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Higher Education and the Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities

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RECRUITMENT TIMES

AN EMPLOYMENT NEWSLETTER FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Higher Education and the Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities

By David P. Gardner, President, University of California

The new Administration in Washington is looking to education, and especially to the nation's colleges and universities, to solve an array of problems, from assuring educational opportunity for young people of talent and promise to bolstering American competitiveness in the international marketplace.

To respond to these challenges, we first must provide the faculty needed to accommodate the dramatic growth in enrollments and resources that will be pressing upon our colleges and universities, beginning in the early to mid-1990s. During the next 16 years, for example, the University of California expects to add between 60,000 and 70,000 students to our current enrollment of 161,000 graduate and undergraduate students. This growth, along with expected faculty attrition due to retirements, resignations, disabilities and deaths will require UC to recruit approximately 10,200 new faculty members.

This is a staggering prospect to contemplate, given the marketplace within which we compete, the effort needed to compete successfully, and the high standards of scholarship and teaching to which we hold UC faculty. We must suc-



David P. Gardner

ceed; for our sake and for California's.

To recruit faculty, we need to expand the number of graduate students in UC, and to attract more women and members of minority groups to graduate and professional study. By doing so, we can maintain the vitality of our research endeavors, which in turn will attract the

funding necessary for us to develop new knowledge for tomorrow's technologies. New knowledge, and not just the application of what is already known, is increasingly the basis of the world's economic order.

Education at Work in the Marketplace

The pressures of the marketplace are requiring ever-higher levels of education. The Department of Labor estimates that most of the new jobs opening up between now and the year 2000 will, for the first time in history, require some postsecondary education. We need to attract more talented young people into academic careers to provide the education—undergraduate, graduate, and professional—that is becoming an increasingly important qualification for a successful career. In a world in which young people today can expect to change occupations three times, and jobs six or seven times, over the course of their working lives, education takes on a significance and a meaning without historical parallel.

UC offers both its undergraduate and graduate students options for bringing together the world of learning and the world of work. Under UC's SCOPE cooperative educa- (Continued on page 7)

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In The Spotlight

A Conversation with Kate Dwyer and Gretchen Thompson of First Interstate Bancorp

By Katy Noviello, Special Sections Writer



Kate Dwyer

Kate Dwyer is Vice President, Management Recruitment for First Interstate Bancorp, a position she has held for three years. Gretchen Thompson is Vice President and Manager of College Relations.

Q: In your position, Kate, what are your primary responsibilities?

Dwyer: I am essentially responsible for external recruiting for managerial, professional, technical and clerical positions for First Interstate Bancorp, the holding (Continued on page 4)



Gretchen Thompson

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Higher Education and the Workforce

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tion program, for example, students have the opportunity to work in paid, entry-level professional positions in both the private and the public sectors, from large corporations to non-profit foundations. This work experience, which generally lasts six months and can be either part- or full-time, is related to the student's major or career objective and is carefully planned in cooperation with the employer to assure a useful opportunity for learning. Employers are enthusiastic about the program, which gives them and talented young people a chance to get to know each other on a trial basis. A particularly encouraging aspect is the high rate at which minority students successfully complete these internships and go on to graduate.

Another example of UC's response to the needs of the marketplace is a relatively new interdisciplinary program in business administration and engineering, designed to give graduate-level training in the problems of technology management and transfer. An advisory board, composed of representatives of industry, gives advice on the program direction, possible sources of funding, and new ways to strengthen the links between academia and the private sector. As part of one's training, for example, a graduate student might spend time in a private company working on a specific technological problem, thus gaining practical experience while giving industry the benefit of recent research findings.

Owing to dramatic changes in California's demography, it's clear that we must attract more women and minorities into graduate and professional programs if there is to be a sufficient pool of talent trained and educated for the professions and the private and public sectors of our state.

At the University of California, we have inaugurated several new programs to respond to these realities. The Pregraduate Mentorship Program, scheduled to begin in July of this year, will identify and provide academic support to talented minority and women undergraduates to encourage them to pursue graduate study. The Graduate Fellowship Program offers financial and mentoring assistance to minority and women students, especially in those disciplines in which they are underrepresented. We also have a Postdoctoral Fellowship Program to help women and minorities enhance their competitiveness for faculty positions; UC, in fact, pioneered the idea of programs focusing on minorities and women at the postdoctoral level.

The University of California has a remarkable opportunity to help create the conditions that will permit California to remain economically, socially, and politically viable. We must succeed here as a state if we are to assist California and our country with the bewildering array of problems we confront, at home and abroad.

Times Lines

To Learn, Unlearn and Relearn

By Barbara Neder,
Reading Lab Administrator



Barbara Neder

"The illiterates of the future are not those who cannot read and write. They are those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

This prophecy by futurist Alvin Toffler has become reality for many of today's businesses as technology and cultural diversity are demanding employers to increase their roles as trainers and educators. The minimum requirement levels set by industry are such that employers can no longer rely solely on traditional educational institutions to produce a qualified workforce. Educators need support — financial and instructional — to produce the employees of tomorrow. In turn, employers need the support of educators to retrain the existing workforce.

Recognizing these needs, the Los Angeles Times has committed its leadership and resources to a computer-based learning lab. The Los Angeles Times Reading Lab has been open for a little more than a year. During this time, more than 250 individuals have received assistance with reading, writing and communications skills, basic literacy instruction, and computer-literacy.

In addition to its role as a computer-based basic skills center for Times employees and their families, the Reading Lab is a technology-centered basic skills center for the downtown community with participation from local businesses, social agencies, community organizations and schools. Another objective of the program is to offer the lab as a model for other employers and organizations to provide similar centers for their employees and the communities they serve.

Many employers find it difficult to accept that they have adult employees who are "functionally illiterate." Part of their reluctance stems from the fact the term illiterate is not limited in definition to a "person who cannot read at all." To be functionally illiterate means to lack the confidence to learn new technology and to contribute to the development of the business.

At The Times, employees hired to do a job manually are increasingly required to adapt those procedures to a computer. Setting the speed of a press or adjusting an ink level must now be done by reading a selection on a computer terminal and keying in the appropriate choice. Employees are experiencing "technical phobia." Some are saying, "I'm too old to learn," while others, given the opportunity, are eager to learn keyboarding skills and brush up on reading, spelling and other skills.

The task, therefore, before employers is to take a more active role in training and educating new employees, as well as retraining experienced workers for a smooth transition to new technologies being introduced to the workplace. The Reading Lab is just one way The Times is addressing these challenges. For more information, including the availability of a video presentation on the program, please give me a call at (213) 237-4738.