Job outlook attractive for paralegals

By LAURA PRAH
Collegian Staff Writer

Pre-law majors aren't the only students showing potential to work within the legal system.

Any student in the College of Liberal Arts learns the necessary skills to become a paralegal, or legal assistant, said an admissions counselor at the Institute For Paralegal Training in Philadelphia.

Legal assistants perform tasks usually handled by a lawyer, such as real estate closings and bankruptcies, researching investigations, managing estates and setting up trusts.

Paralegals do everything except give legal advice or represent clients in court, said Suzanne Brady, the institute's admissions counselor.

Students majoring in history, English, and political science may want to keep this in mind because paralegal training is the fastest growing profession in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupation Outlook Quarterly* for Spring, 1986.

In 1984, the quarterly report stated, paralegals numbered 53,000. By the end of the next decade, that figure is expected to double, said Philip Bucher, assistant director for information systems at the Career Development and Placement Service.

"Liberal Arts student graduates have strong communication skills, especially in reading and writing and researching," Brady said, adding that these tools are invaluable when working in law.

They can effectively talk to people and deal with them on a person-to-person level, she said.

careers

When someone walks away with a degree in liberal arts, Brady said, they are well-trained in composing and compiling information from statistics. With post-graduate training, students can refine and direct their skills towards a study in law, she said.

The institute was the first to adopt guidelines for a paralegal training program in 1970 with the guidance of the American Bar Association.

The most recent figures indicate that 85 to 90 percent of the Institute's certified students are placed in jobs within six months of completing the paralegal training program.

By becoming paralegals, students are not just bringing benefits to a law firm, but also increasing their own marketability, Brady said. Skills acquired in post-graduate training in law-related areas are also desired in other businesses, she said.

Legal assistants are now employed by banks, corporations, stock brokerage houses, accounting firms, insurance companies, government agencies, hospitals, and labor unions, said Cynthia Christopher, the Institute's Director of Admissions.

The increase in the demand for paralegals is partly due to the desire among lawyers or law firms to increase their caseloads, Brady said. Using paralegals also allows the lawyer to charge reasonable fees because the paralegal has a lower salary than the lawyers, she added.

More and more, specially trained legal assistants are able to assume job responsibilities beyond traditional law firm environments. For example, Brady said paralegals may specialize in Administrative and Public law or International Trade Law and Business.

Employee Benefit Plans are an area where paralegal specialization is currently in high demand, Brady said. Every corporation offers a benefit plan to employees. Paralegals learn to write, modify and manage pension plans and benefit packages, apply government rules to plans, and help design packages for employers that work well in the company, she said.

Lynn Distler has an associate degree in paralegal training from the Central Pennsylvania Business School in Summerdale, and is currently working as a secretary at James L. Jubeliner and Associates, 205 E. Beaver Ave.

Distler worked for three years as a paralegal in El Paso, Texas and Denver, Colo. after receiving her degree. Of the 12 students in her graduating class only two found jobs in Pennsylvania.

Distler said it is difficult to find paralegal work in small towns because firms tend to be more conservative and hesitant to take a risk with them. She said McQuaide, Blasko, Schwartz, Fleming and Faulkner Inc., 811 University Drive, is the only firm in State College that employs legal assistants.

Sarah Arosell, a paralegal at the State College firm, received a dual degree in English and history at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee before attending the Institute for Paralegal Training in Philadelphia.

It is a good way to get into a professional position and advance within a corporation without becoming a mail person or secretary first, she said.

Arosell said she became a paralegal because she was interested in law but did not want to make the commitment of attending law school.

SUB offers more than food for thought

By CHRISTINE NICHOLAS
Collegian Staff Writer

While some students enjoy the Coffeehouse, the Asylum, or on-campus concerts, many do not realize that these free activities are made possible by the Student Union Board.

Founded in 1968, SUB "runs free activities for students in the HUB," Vice President Cheryl Woodward said.

A SUB committee organizes the Asylum, the University's non-alcoholic nightclub, open in the HUB Cellar from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Wednesdays.

SUB President Leonard Farber said the board also handles the Coffeehouse — a showcase for student and local performers in the HUB Cellar. Performers, chosen through auditions, sing or play musical instruments at the Coffeehouse on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Woodward said that the purpose of the Coffeehouse is for sheer enjoyment.

In addition to these activities, Farber said SUB hopes to organize teams for this year's College Bowl competition — a trivia contest between teams of college students which has existed for about 20 years.

College Bowl, a national contest that began as a television game show, consists of two rounds of competition, said J. David Grebos, assistant director of activities. Teams gain points by answering trivia questions on a variety of subjects.

A college holds an elimination contest to produce its best team. Then, Grebos said, the teams compete in one of 16 regional College Bowl competitions.

"Winners of these regional events go on to either another regional contest or national intercollegiate finals," Grebos explained.

The University will sponsor this year's regional College Bowl competition for the region including Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia, Grebos added.

Colleges such as the University of Maryland, Temple University, Kings College, and Bloomsburg University will attend the regional competition, Farber added.

SUB is funded by the University since it is a registered student organization, Farber explained. He said SUB's activities, except movies, are free to students because they are paid for with money allotted from the Student Organization Budget Committee.

The charge to students for movies is $2, Farber said, but the money is used to supplement SUB's budget and to sponsor additional activities. SUB tries to sponsor "top-run movies," he said.

SUB also organizes on-campus movie premiers. The free premiers, which are held in Eisenhower auditorium, Farber said, allow students to see movies that have not yet been released in town.

In addition to movies, SUB sponsors free concerts in the HUB Ballroom.

Farber explained that SUB concerts occur "on a sporadic basis because of funding." SUB tries to have one or two concerts a month and to feature performers with different styles, he added.

SUB has not decided on future concert dates, Farber said, but they will most likely be held this semester or the beginning of next semester. He said the concerts will feature bands such as Friction, from Lewistown, and Asylum Blue, the band that has opened for the popular rock group Berlin.

He said 50 to 60 students, including four officers and numerous committee heads, are members of SUB. Interested students can join SUB, 222 HUB, any time of the year since the organization is always looking for new members with fresh ideas, Farber said.

Birth-control aids aborted pending sex education

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — Plans by University of Iowa students to dispense birth-control devices free of charge in a dormitory have been postponed in order to work first on improving sex education.

Randal Koppes, president of the Burge Associated Student House, said condoms were to be distributed to residents of the third floor of Burge in a "pilot program" because of sexual activity among college students. A box of 100 condoms was purchased with student activity fees.

However, because of fears about being sued and concerns of other students involved in running residence hall programs about dispensing the condoms without sex education information, the Burge plan has been delayed.

Koppes, a sophomore from Cascade, said to prevent any discrimination, there are plans to purchase non-prescription birth-control devices for women, too. He said a sex education informational meeting will be scheduled before the end of the year, at which time the birth control items will be dispensed free of charge.

George Droll, the university's director of residence services, said student dormitory governments "have that kind of freedom" on use of student activity fees, which come from a $4 assessment on each resident student.

Droll said university officials would not step in to prohibit use of student funds to purchase condoms.

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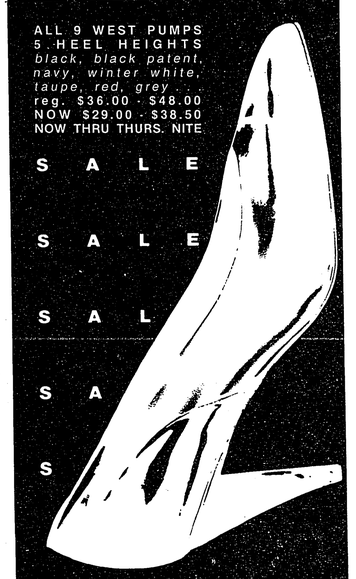
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Foreign language:
Bilingual students have the upper hand in the international job market

By LORI LINCOLN
Collegian Staff Writer

Foreign language skills are in a greater demand across the nation for individuals pursuing careers in teaching, translation and international business.

"Business has discovered a bilingual or multilingual person is at more of an advantage than a monolingual person with equal skills in the internationalized world," said Richard L. Frautschi, professor and head of the French department.

The business world is discovering that the growing world economy necessitates a knowledge of a foreign language and culture, Frautschi said.

He said not only is the growing need in business, but also in education. Ten years ago it was difficult to place graduates in foreign language teaching positions, but now the number of available teaching positions is exceeding the applicants.

"There is a demand for international skills because the American business environment is becoming more dependent on the foreign trade. Therefore, students who are able to deal with the foreign market will have better opportunities," said Jacob De Rooy, associate professor of managerial economics and statistics.

No data exists to suggest that employers are specifically demanding foreign language proficiency. However, many employers want students who understand international business, De Rooy said.

"I assume foreign language skills would be attractive to employers. It would strengthen the the job applicant's skill in dealing with international business relations," De Rooy said.

Ernest Schurer, head of the German department, credits part of the significant increase in enrollment in the German department because "students are becoming aware that knowing a foreign language gives them an advantage in the job market later on."

Students are continuing foreign language studies from high school and have had the opportunity to visit foreign countries before entering college, Schurer said.

Besides cultural enjoyment, students interested in the foreign service and international government jobs in Washington, D.C. need foreign language skills, Schurer said.

Jack Rayman, director of the University's Career Development and Placement Center said, however, he has not observed any rise in job opportunities for University students who possess a language skill and seek employment in technical areas.

Based on results from interviews arranged by the CDPC for students, Rayman said, "We have not noticed a new surge in demand for foreign language skills in our office based on interview activity."

Employers come to Penn State looking for people in technical areas, Rayman said, while graduates with foreign language skills usually have to leave the campus to find their jobs.

"There could be a change but we haven't seen it yet," Rayman said.

A minor in a foreign language would add breadth to a technical major. It is a nice plus if you have it but not of extreme high value at most positions, Rayman said.

From the vantage point of the University's Spanish department, there is clearly an increasing need for foreign language skills, said Leon F. Lyday, professor of Spanish and head of the Spanish, Italian and Portuguese department.

Job openings for translators are clearly on the upswing, Lyday said. Demands in other jobs areas, most obviously in teaching, have also increased, he said.

Foreign languages have gained importance among the national academia.

Many states have now instituted foreign language requirements. In addition, some areas of the nation are experiencing a shortage of foreign language teachers that is expected to become more critical over the next few years, Lyday said. There is an increased demand at the university and secondary level.

Job openings have more than doubled in the University Spanish department's placement manual for foreign language teaching at colleges and universities.

Subsequently, enrollment in foreign language classes has increased. The Spanish department experienced an increase of about 1,000 students this semester, Lyday said.

"Opportunities are much much better than they were five years ago, obviously there was a slump but obviously we are out of that slump," Lyday said.

More graduate assistants are needed also. As a general rule, a good student can teach anywhere they want and the stipends are getting better. Colleges are competing for students from other than just name colleges if the students have a good record, said Lyday.

"Clearly the light is at the end of the tunnel. There are job opportunities out there for foreign language students when they graduate," Lyday said.

American businesses are more aware of the international market and the expansion of the market and want students with a foreign language skill, Schurer said.

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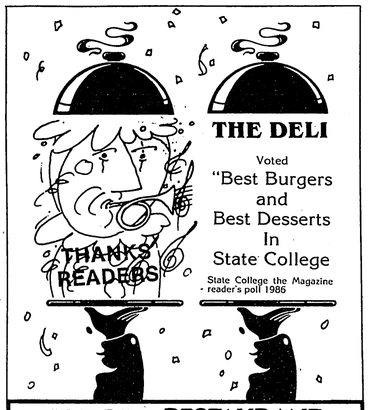

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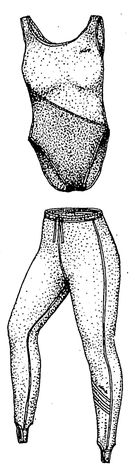
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