

# Counselors face worries about jobs, careers

By Mary Louise Knapp

As inflation continues to take bigger bites out of the American paycheck and unemployment continues to rise, more students are seeking career counseling, changing their majors and working to put themselves through school.

Frank Hallgren, director of the Career Planning and Placement office in the Nebraska Union, said that more students than ever are coming in for counseling.

"More students are concerned about what is going to happen to them," he said. "Most of the people we see fall into two categories—those who have absolutely no idea what they want to do and those who want to sharpen their skills in the field they have already chosen."

Hallgren said that many students he has seen feel that they must get a job in the field they have a major or a degree in.

"This is not absolutely necessary," he said. "There are many alternatives to the specific job a student has been trained for—a student can often get a very closely related job if he can't get the specific one."

"We don't see many freshmen," Hallgren said. "The ones we do see want us to predict what fields will be good ones to go into, and that is usually not possible."

**HALLGREN SAID** today's students are more interested in getting work with established corporations than were their counterparts of the 1960's.

"I've never seen the office boycotted, though," he said. "There has always been a

certain amount of interest, at least among students here in Lincoln, in established firms."

Hallgren said he has noticed more students entering the business and engineering fields, and a higher percentage of arts and sciences majors are going to graduate or professional schools.

"I have not noticed a large number of students leaving their profession in order to find one that pays them better," he said. "I certainly haven't seen anyone leaving journalism school to go into engineering. I think most students are more concerned about finding a job that makes them an adequate living and gives them satisfaction."

Barbara Kerr, assistant professor of counseling psychology, advises both stu-

dents and guidance counselors in job-seeking skills. She said she tells students to major in a field they will enjoy.

"I HAVE seen a large number of students change their majors because someone has told them that there was no future in the field they were in," Kerr said.

"Because students were told five years ago that the teaching field was overcrowded, we now have a shortage of teachers," she said.

"Many students today are moving out of the liberal arts fields into business or engineering, and, of course, those fields too will eventually become overcrowded."

Kerr said she believes the insecurity of the job market has been overplayed. "Since the first baby boom is now past—and the population has fallen quite substantially since then—in about 15 years there will not be enough people to fill all jobs," she said.

Kerr said students seem much less idealistic and less oriented toward social service and liberal arts careers than they were in 1973, when she began counseling at the University of Mississippi.

**KERR SAID** that many students, especially those in the fine arts, feel that they are part of an "over supply" of liberal arts majors, and that they are locked out of the job market.

"This is not true at all," Kerr emphasized. "There are jobs out there, and there always will be jobs. My advice is for students to become very, very good at a field they enjoy—not to choose a career on the basis of what sells."

But Phyllis Bernt, a UNL English instructor, feels she needs a second degree—in accounting.

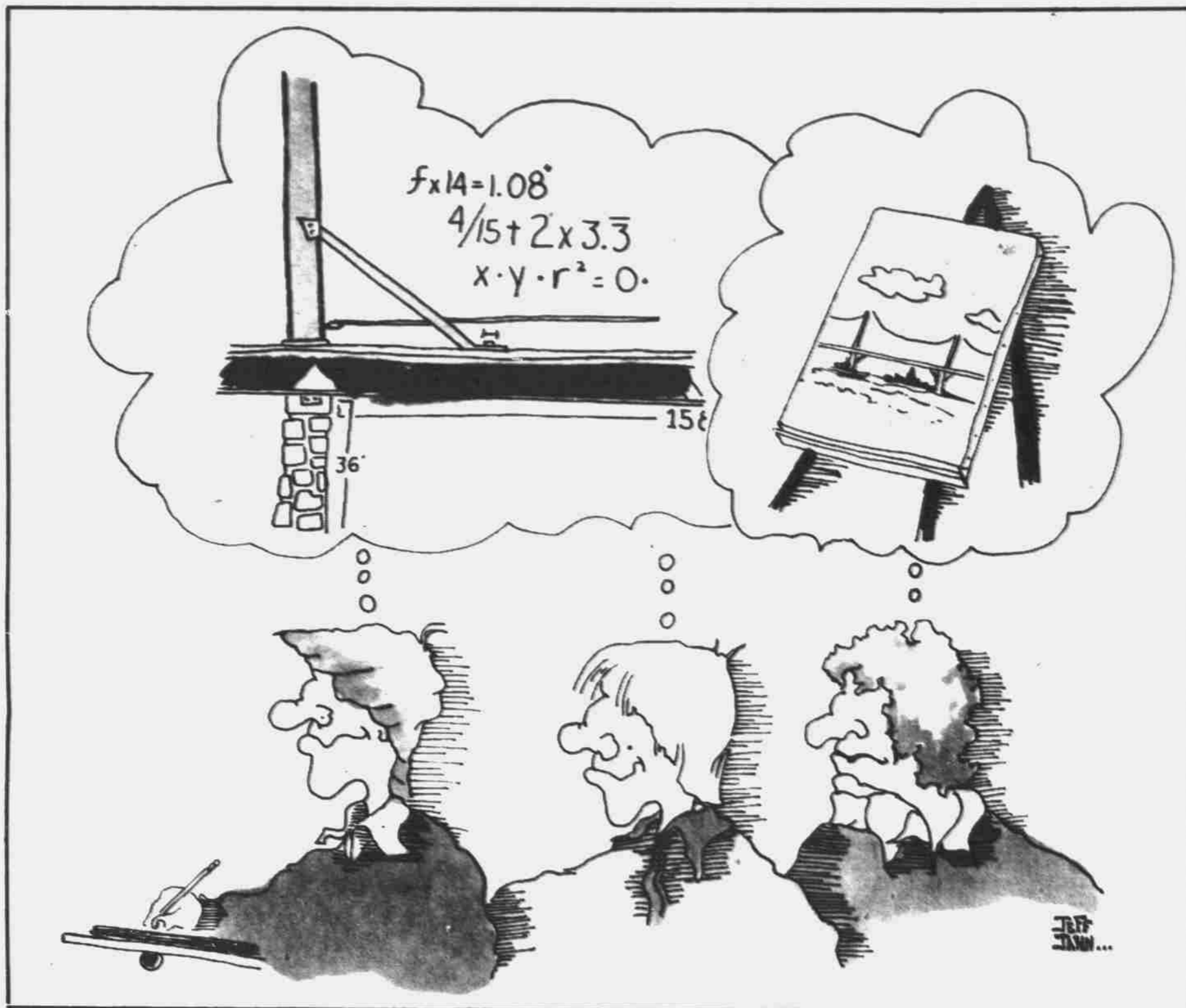
"There is no future in what I am doing now," she said. "I originally trained myself to teach and do research in Victorian literature, but after several years of looking for jobs in that field, I gave up because there were none to be had."

Bernt, who now teaches composition and introductory literature courses, is taking six hours of accounting classes this semester, and expects to be finished with her training in two years.

"I hope to get a position as a certified public accountant," she said.

Bernt said that the English field was "beginning to go bad" when she started teaching seven years ago.

"However, I trusted my teachers, who predicted a rosy future and said that 'there is always room for good people'. I didn't find this to be the case," she said.



## Officials say jobs are fewer; effort rewarded

By Mary Kempkes

The Number of jobs offered to UNL students is down from last year but better than this summer, according to university and Lincoln employment officials.

Lincoln industrial firms are offering fewer jobs to students and retail jobs are snapped up quickly, said Mrs. Gail Wheeler, off-campus employment advisor for the Financial Aids Office.

Mrs. Wheeler said she has placed about 59 students in off-campus jobs since Aug. 15. Last year, she placed 173 students within about the same time period.

The number of jobs listed with Mrs. Wheeler by Lincoln businesses declined from 369 last year to 155 this year. Employers call with about 8 new jobs a day compared with 12 a day last year, she said.

"...The only reason I can see is that the economy is still in somewhat of a depressed state. We really haven't moved out of the recession we've been in the last few months."

**BUT THE** reduced number of jobs hasn't caused a problem yet, she said, because there aren't as many students looking for jobs.

A pinch on the area summer jobs sent some students home and has others requesting more financial aid this fall.

There were fewer traditional summer jobs—construction and industrial labor—due to the depressed economy, said Gene Landkamer, manager of Nebraska Job Service in Lincoln.

July unemployment in Lincoln was 4 percent, less than the national rate of 7.6 percent but still high for an agricultural state, Landkamer said. Lincoln unemployment in August fell to 3.7 percent.

"This summer, there was high unemployment among students," he said. "Early this spring, we were swamped and a lot of those (students) ended up going home for the summer and getting jobs there."

**MRS. WHEELER** said, "I started noticing the effect of the change in the economy last March because we were making contacts about summer jobs and not getting them."

She said in March of 1979 about 30 industrial employers listed jobs through her office but none returned this year.

Inability to get jobs last summer depleted some student bank accounts, said Larry Apel, on-campus employment advisor, and

more students are looking for on-campus jobs, work study and financial aid.

Apel said most campus jobs are filling up fast.

The big campus employers—food service with 450 students, housing with 610 and the unions with 205—have few openings left. The total number of students employed on campus, including work-study students, is about 2,500, Apel said.

He said, "people had every-summer jobs that they thought they could go back to and found out they couldn't so more kids are coming in (for financial assistance)."

The number of students employed by work-study increased from 1,100 last year to 1,400, said Doug Severs, assistant director of financial aids. The number of students accepting work-study as part of their financial aid packet increased from 50 to 60 percent, Severs said, partly because jobs downtown are scarce.

**AND SEVERS** hopes the economy will increase the efficiency of work-study employees. Many students who have a job downtown pay less attention to their work-study jobs, he said.

"If the job market is really tight downtown, students will take the (work-study)

position that they have and really work it."

Students who look hard enough can still find jobs. "We don't have a great number of opportunities for part time jobs for students but many are gotten by knowledge from friends who knew about the job," Landkamer said.

"Be a little more versatile about the job one might accept," he said. "A job is better than no job."

Lincoln has traditionally been kind to students concerning jobs, Landmaker said, and retailers are still hiring students although manufacturers are not.

Apel said students seeking jobs should check the bulletin board outside the Financial Aids Office.

"There are quite a few jobs on the board right now," he said, "especially off-campus, so we think they're having their own luck and when jobs get tight off campus they'll come to us."

Apel recommended students check the board at least once a day because it is updated regularly.

The first few weeks of the semester is the best time to look for jobs, Apel said, because student jobs have high turnover rates.