

Summer classes: to take or not to take?

by Breanna Bush
staff writer

Currently, there is little less than a month to go to finish the spring 2001 semester at Behrend. Then students either graduate or summer vacation begins. Or does it?

There are students that will not be enjoying their summer vacation as early as others because they are going to be on campus. Doing what? Going to class. Yes, that is correct, some students choose to attend Behrend for the Summer Session courses. These classes are held at a convenient time to pick up some extra credits.

Since the campus has a rural setting, concentration, relaxation, study can sometimes come more easily. The summer atmosphere at Behrend is informal. Small classes await the students, normally during the morning and evening hours. Credits that are earned in the summer are applied toward an individual's college degree.

Registration for 2001 Summer Session courses is currently underway, so the number of people who registered or are going to register is still unknown. There are a variety of classes that are being offered. Classes may be three-week, four-week, or eight-week sessions, depending on the course. Summer education abroad, graduate classes and undergraduate independent study, internship, and special project courses are also offered.

The subject matter offered for the Summer Session courses varies each year. For the Summer '01 schedule, there are a wide variety of classes being offered, such as chemistry, communications, English, marketing, math, philosophy, psychology, Spanish, and many more. Not including the summer education abroad, graduate classes and the undergraduate independent study, internship and special project courses, there are an estimated 67 classes that are being offered.

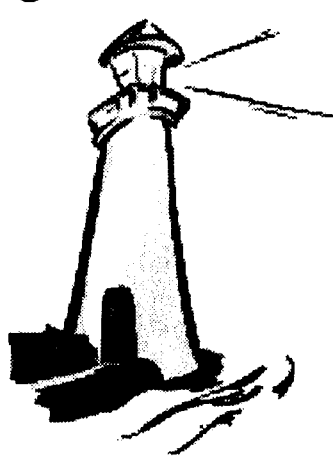
On-campus housing is available for students with fifth semester standing and above for the Summer Sessions. The Office of Housing and Food Service can provide students with more specific information; the office number is x6161.

Why do some students choose to attend Summer Session classes and others do not? Behrend students gave different answers to that question. Carrie Rogers, a Communications major, said, "I am going to Europe to take classes. It is a break, a type of change. It is a different atmosphere and a good experience."

Jill Hedlund, a Biology major, expressed that she will "have to attend two summer classes to graduate. It doesn't bother me, but I just can't wait to be done!"

Students in general seem to be taking Summer Session courses to fulfill their credits. Whether they are taking them to get ahead, to get a certain class over with, or even to graduate, some will be here this summer. Other students decide not to take Summer Session courses so that they can just enjoy the summer or work for those needed dollars.

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Getting a job after college: How hard is it?

Though the economy may be slow, many companies are hiring college graduates in certain fields

by Mike Grooms
staff writer

As the economy plunges, many graduating Behrend students may begin to wonder how all this will affect the job market. Recent studies have shown that even though some corporations are laying off older, middle-management employees, they are still planning to hire younger, recent college graduates.

Companies like SBC, the parent of Southwestern Bell, Ameritech and other telecommunications companies, are examples of corporations that are hiring young grads and, at the same time, they are cutting their middle-management ranks by the hundreds. Recruiters are looking to fill dozens of openings at job fairs for positions in information technology, marketing, sales, finance, and accounting.

In certain careers, demand remains strong. Don't be fooled by stories about massive layoffs in big computer and high-tech companies. Management information systems and all fields of engineering, construction management, and computer science are also good fields. Computer experience will go a long way to finding that job.

Those graduates who pursue medical careers also fare well in the downward spiral of the economy. Right now, there is a nursing shortage, and plenty of jobs in technical fields for the giant health care corporations. Depending upon the field, medical employers can try to tempt prospective hires with starting yearly salaries around \$28,000

for four-year nursing grads or \$36,000 for highly qualified radiology technicians. Nursing grads with excellent grades and a strong work ethic are in a good position — they can be choosy. They have lots of choices among local and regional hospitals and health care centers. Teachers for elementary and secondary schools are also in demand.

Other "hot" jobs include areas in retail management, be it at Target stores or a Steak 'n Shake restaurant. Target, the large discount retailer, will be operating more than 1,000 stores by the end of this year, and is planning to open 72 new stores each year. As with other retail chains, Target isn't looking for graduates in a particular field; they are accepting all majors.

The employer will consider more than just their first impression. They want to see internships and experience. Employers also want their job-hunting students to realize the importance of being well prepared. They want to see enthusiasm. Potential employers are looking at the way students present their résumé to them. Students have to be able to sell themselves. A strong work ethic is very valuable to companies. Companies can train employees on how to do the job, but one thing they cannot do is teach new employees work ethics. Graduates with excellent grades and a strong work ethic should have lots of choices.

While the economy may be weakening in certain sectors, such as high-tech, one cannot generalize. Many companies seem to be cutting operating costs by giving early retirements

in the upper ranks while continuing to hire at excellent starting salaries.

Many companies in this tighter job market follow the trend of calling many prospective employees and only choosing a few. It is important to stand

out. Going the extra step to stay fresh in the employer's will help to prevent job-hunters from getting lost in the shuffle.

Some advice for job-hunting grads this summer: Be prepared, be sharp and

do not count on a signing bonus with every offer. Perks like bonuses, eye-popping trips to corporate headquarters, and the name-your-salary days are mostly gone in the flat economy of 2001.

CDC and local companies provide job-seeking advice

by Mike Francis
staff writer

Experts agree: a good Grade Point Average, communication skills, and internships are needed to land that ideal job. Behrend's Career Development Center recently hosted representatives from Marconi Communications, Erie Insurance, and Merck Pharmaceuticals in a career preparation presentation for faculty. The topic was "Student Success: Faculty Role in Preparing Students for the Workforce."

The group met last Wednesday for the brown bag lunch discussion in room 114 in the Reed Building to talk about different issues regarding teaching skills and what the students' best interests are as they prepare for job interviews after graduation. The Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Faculty Organization chaired by Tracy Halmi, invited all members of Behrend's staff and faculty to the first meeting of the 2001 spring semester.

Mary Beth Peterson, director of the Career Development Center, presented Halmi with the idea of the faculty's role toward students and felt these were important issues that needed to be brought to their attention. To help with

this discussion, representatives from these companies were brought in to give information to the faculty on qualities their companies look for when interviewing students for a position.

Each representative was given a chance to explain what their company expected students to have after graduation. Similarly, they all mentioned what they called the "total package," a combination of communication and experience as critical factors for a potential employee.

The area they stressed the most in the "total package" was good communication skills, written and oral. Most companies look for good communication because there is teamwork involved in the job description; also, there is usually a product to be sold. If students don't have this basic skill it will be difficult to have a productive interview.

Internships or work related to a student's major is also very valuable to these companies or any other company when applying for a position. They need to know that their potential employees have taken the steps necessary to get their feet in the door. Other related experience could come from part-time and summer work.

The reps stressed teamwork as an

important topic as well as good work ethic. The discussion of a student's career plan was mentioned. Companies like to know what a student is looking for when finished with college. School and community involvement is also important and in some cases expected.

Another critical element not to be overlooked is a student's Grade Point Average (GPA). These representatives did not place as much emphasis as has been placed on the GPA in the past, but it is still very important. Students with a lower GPA but good communication skills and an internship are still eligible for a good position, according to the representatives. But, they added that some companies will not even accept an application if the GPA is not high enough.

One of the problems that the representatives stated the companies are having is that students are not happy with entry-level positions. The reps warned that in some cases it is necessary to start at the bottom and work your way to the top.

Peterson feels that this was an important area for the faculty to discuss and hopes to have a session for the students in the fall semester.

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