

Jobs

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so they were facing a relatively unprecedented situation of graduation with no job.

"The students are aware of the problem now. They are starting earlier, interviewing harder and investigating all their options."

Dr. W.D. Von Gonten, head of the Petroleum Engineering Department, agrees students are going to have to start earlier and interview harder than they have in the past.

"Petroleum engineering graduates historically have gotten their jobs during the fall semester," Von Gonten said. "People who are graduating in May and August are getting their jobs in October and November and last October and November the economy was still good so the job situation was still good."

Von Gonten said the job situation was much tighter in the spring but as far as he knew, petroleum engineering students who didn't have jobs at the beginning of the spring all have jobs now.

"If all of our students had been trying to get jobs last spring, we probably would have had some major problems," he said. "I don't think that this fall will be as lucrative as last fall."

Vulliet said the graduates are not going to be able to walk in at the last minute, interview with their top three choices and expect to get a job.

"The economy is not allowing that to occur," she said. "They've got to put in a little extra effort to compensate for the fact that times are slow."

Von Gonten said he believes the good students are going to get a lot of job offers, but students with lower grades are going to have to work harder.

"They will have to interview harder and interview more companies and they may have to go out and interview companies that haven't come to A&M," he said. "Some of the students are going to work for companies they wouldn't have even interviewed with last year."

But Vulliet said the engineering jobs still are lucrative compared to other disciplines.

"It generally tends to be the non-technical areas that really get aced when things like this (recession) occur," she said. "They tend to fill the slots that are 'icing on the cake' so to speak."

Vulliet said hiring in the non-technical areas is probably even lower than in the technical areas. She said this semester looks like it will be slow, so students are going to have to work hard and investigate all options.

But, she said, other schools have much deeper problems than Texas A&M.

"We are in very good shape compared to other schools in the state and in the nation because we are a highly technical school and it is the highly technical disciplines that are still in demand, even though the demand for those might even be less," she said.

Recruiting organizations that may have traditionally gone to 150 schools and have cut back to about 40 schools still are coming to Texas A&M, she said.

"They're going to pick the schools where they've had the greatest success in the past and generally speaking, Texas A&M is one of those schools," she said.

"Of the seven major petroleum firms in the country, the single school that they do the most hiring from has consistently been Texas A&M. If they're going to cut out schools, they're not going to cut out the ones from which they have hired the most students."

Vulliet said the engineering disciplines — especially chemical, petroleum and electrical engineering — accounting, and

the computer sciences still are in demand, though they have been affected somewhat by the recession.

But an incoming freshman shouldn't necessarily pick a major just because that major is lucrative now, Vulliet said.

"If you come to school and choose a major strictly on what it can make you when you get out, you're not allowing yourself a cushion for anything, particularly if it's something you don't especially like," she said. "You could end up four years later finding out that the bottom has dropped out."

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Pageant is not all good looks

NEW YORK — Miss America, Debra Sue Maffett, said the Miss America pageant is judged more on brains than beauty and Americans place too much importance on looks.

A native of Pittsburg, Kan., Maffett lives in Anaheim, Calif. Her family lives in Cut 'N Shoot. Maffett, 25, who won the competition over the weekend, said if the contest would have been judged on beauty alone, she would not have been the winner.

"I wasn't the prettiest girl on the stage," Maffett, who competed as Miss California, said.

"Miss Alabama was super, super intelligent. I thought she would win," she said referring to Yolanda Fernandez, 19.

Miss Maffett told reporters at a press conference that one of her heroes is British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

"She stuck to her principles during the Argentine crisis. I like that," she said.

"I feel like modern day society places much too much emphasis on shallow things. There's much more to life than appearances."

She said the men in her life "would not have to be really good looking." However, she said, she has had very little time for men.

"Now it will be the same thing, but on a bigger scale," she said.

As for the future, Maffett said her speaking engagements as Miss America will help make her better talk show host.

She said she would also like to run for a Republican office, but she did not specify what post she would seek.

She advised women who want to be Miss America to get a nice evening gown and an interview dress.

The slim, blonde confessed to a few imperfections: "I have a crooked nose and one side of the face is different from the other."

She also admitted having one vice.

"I love chocolate."

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