

Bad economy spells trouble for everyone

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Capital Times Staff

Everyone is worried about it. Nobody knows what to do about it. And graduating seniors hope it goes away soon. A bad economy affects everyone.

Professors at Penn State Harrisburg agree that the economy is suffering.

"The economy is not picking up as much as we expected it would," said Mukund Kulkarni, assistant professor of finance. "But, it is not a recession."

William Mahar, head of division of humanities, said otherwise.

"I think there is a recession going on," Mahar said, "And it's been going on for a

long time."

Nobody knows when we can expect some relief--whether it will come quickly or the recession will linger on.

"We are in an upturn and things are starting to look better," said Krishna Dhir, director of the school of business administration. "However, the progress is slow."

The bad economy poses extra problems for graduating seniors. In nearly all areas, graduating seniors are finding the job market tight. According to Karl Martz, coordinator of career services, jobs are still out there, but students need to work harder to find them.

"Students need to take an active role in

the job search," Martz said. "They need to do more than just check the (bulletin) board once a week."

According to Martz, students should use all available resources in their job searches.

"They have to network and use their contacts--professors, friends, anyone," Martz said. "They have to keep listening for any information about any company."

Derek Slocum, a senior engineering technology major from Middletown, agreed with Martz.

"There is a lot left to the individual to go out and get it done," Slocum said.

For students who have already graduated, the pressure is greater.

Tom Kessler graduated from Penn State Harrisburg in Aug. 1991 with a communications degree. He is now a bouncer at Rod's Roadhouse in Harrisburg.

Kessler said he has had interviews, but he is competing with people with more experience, who have been laid off.

"We're in a recession," Kessler said. "Companies are cutting back. The first thing to go are the luxuries--public relations and advertising."

Senior business management major Jerry Ross said he found other reasons companies weren't hiring.

"I had two interviews during which the interviewer said that they're waiting for people to retire," Ross said.

Library, from page 1

neglected for years." The group believes a lot of this comes from the idea that a new facility will be built in the future. Students and faculty attending open forums have expressed concern with the campus being "neglected" by the university.

"It's as if we're the bastard child of Penn State," said Dave Decima, a public policy major. "We get all the hand-me-downs, and they pay attention to us when they have to."

Faculty members shared their problems with the library and supported the students' appeal for changes.

"We're underfunded and neglected," said Frank Swetz, professor of mathematics and education. "We always have been and we always will be unless there is a university cry."

Speaking at an open forum held on Nov. 21 by the PSH administration, SGA Faculty Senate representative, Kevin DeWitt, said student complaints about the library have "fallen on deaf ears." DeWitt said University Park officials seem to say the library's inadequacies are the local administration's problem.

According to Provost Ruth Leventhal, "Higher education, in general, is grossly underfunded in Pennsylvania." Leventhal assured those at the forum the college is "doing the paperwork required to get PSH a new library."

Until then, Heindel Library Division Head Howard Shill said his office will attempt to deal with some of the more immediate problems. Shill said he is checking into securing a fourth copy machine by spring semester; adding an upgraded change machine capable of making change for \$1 and \$5 bills, as well



Photo by T.J. Brightman

A Penn State Harrisburg student checks out books at the Heindel Library. The manual checkout system is one of the problems to which Students For a Quality Library are seeking a solution.

as coins, by Dec. 6; and improving the turnaround time of inter-library loan materials.

The inter-library loan is not a sore spot just for students, but for faculty and library staff as well.

"As a student at U.P., my daughter can get me research material faster than I can through our inter-library loan," said Toni Leggett, instructor of criminal justice.

For Ruth Runion, who works in inter-library loans, space is a major problem for the program.

there's talk of requesting money to place five, double-faced ranges of shelving in the library's reading room. But the shelving would eliminate 16 seats, dropping the library's total seating capacity to 199.

"The administration is serious about giving whatever support they can give us," Shill said. "I'm cautiously optimistic about some of the temporary improvements."

Faculty members speaking at the forums said the promise of improvement is nothing new.

"What we've been having for years have been assurances, probably made in good faith," said Bob Colman, assistant professor of social science and psychology. "What we need is concrete outcomes."

Students doubt that any major changes will occur. Manger said it comes down to administration's "value system."

"I've sat in that library for the past year and a half and have watched administration move ahead on the Eastgate Center, a Child Care Center, Continuing Education Center, a video up-link for job interviews at main campus and on the auditorium," Manger said. "But, I've seen nothing done in way of expenditures with the library. That is wrong. It's not a reflection of our values. That's their [administration] agenda, not ours."

DeWitt said if students protest loudly enough, there will be action.

"I don't think the University as a whole can afford not to do the things we are demanding them to do," Dewitt said. "If you're a student who's putting your money out for an education that you're not getting, that's where the real voice has got to come from. It's really up to the students to get the changes taken care of."

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