

Center offers career services

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Now is the time to think about resumes and interviews, but if you haven't even decided on a career one service at Texas A&M University can help make the decision a bit easier.

The Academic Counseling Center, located in 107 Academic Building, provides students with individual and group counseling, career interest testing and self-instruction.

Dr. Ronald A. Lewis, assistant ACC director, said: "We have several counseling psychologists on the staff that work with the normal transitional, educational problems that are typically short-ranged that students run into in the college environment."

Lewis said the staff at the center mainly helps individuals with career decisions, choice of major and career planning.

To help a student make these decisions, Lewis said the center has "a very fine testing program that we give to determine the student's interests and personality."

Lewis said they also have access to the student's high school records that often help the counselor understand the student's background.

"If a student comes in having academic difficulty, what we'll do is look at the problem," Lewis said. "Is it that they're in the wrong major? Do they lack the developmental background for a particular course?"

Finding right major, job harder for some students

"We hesitate to use the word intelligence, because it's misused. But the fact is that some students are better students than other students. Some students are going to

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have difficulty surviving in an academic environment like Texas A&M."

Lewis said the best predictor of a student's academic ability is his high school grade average. Scholastic Achievement Tests are good indicators, but they're not the best, he said.

"For the most part," Lewis said, "most students have the innate intelligence to do okay at Texas A&M. But there are many other factors that go into the process, like motivation and maturity levels.

"Does the student have control of his life? Can he be realistic in his decisions.?"

"It's a very complex thing and what we intend to do is use all the resources available to help students assess their problems and then try to come up with ideas and solutions," he said.

If the problem requires long-term counseling or therapy, then the student is referred to the Personal Counseling Service. "If they have a depression related to a boyfriend or girlfriend problem and it's affecting their academics, we'll help them deal with that depression," Lewis said.

"Now, if the depression is a result of a personality disorder or something that is long-term — that has been with them for awhile then we'll refer them to the Personal Counseling Service, he said.

The Personal Counseling Service, located in the YMCA Building, is another service available to University students.

Lewis said there is a lot of overlap between the two counseling centers — one concentrates on academic problems, the other with personal problems.

Testing at the Academic Counseling Center focuses on the likes and dislikes of the student in terms of activities and occupations, Lewis said.

"We have as good a battery of tests that you can get anywhere. What these tests will do," he said, "is take a sample of you behavior based on the way you answer some questions." Then the answers are analyzed and compared with the characteristics of people who are working the same career.

This way, Lewis said, students can get an idea of what a career in a particular area may be like.

Lewis said the center is affili-

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ated with the General Studies program; however, they don't always recommend that students participate in the program if they are undecided about their major.

"General Studies is a good place for students in their early years here, where they are really confused and they need a chance to get their feet on the ground, either academically or careerwise, to explore some things," he said.

He said the program provides the student with some flexibility to explore different areas of study.

Students are encouraged to choose a major after two years in the program. "I think students need to recognize that General Studies is not a degree granting option and the longer you go after you pass you sophomore year, the more penalty you pay in terms of time."

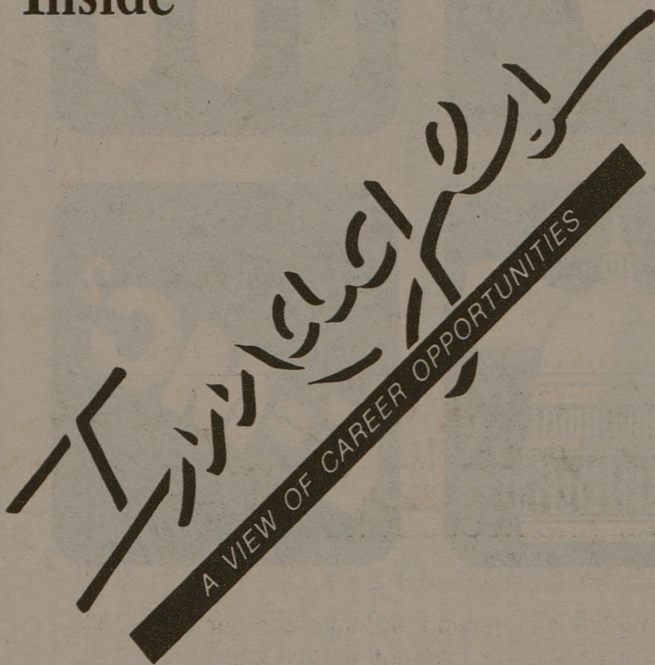
Lewis said the center also maintains files containing information about every major on campus.

"A questionnaire is sent to every academic department," he said, "and they tell us what they like to see in students, what kind of attributes a student ought to have. They'll tell us what they perceive to be the job opportunities in the career."

He said if a student can identify three or four career alternatives, then he can go to the occupational files for information.

To help make decisions, Lewis said students "start with a self-assessment and that's where the counseling and the instruments we use here come in. After you've identified some alternatives, then you gather information and evaluate that information. Your final decision is based on that evaluation."

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