

Business school grads face uncertain future

Princeton President wants to end Nude Olympics

By Christine Tatum
College Press Exchange

CHICAGO (CPX) - Students walking out of business school these days are learning the hard way that what goes up must come down, including fat-cat salaries, signing bonuses and any expectations of getting them.

In the past few years, newly minted MBAs have had it good. Make that really good. Starting salaries for 1997 graduates of the top 50 business schools as ranked by U.S. News & World Report averaged \$64,550, with graduates of the most elite schools getting offers of more than \$80,000. And that was just the beginning. Many new graduates doubled their salaries by negotiating a signing bonus, a guaranteed bonus after one year of service, reimbursement for tuition and a company car.

It's a gravy train that many b-school students and administrators say is chugging at less than full steam. Despite reports from firms insisting that hiring levels will remain about the same as last year, recent financial crisis in world markets, layoffs at big-name businesses like Merrill Lynch and dramatic fluctuations in the Dow have combined to make this year's job prospects for MBAs less bountiful and bright. Certainly not helping matters are predictions that corporate America will continue in 1999 to discard workers at a rate not seen in the last five years.

"We've had a reality check in the global financial markets," said Glenn Sykes, director of MBA career services for the University of Chicago's graduate school of business. "The market is still very strong but it has created uncertainty. We won't see the growth we did from '97 to '98."

Though companies are still showing up on campuses, it's no secret that many, particularly those specializing in investment banking and many types of consulting, are granting fewer interviews. As a result, many students are quick to accept offers, rather than holding out for a few. "There's been a boon in the market that has been sustained for a pretty long time," said Daniel Nagy, assistant dean of Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. "Companies have been hiring so many people for so long that eventually they were going to have to start scaling back."

"There is still a very good job market out there for MBAs," he added. "But it has changed in terms of who is and is not hiring. Like everything else in life, people are going to have to adjust and adapt." The manufacturing, information technology and pharmaceutical industries are hiring like mad, but if the depression that's hitting banking and consulting continues or worsens, competition is expected to stiffen there, too. "There's definitely going to be a ripple effect to contend with," Nagy said. And that's all the more reason for b-school candidates to avidly pursue getting into the nation's top programs, Sykes said. "Where you go will have a tremendous impact on the value you have in the work place," he said.

For students at top-tier schools, worries aren't so much about unemployment as salaries and perks. For example, the general mood among students at the University of Chicago is that they will be hired, but perhaps not by their first pick and not with the lavish signing bonus they had hoped for, said one recent MBA grad who wished to remain anonymous. "It could be trouble for people in schools

that aren't in the top 20," the graduate said. "The top firms are pulling back, so people are taking lower offers. That of course is going to feed down. If you weren't the pick of the litter before and the people who were are taking the jobs you wanted, well, that's not good news."

Indeed, students aiming to walk out of school and into an office at one of the big-gun firms on Wall Street are increasingly disappointed this year, said Roxanne Hory, director of career management at Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Management. "Some of those folks have been forced to re-think their professional priorities and lifestyle," she said. "They're having to set their sights lower."

Many new MBAs have said they and their friends have been glad to do just that. "A lot of people are looking for a strategy position that doesn't travel and is in a city they like," said Troy Ihlanfeldt, who graduated from Kellogg last year. "People are not so attracted to a firm's brand name as they used to be. I think they are very interested in hearing what else is out there."

Just what else is out there remains uncertain. The real hiring picture won't be clear until the recruiting process winds down later this month. Many biz-school applicants are hinging on the results before committing their time and money to pursue a graduate degree.

"I can't help but be nervous," said Wendy Peterson, a graduate of California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo who is now considering heading back to school for an MBA. "Where am I going to be in three years? A hundred grand in debt and unemployed? I hope not."

By Christine Tatum
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PRINCETON, N.J. (CPX) - The "Nude Olympics," a long-standing tradition at Princeton University in which students run naked through the semester's first snowfall, should stop before someone gets killed, the university's president says.

In a letter printed in the student newspaper, President Harold Shapiro said the university is considering banning the event after six students were hospitalized with severe alcohol poisoning and four more were treated at the university's student health center following the latest raucous running on Jan. 8. "This past weekend's experience provided a grave reminder of the serious risks that the Nude Olympics pose to our students' health and safety, largely because of the excessive and indiscriminate use of alcohol," Shapiro wrote. "Moreover, several of the college masters report behavior that was truly disgraceful and unacceptable."

The decades-old tradition is one of Princeton's most notorious. At midnight, hundreds of students gather to watch the sophomore class run naked through a central, ice-covered courtyard while music blares from adjacent dormitory windows. About 350 students bared all, and hundreds more clamored to watch on Friday, but what started out as fun and exhilarating

quickly got out of hand, many students said.

Anna Levy-Warren, 19, said she ran with her friends wearing nothing but shoes, socks, a hat, body glitter and a tiger, the school's mascot, painted on her back. While making her way through the courtyard, she said she saw a man peeing on a woman, another man masturbating, a couple having sex, men groping women, drunk students drifting in and out of consciousness and several people slipping on the ice and snow. "I was in a nudist mosh-pit grabbing desperately at arms and shoulders to keep myself from being trampled," she wrote to the student newspaper, the Daily Princetonian.

Some students said Friday's run was emotionally painful as well. "Was it class unity when a guy in one of my classes was hurt after a spectator yelled out obnoxious comments about his physique, and a woman cried and pledged to lose weight because two of her male friends told her that she had put on too many pounds since freshman year?" Jen Jennings, president of the class of 2000 wrote to the newspaper. "A combination of mob culture and a couple of inches of snow apparently give us the license to normalize behavior that we would otherwise not tolerate: sexual harassment, rape and threats to our lives with blood-alcohol levels over .25, just so we can loosen up enough to take off our clothes."

University officials at the scene said they, too, were shocked and dismayed by the display. "I can't go back to the Nude Olympics after this," College Master David Carrasco told the Princetonian. "I felt a sense of shame. I think many people there felt ashamed." Nevertheless, many students want the event to continue, claiming that it is an important opportunity to bond and soak up the college experience with classmates.

"I look like an idiot trying to defend people's right to run around naked, but if students see this as a tradition, the administration needs to do anything possible to make it safe," said student body president-elect Spencer Merriweather.

University officials have tried to regulate the event in the past few years by working with student organizers and barring photographers and television cameras. The university also added security, extra lighting and emergency personnel to make the run safer for students.

As far as Shapiro is concerned, the efforts have failed. He has asked the university's dean of students and a group of faculty, students and staff to study the event over the next several weeks and come up with options for preventing this tragedy before it happens. Shapiro said he wants to resolve the issue with university trustees early in the spring semester.

Court says VMI successful in assimilation of female students

College Press Exchange

LEXINGTON, Va. (CPX) - The Virginia Military Institute is off the hook for now. A federal appeals court ruled Jan. 15 that the nation's oldest state-supported military college has successfully assimilated women into its student body.

U.S. District Court Judge Jackson L. Kiser dismissed a 9-year-old lawsuit against VMI's males-only admissions policy. Kiser ruled that the state

and institute have "successfully formulated, adopted and implemented a plan" that gives women equal access and treatment as guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. Kiser said the Justice Department, which brought the suit against the school, has filed no objections to the measures VMI has taken to incorporate women into its Corps of Cadets. The department has 30 days to respond to the ruling.

In June 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered VMI to accept women

or give up its state funding. The next year, the institute admitted 31 female cadets. Of those women accepted, 23 made it through their first year. Now, 48 women, 26 freshmen and 22 sophomores, are among the institute's 1,250 students.

"We'll continue to monitor this situation," said Col. Michael Strickler, VMI's public relations director. "It's not just a year-and-a-half process."

Michigan student, 20, dies in 3-story fall

By Peggy Walsh-Sarnecki
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

DETROIT - For the fourth time in four months, a young person has died after drinking alcohol near a Michigan college campus. Adriane Allen, a 20-year-old Ferris State University sophomore from Williamston, Mich., fell from her third-floor apartment around midnight Thursday and died Friday. Big Rapids police said Allen had been drinking. Police said they are investigating the accident and how Allen obtained the alcohol. She was under the legal drinking age of 21.

Allen was alone in her bedroom in a downtown Big Rapids apartment building that is popular with students. Around midnight, a person in another room heard crashing glass, ran into Allen's bedroom and discovered that she had fallen to the sidewalk, police said. Allen was taken to Spectrum Health Downtown Campus in Grand Rapids, where she was found to have severe head and internal injuries.

Her parents arrived at the hospital before she died at 3:05 p.m. Friday, but she never regained consciousness, said Tim Bulson, hospital spokesman. The cause of death, as well as her blood-alcohol level, are pending the results of an autopsy today, Bulson said. "We are very saddened by the

situation and are investigating it," said Ferris State President William Sederburg. "Though it didn't occur on campus, we remain extremely concerned, and the entire campus community extends its sympathy to her family."

Michigan campuses have reeled from a string of deaths this school year: On Oct. 16, Courtney Cantor, 18, died after she fell from the window of her sixth-floor dormitory room at the University of Michigan. Police said she had been drinking at a fraternity party the evening before. Her blood alcohol level was 0.059. A blood-alcohol level of 0.10 percent is considered intoxicated for adults. Cantor was found to have traces of the alcohol-enhancing drug known as GHB in her body, but police and prosecutors cannot determine how it got there.

On Nov. 5, Michigan State University student Bradley McCue died of alcohol poisoning after drinking 24 shots to celebrate his 21st birthday. His blood alcohol level was 0.4. On Dec. 12, Allan Hower, 24, died of alcohol poisoning. His blood alcohol level was 0.40. Although Hower was not a Ferris State student at the time, he died following a party at the Delta Zeta sorority house there. He had been drinking before he arrived at the party.

Spurred by increasing concern

about underage and binge drinking, the presidents of Michigan's 15 public universities are holding a conference on campus drinking Feb. 2 in Lansing. The conference was planned before Allen's death. "This is well beyond the talking stage," said Glen Stevens, executive director of the Presidents' Council, State Universities of Michigan. "We are very much at the action level and very much encouraged by the campus response."

The council maintains that the solution extends beyond campuses. Aspects to be addressed include the response of surrounding communities, the role of parents and the drinking habits students develop before coming to college. "As a result of the recent tragedies, I think the university community has faced these issues much more directly than in the past," Stevens said.

Ferris State will be even more aggressive about making students aware of the alcohol counseling and education programs available on campus, said Ted Halm, news services manager. The programs include a mandatory class for new students that covers alcohol issues, as well as sexual assault and HIV/AIDS. The university also sponsors alcohol awareness events and alcohol-free activities.

Quiz-show addict goes to head of class

College Press Exchange

LONDON (CPX) - The things some people will do to get on television. Hoping for a chance to appear on a popular game show called "University Challenge," Lance Haward, a 62-year-old self-described quiz-show addict, recently enrolled in Open University, a nonresidential college in England for adult students of all ages. Haward said a love for learning also

motivated his decision to study classical Greek.

"Let's just say I was killing two birds with one stone," he told the Associated Press.

Haward, an education law consultant, has appeared on about a dozen game shows, including "Mastermind" and "Sale of the Century."

"I like to avoid the more vulgar game shows, and 'University Challenge' was about the only one left I

really wanted to go on, especially as I had missed out on it when I was a student," said Haward, who graduated in 1957, five years before the show went on the air.

Haward handily made the Open University team, which, with his help, recently defeated Lancaster University. Haward and his teammates are scheduled to match wits with Oxford University next.

College Press Exchange

BATON ROUGE, La. (CPX) - An assistant professor at Louisiana State University has filed suit against the school, charging that an associate dean pulled her onto his lap and spanked her while chanting, "You're a bad girl." Another associate dean, Ronald Garay, confirmed the accusation Sunday, The Chronicle of Higher Education reported.

Dianne H. Piper, an assistant professor of mass communication, claims the Jan. 12 incident happened while she was talking to Richard Nelson, an associate dean of the university's Manship School of Mass Communications, about a chance for her to lecture for a year at Indiana University. Piper, 43, said the conversation took

a turn for the worse as she tried to defend the length of time she would be gone from her LSU post.

Piper's lawsuit alleges that Nelson spanked her while Garay "sat idly by, watching and laughing." Garay told the Chronicle that was "not at all the case." He said he witnessed the incident, which "was something that happened so fast that no one could have reacted to it." "I think I reacted as anyone would have, just in total shock," Garay said. "The incident did happen."

Nelson, who has agreed to step down from his position while the charges are being investigated, has said he is "totally innocent of any sexual or racial harassment" and under strict orders from the university not to discuss the case. But according to news reports, his wife, Valoie,

called the Chronicle and the Associated Press to say the charges against her husband are "totally false." Valoie Nelson also said her husband was trying only to pat Piper on the back when she "fell on him."

Piper's suit alleges that Nelson had made several sexual comments and advances toward her and that he once told her the only reason LSU hired her was because she is black. The suit, filed against both the university and Nelson, seeks unspecified damages. University officials said they would not discuss pending litigation.