

Area U-M seniors tackling job search early

By Taylor Lincoln
special writer

Corporate hiring is down and competition for graduate school slots is stiffer, but University of Michigan seniors from the Observer & Eccentric area seem to be meeting the challenge with good planning and ingenuity.

Of the students interviewed, most either know what they will be doing upon graduation, or are pursuing multiple options.

"The key is just starting early," said Charles Carpenter, an economics student from Bloomfield Hills who has already turned down an offer and is interviewing with several companies.

"As soon as you get started, things just start rolling along. It's a lot easier after you get a couple of interviews," he added.

Still, the number of positions companies have to offer are fewer. Terry Murphy, the recruiting director at the Arthur Andersen & Co., a national accounting firm, reports that his company will hire about 20 percent fewer Michigan students than in recent years (although the cost was the same last year).

Donald Peterson, director of admissions for the Michigan College of Engineering, reports a 25 percent drop in the number of companies recruiting. He says that the drop in

auto industry openings, particularly General Motors, has been marked.

"GENERAL MOTORS was one of our larger recruiters here in terms of number of recruiters and number of students hired and now that's down to very few recruiters," said Peterson, adding that he was unable to predict how many students will be hired this year.

He also mentioned the buildup of unemployed graduates as a difficulty for current students.

"There is an overlap of people who graduated last May and August and are still unemployed, with those who are graduating in May," he said.

Even when companies conduct interviews on campus, they may not necessarily hire students.

"A lot of companies have hiring freezes," said Ami Mehta, an economics and French student from West Bloomfield. "A lot of companies that do come are just trying to get an idea. Others have very limited spots open."

Mehta, who has an upcoming interview with the Federal Reserve Bank in Chicago, was one of several students who interviewed with Manufacturers Bank, which has since merged with Comerica.

But she has an alternative plan. If she is unable to find a job, she plans to go to Europe in hopes of marketing her French skills.

Nationally, increased number of students have applied to graduate schools, probably due to the recession. For instance, medical school applications are up about 12 percent nationally, and a striking 42 percent at nearby Wayne State University.

But the recession does not seem to have influenced students from the Observer & Eccentric area to stay in school. Several students said that they are going to law or medical school, but each of them said that they have planned to do so for years.

Many of the students who plan to work cited debts or the need for experience as their reason.

Ira Goldstein, a mechanical engineering major from Farmington Hills, is one student who is considering graduate school, but his reasoning has little to do with the tough job market.

"I want to stay in school and delay the inevitable," said Goldstein, who has been accepted into the Michigan engineering graduate school and will intern at Ford immediately after graduating.

WHEN JOBS ARE scarce, career counselors recommend increased flexibility and a willingness to spend more effort searching, as methods to find employment.

Jeff Higgins, a business school student from Rochester Hills, has been hired by a commercial brokerage company in Southfield. He learned of

the opening from a bulletin board posting.

"I called them and interviewed a couple of times and ended up taking a job," he said.

Peggy Carroll, director of career

development at the Michigan School of Business says that there is about a 20 percent drop in the number of companies recruiting on campus, but the job picture for undergraduate students is about the same as in past years.

"It may be having a positive effect on (students)," said Carroll. "They may be starting their job search sooner or getting their graduate applications in sooner."



Ami Mehta, an economics and French major from West Bloomfield, is busy interviewing, but will market her French skills in Europe if no stateside job materializes.

How one local grad found a job

By Taylor Lincoln
special writer

When Buffy Schechter moved to Chicago last fall, her goal was to find a job that would utilize her organizational and promotional skills.

Fortunately for Schechter, a West Bloomfield native who graduated from the University of Michigan last May with a degree in economics, those skills proved invaluable in actually finding the job.

"There's so many different resources that I used," said Schechter, who lists volunteering, using employment agencies, searching through periodicals and networking as her methods of pursuing work.

Five months and about 25 interviews after moving to Chicago, she accepted an offer from Smith Bucklin & Associates, an association management firm.

"The networking thing was very

helpful to me," said Schechter, whose lead on the job she accepted came from her mom's friend's friend's daughter.

"When I first got to Chicago, I came with . . . probably 20 or 40 names of people — friends, or relatives or cousins. I called them all when I got here, and got more names and I called them."

HER ORIGINAL PLAN was to find work in the area of special events, which involves staging activities such as conventions, parades and festivals. Her job with Smith Bucklin, which involves handling administrative work for a computer association, has many similarities.

"Although I'm not coordinating an event per se, I'm helping coordinate all the things that go on in the organization. I'm using the same skills, only it's for an organization rather than for events."

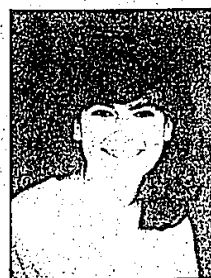
Schechter, who worked part-time in a retail store while searching for full-time work, credits her success to her focus and attitude. "I felt like I could do a good job and it was something that was really interesting to me."

"I think my enthusiasm showed through and I think that really helped."

She expected to find work in fewer than five months, but still did not get discouraged.

"There were a couple of interviews that didn't work out . . . and that was kind of frustrating. But that was just more incentive to go out and find more places to interview. I didn't want to just sit around all year."

"I wanted to make it happen. I wanted to get a job and I was willing to work for it. I didn't think it would take this long, but I really didn't lose momentum."

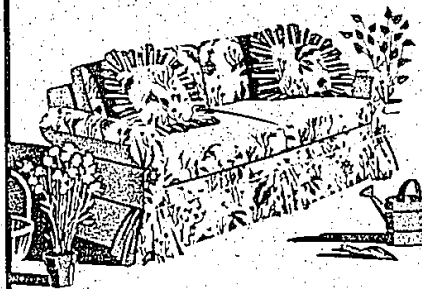


Buffy Schechter

EXPRESSIONS

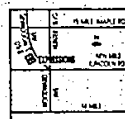
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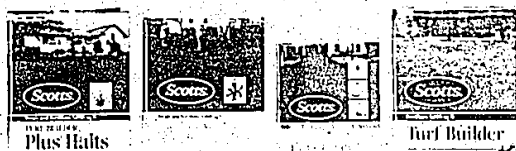
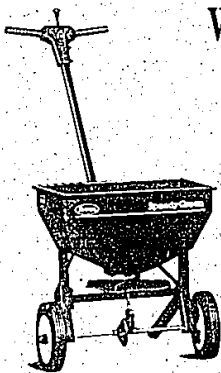
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