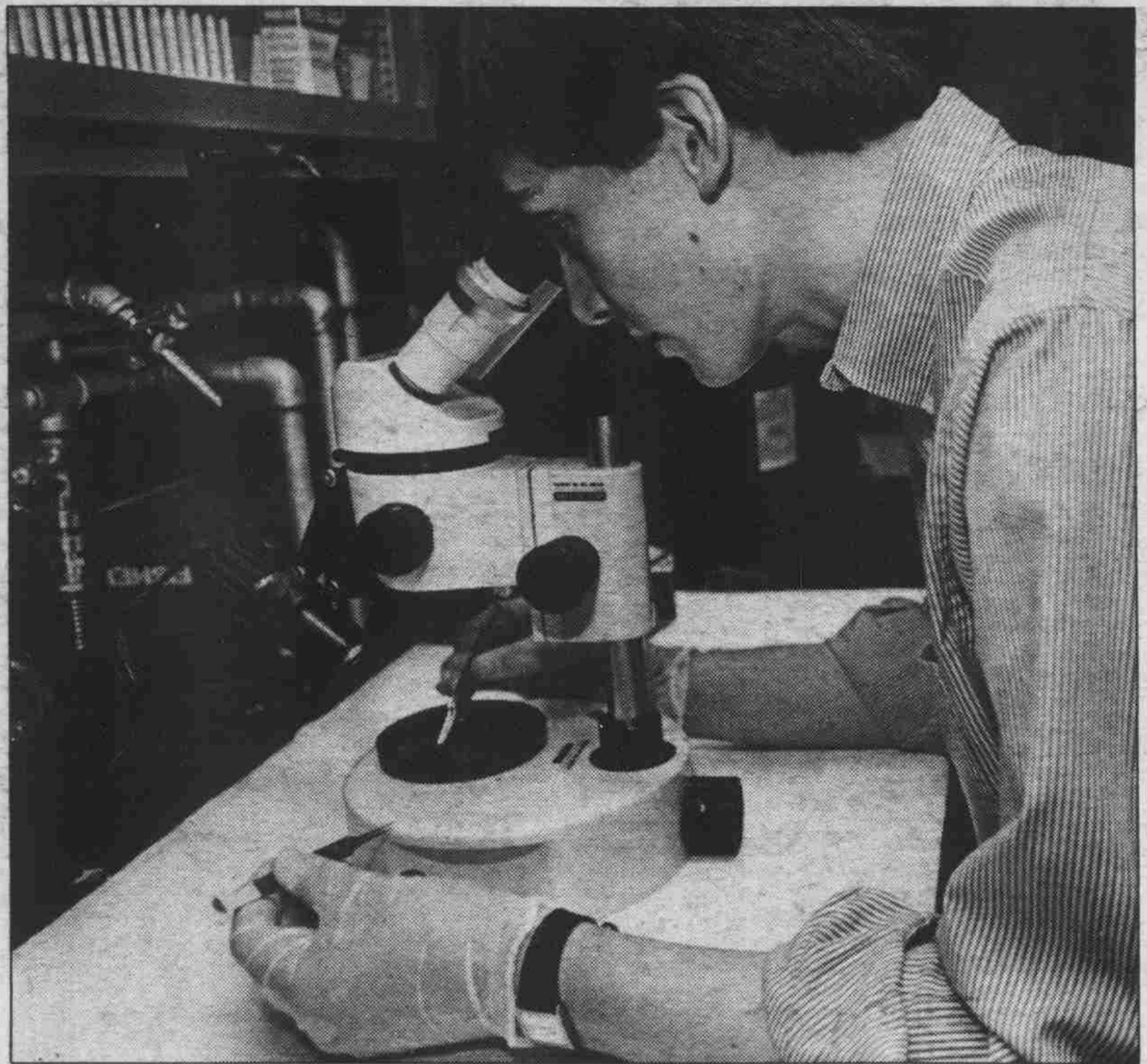
In political science, the effect of a doctorate depends on the focus of the student, said Thad Beyle, a political science professor.

In some areas, the student is limited to research and teaching, he said. A graduate degree in public policy and administration can open doors in government, he added. Certain skills — proficiency in a foreign language, for example — can help graduate students get jobs in the foreign service and in the military.

Beyle said the major advantage of an advanced degree in political science is that students can be more mobile in some fields.

"The more training you have, the higher level you can enter into a profession with a generally higher salary," said Ancel Mewborn, director of graduate studies in the mathematics department.

Aside from teaching, students who have a doctorate or master's can work



DTH/Charlotte Cannon

Graduate degrees are essential in many research fields

in industry or for the government, he said. One advantage of having a graduate degree is that students can do less routine jobs, he added.

Many students also benefit from graduate degrees in journalism as well. "The value (of obtaining a graduate degree) is that it combines study in journalism with knowledge in another field," said Robert Stevenson, director of graduate studies in the School of Journalism.

Stevenson said that most students get a master's after having received an undergraduate degree in another field. This makes journalism graduate

students unique because they have a detailed understanding of an area they want to write about, he said.

A graduate degree in education also can be valuable. If a student in education administration gets a master's degree, his salary will be affected because the salary scale is based directly on the degree level, said William Burke, associate professor in the School of Education.

In North Carolina as well as other states, certification and pay scale for teaching also are based directly on

degree level, he said. "In some fields, we equate degree with competence. That's not always the case."

Burke said that the competence of a teacher is based on several qualities, and that a degree does not always cultivate these qualities, which include initiative and motivation.

Harris said, "In almost every field of graduate study, the educational institution makes a big difference."

"I would (also) advise someone to think very carefully about why they want a graduate degree."

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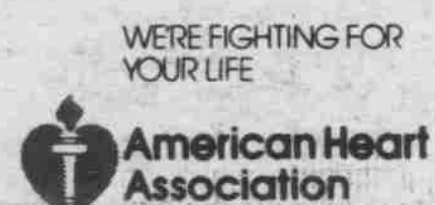
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