

Students seeking work find few job openings

By Linnea Fredrickson

The job situation for students is tight, according to Larry Apel, assistant director of scholarships and financial aids.

Apel, who coordinates students with job openings for the university, said that two years ago he was looking for students to fill jobs. Today, students' names are on waiting lists for jobs at the Nebraska Unions, libraries, residence halls and elsewhere on campus.

Apel's section of the job board in the basement of the Administration Building had only two of the small white job slips tacked up last week.

Apel said that recently has was trying to find a job for a student from India who told him he would even shovel snow, he was so desperate for a job. But the Grounds Crew, which, according to Apel, usually handles 12 to 15 applications, received more than 70 this year.

Apel attributes the present unemployment situation to several factors. One is the change in qualifications for borrowing student loans from the government. Through September of last year, anyone was eligible for the Guaranteed Student Loan program.

Beginning Oct. 1, though, the standards changed. Some students weren't given loans, and others found the amount they could borrow was reduced, forcing them to pay the rest of their college costs.

Other students, he said, are working because their parents may have lost jobs, meaning less money in the family to spend on education. Apel said it is also difficult for many farmers right now to find the money for their children's tuition because farm prices are low and interest rates are high.

Apel said a little psychology also figures into the picture. Students are worried and looking ahead, he said, wondering if

the situation will get worse and if they should try to get a job now instead of later.

Valerie Fisher, who is also an assistant director of scholarships and financial aids, has been coordinating students with off-campus jobs since August. She said she looks at her postings on the job board and realizes the job situation is not very good.

Records that her office has kept show that during the period from July to December in 1979, 599 job openings were listed. For the same time period last year, only 314 were posted.

In 1979, 50 percent of those jobs were filled; in 1981, that percentage increased to 77.

Fisher said that when a job opening is posted, it is filled quickly. She said several employers have called her to remove postings because of the overwhelming response. Some businesses that usually keep a continuous listing have asked her to take their request down, she said.

The bad news in student employment correlates perfectly with the full-time employment situation, Fisher said. She said that because of the economy, business isn't expanding and people aren't eating out. That makes fewer jobs for students, she said.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County unemployment rate was 4.9 percent for January. Fisher said there is also plenty of "underemployment." People who usually work full time are accepting part-time jobs that students traditionally take.

Fisher said students should remember that there are people "behind" the job board who will help them locate jobs.

Apel said it's important for students to realize it is the total job situation, not them, that is making it difficult to find a job.

"Don't be discouraged," he said. "It isn't you. Keep looking and don't lose confidence in yourself."

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