

Hot Careers for College Grads

By Jennifer Wake



Thousands of prospective college students and their families gathered at Saint Mary's College's College Connection on Saturday Photo Jennifer Wake

Hundreds of prospective college students gathered to meet with representatives from 150 colleges and universities last Saturday at Saint Mary's College looking for the right fit between interests and future job prospects. But what are the hot jobs of the future? The answer may surprise you.

For those college graduates looking for a good salary right out of college, Saint Mary's College Career Center Employer Relations Manager Patty Bishop says one of the hottest jobs that has popped up in the past two years is recruiter for a staffing agency.

"These are full-time recruiters with the majority having a sales component," Bishop said. "Every staffing agency has their own niche markets that they recruit for. It's so time consuming from a client's standpoint to screen all these applicants, and it's a gold mine [for new employees] where these grads can have six-figure jobs two years out of college."

Although sales is not as glamorous as the typically sought after status jobs such as lawyer or architect, there are no stipulations on the major you studied in college to land the job, and the prospects are good if your personality fits.

"Ten years ago, if I mentioned sales students would be turned off, but now they see others make \$75 to 80K and six figures, and are open to these opportunities," Bishop said.

In addition to these business opportunities, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) states the other two of the top

three areas for best jobs are in engineering and computer related fields. Even following the dot.com bubble, NACE reported that salary offers to computer and information services graduates were higher than for any other majors.

After a recent Salary Survey, NACE stated that, for the most part, "average starting salary offers to 2007-2008 graduates are on the rise."

Bishop concurs that the recent economic downturn has not yet impacted recruiting efforts at Saint Mary's, but she is beginning to hear that companies may be holding back on the number of hires they had projected earlier last year.

"I'm beginning to see a softening," she said. "Next year, we may see a downturn."

Other components affecting the future job market involve demographics of the work force. For example, Bishop said PG&E is projecting that 30 percent of their baby-boomer-aged employees will retire in the next five to 10 years.

"They need to very quickly hire students because they're seeing a mass exodus coming," Bishop said. "They need to get young people into those management roles early on."

Some of the top companies projected to hire the most employees in the future, according to CollegeGrad.com, are AmeriCorps, the Internal Revenue Service, Progressive Insurance and Enterprise Rent-A-Car.

But a rental car company?

"It doesn't have great curb appeal, but Enterprise has a great training ground and master-level training for managers," Bishop said. "The

Vice President for Standard & Poor's [during a recent keynote address to college career professionals] said he would interview anyone with Enterprise on their resume."

In addition to a company's reputation for training, a college's reputation can play a key role in recruitment after graduation. Bishop said that Saint Mary's College is seeing more of the big companies like Oracle coming on campus to recruit because its students are known to have high communication and critical thinking skills. Other colleges known for their specific programs fit into niche markets that are expected to grow.

Of these markets are healthcare (which has expanded career opportunities to include careers such as patient advocate and health information specialist), environmentalism, (which has sparked new careers from green construction to green sales), and anti-terrorism (although the post 9/11 push from agencies such as the CIA and FBI have softened).

"It's gone from one extreme to the other," Bishop said. "For now the future job outlook for college graduates looks good. Even though the economy is slow, we are experiencing more high-caliber employers engaged with us."

To view the full list of top jobs for college graduates, you can visit CollegeGrad.com.