

ECONOMY: Community colleges see surge in enrollment

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the university that provided them with the best financial aid package," said Cuevas. "There are many students in this area that may attend Harrisburg Area Community College for free due to parental employment."

Danielle Brookhart, the director of admissions at Harrisburg Area Community College, agrees that the economy is driving students to enroll in community colleges.

"I certainly think it has an effect on our traditional age students," said Brookhart. "They might be doing HACC now for two years to save a little bit of money rather than go immediately to the four year school that would be more expensive."

Unsurprisingly, application rates at Harrisburg Area Community College are up for all semesters this year. Brookhart says that the economy is leading to an increase in applications from more than just high school students, "With the economy in the state that it's in, we're also seeing an increase in dislocated workers who are coming back for retraining or new job skills."

At Northampton Community College, McCarthy says that job

instability has been a factor in enrollment growth as well.

"We saw an increase in students transferring with any number of credits from another college of 16%. For students with either an associates or a bachelors degree already, there was a 49% increase in that population in the spring semester," said McCarthy. "That's more evidence that students that are here are either coming for retraining, or worrying about their jobs, or have lost their jobs."

In response to the economic climate, the school has taken action to help students who are suffering from job losses. In December of 2008, the school announced that it would provide a semester of free tuition to students who had lost their jobs and were pursuing certain majors. The idea, which McCarthy says the community colleges have been doing over the past years, has led to over 200 students taking advantage and being granted a free semester at the school.

Yet, in a time of uncertainty, the immediate future of the community colleges of America appears to hold only one thing. Do the community colleges expect to see further increases in students?

"Yes, definitely," said Brookhart.

GRADUATES: New college degrees scramble as job market shrinks

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the employers see until a job interview is given. Before sending out a resume to a company, make sure to do some homework on the company. "Polish your resumes, know the company, and above all, be persistent."

The chances of getting a job after sending out one resume is very slim, if not at all impossible in this economy. It is very important to keep talking to people, and send resumes to different companies, Martz said. Also, make the connection between what one has and what the employers are looking for.

Danielle Harrow, who is graduating in the summer, is majoring in life sciences. Harrow is applying to graduate school while looking for a job. "I have gotten some responses from the companies I submitted my resumes to," Harrow said, "I feel my chances of getting a job range from slim to fair."

"With the economy being so tight, students cannot expect to get a job at medium-level management straight away," Martz said, "Work experiences are even more critical nowadays. Seniors have to be flexible and possibly lower their goals to entry-level jobs."

Martz said seniors cannot be choosy with the kind of work they have to do or where the jobs are located. It might be 45 minutes away from one's house, but finding a job that places food on the table is more important.

Another important aspect of finding job opportunities is developing networking skills. Martz and Dobrosky emphasized that networking may lead to a job sooner. "Persistence is the key. Be assertive, but not aggressive," Martz said.

Martz said there are more unpaid internships now because of the economy. There is more competition between those who were laid off this year and the

graduating seniors.

The normal waiting time for employment after graduation can range from three to five months. With the downfall of the economy, candidates might be unemployed longer. Martz said some students are in for a nasty surprise because they have not done their preparation.

Some students are just now going to him, three weeks before their graduation, hoping that he could perform a miracle. "Some of those who took advantage of the Job Fairs on campus have already secured a job for themselves. It really depends on the student... With such a late start, there's not much I can do," said Martz.

"There are some signs that the economy is turning," said Martz, "People are more aware of this kind of stuff at the convenience of the internet. And this economic recession is not only in the US, it's everywhere. There's no need to panic...keep your hopes up."

Exxon Mobil overtakes Wal-Mart to top Fortune 500

By DAN STRUMPF
AP Business Writer

Exxon Mobil Corp. unseated Wal-Mart Stores Inc. in the 2009 Fortune 500 list, shrugging off the oil price bubble and weathering what the magazine called the worst year ever for the country's largest publicly traded companies.

Fortune's closely watched list, released Sunday, ranked companies by their revenue in 2008. Irving, Texas-based Exxon took in \$442.85 billion in revenue last year, up almost 19 percent from 2007. The company also raked in the biggest annual profit, earning \$45.2 billion.

Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart had held the top spot

for six of the last seven years but fell to No. 2 this year. Still, the retail giant's 2008 revenue climbed 7 percent to \$405.6 billion, as the battered economy sent more consumers searching for bargains. The world's largest retailer took in \$13.4 billion in annual profit, an increase of about 5 percent.

Although it may have been a good year for Exxon and Wal-

Mart, 2008 was far from rosy for most of remaining companies on the list. Overall earnings plunged 85 percent to \$98.9 billion from \$645 billion in 2007, the biggest one-year decline in the 55-year history of the Fortune 500 list.

"America is getting used to the sound of bubbles bursting," Fortune said.

Energy companies continued to dominate many of the top

positions, as last summer's skyrocketing oil and gas prices more than compensated for their plunge later that fall. Chevron Corp. held on to third place with \$263.16 billion in revenue, up 25 percent. ConocoPhillips climbed one place to fourth, with \$230.76 billion in revenue.

General Electric Co., the diverse conglomerate whose troubled financial arm has been weighing on recent results, rose one notch to fifth. Battered automaker General Motors Corp. fell two spots to sixth, as revenue fell 18 percent and losses totaled \$30.86 billion amid the imploding car market. Crosstown rival Ford Motor Co. followed, with \$146.28 billion in revenue.

Telecom giant AT&T Inc. moved up two notches to take eighth place, with Hewlett-Packard Co. and Valero Energy Corp. rounding

out the top 10.

Among the hardest hit in 2008 were financial services companies, Fortune said. Banks, securities firms and insurers took cumulative losses of \$213.4 billion, accounting for almost 70 percent of the total dollar decline from the peak year of 2006, the magazine said. Citigroup Inc. and Bank of America Corp., which were No. 8 and No. 9 respectively last year, each slipped a couple notches from the Top 10.

Thirty-eight companies fell off this year's list, including financial firms Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., Washington Mutual Inc. and Wachovia Corp., all of which have either gone under or been acquired by rival banks.

Engineering and construction company URS Corp. moved the most up the list, leaping 185 spots to No. 264. But the title of "biggest loser" went to AIG Corp. The insurer, which has received more than \$180 billion in government bailout aid since last fall, fell 232 spots to 245 in this year's ranking.



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