

CAREER SERVICES

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Welcome to the 2005 Edition of Career Services Update, brought to you by the Office of Career Services, Division of Student Affairs.

Parachute Express bus tour visits OU, offers students career advice

By Reanna Stoinoff

In 1968, Dick Bolles published a book that changed the way college students looked at life after college: *What Color is Your Parachute?* More than three decades and a million copies later, helpful career information found in this book is available not only in bookstores but nationwide on college campuses via four young college grads and a 40 foot RV. On September 19, the bus stopped at Ohio University to enlighten students about careers (and give away a few freebies, for good measure.)

Setting up camp at the Howard Hall site across from Baker University Center, two native San Franciscans and a 2005 OU grad beckoned



Parachute team member and OU alumna Erin Griffith quizzes students on career facts and trivia.

passersby to a tent set up with free resources and information (one member of the Parachute staff was not present on this leg of the road trip.) Using laptop computers, students could enter their information to receive free business cards, which they could pick up later at Career Services. "In 7 days we'll be shipping them to the Career Center [Office of Career Services]," said Diana San Diego, public relations and marketing officer. "We're trying to drive traffic to the career centers so students can take advantage of their resources."

Signing up for business cards automatically entered students in a drawing to win an iPod Shuffle (Katie O'Connor Farrell was OU's winner), and also a drawing in December to win a \$5,000 gift certificate from American Express.

Students could also spin a wheel and answer questions relating to interviews, living in the "real world," employment statistics, and trivia, and win prizes such as OU keychains and water bottles. Even those who got questions wrong learned vital facts, including the most professional accessory to bring to an interview (leather portfolio), the percentage of employed people who found their jobs online (four percent), and the bestselling female vocalist of all time (Shania Twain.)

Employees from the Office of Career Services collaborated with the enthusiastic, if not road weary, Parachute team members



Students received a variety of prizes by answering questions about careers, interviewing, and OU.



An OU student fills out her contact information for free business cards produced by Parachute.

to hand out free soda and informational packets to students who stopped by during class changes.

San Diego, who immigrated to San Francisco from the Philippines five years ago (according to her online profile), described her take on Ohio University from an outsider's point of view. "I like the brick and cobblestone paths; they give the campus a lot of character. I like that it is a mostly pedestrian campus and you

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Career Services Calendar

2005-2006 Academic Year

November:

• FINALS WEEK: Nov. 16-23. No mock interviews.

January:

• January 3: Beginning of winter quarter

February:

• WINTER CAREER FAIR Wednesday, February 8, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Convocation Center

March:

• FINALS WEEK: March 13-17.

No mock interviews.

• March 27: Be-

ginning of Spring Quarter

April:

• TEACHER RECRUITMENT CONSORTIUM Friday, April 7, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Convocation Center

June:

• FINALS WEEK: June 5-10. No mock interviews.

• GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

June 9

• UNDERGRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

June 10

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can actually see students walking to and from class."

She said that although students could visit the bus for one day on campus, they could also make use of the Parachute program's resources on the web. San Diego also offered a little history of the program.

"It was inspired by the book *What Color is Your Parachute?* which in 1970 was the bestselling job-hunting book on college campuses. Now, the people who read it originally are older, a lot probably with kids in college. We are trying to reintroduce the book, and it's hard to get students' attention without going over the top. So we bought a 40 foot RV and we're going to be in-your-face and tell students they don't have to wait to be offered career help—they can go get help from places like their career centers or the book."

Another member of the Parachute team was Erin Griffith, who graduated from Ohio University with a journalism degree in 2005. Ironically, Griffith is part of the four percent of people who find employment online—she learned about the program from Parachute's website, applied for the internship, and joined the team a week after their initial departure in St. Louis, Missouri. "It is exciting to come back, because everyone else (on the bus) is from San Francisco. I get to show them around and show them the Midwest lifestyle," she said.

As an OU alumna, Griffith said she has a different perspective of career searching than she did as a student. "It is never too early to start planning for your career," she said. "I waited until spring quarter of my senior year, and it took me three months to find this. No one wants to graduate and then move back home. It's never too early to build up your network and plan your next step."

One way to plan ahead and form career goals is to use the

services provided by the Office of Career Services. Griffith said she attended a mock interview and had her resume critiqued while she was a student here.

Ohio University was the tenth stop on a 12-week road trip for the four members of the Parachute bus team. The bus stayed in Ohio for three days, visiting Kenyon College and Ohio State University, as well.

Griffith explained that the staff does more than visit schools and hand out prizes. Each member has his or her own assignments to complete—often while in transit between schools. They work on laptop computers, producing newsletters, designing business cards, communicating with schools and managing other various tasks.

San Diego emphasized that the Parachute College Program is available online. "The RV is only one aspect of the program," she said. "We don't want to leave students hanging after we go. They can go to the website and read our blog, meet the team, and follow us to the other schools we visit." There are several other resources on the site, including links to various schools' career centers and newspapers, career related articles, and opportunities to become more involved with the program. The site can be reached at <http://www.parachute.com/college>.

Extra, extra:

Few may know that *What Color is Your Parachute?* was originally written and self-published by Dick Bolles, an Episcopalian minister, to help Episcopalian campus ministers keep their jobs during the late 1960's. The mysterious title originated after Bolles posed the famous question when someone said people in his organization were "bailing out." Neither the job-hunting guide nor the RV contains parachutes of any color. (Fact found at www.fastcompany.com.)

How to: Write a letter of recommendation

Students seeking employment or acceptance into graduate school often ask for letters of recommendation from their advisors and professors. There are several considerations you should follow if you are asked to write one. The following tips can be found along with a sample letter at <http://pages.ohio.edu/careers/faculty/refer.cfm>:

- Identify the student and the capacity in which you came to know him or her, including course names as well as numbers.
- Give as much evidence as possible of the student's personal developments or improvements over the course of time you have known him or her.
- Future employers and graduate schools will be evaluating candidates on the basis of several factors that you should mention if they apply to the student, including written/oral communication skills, motivation, organizational skills, technical/professional knowledge, flexibility, leadership abilities, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork skills.
- Avoid potentially discriminatory references (race, religion, national origin, marital status, age, etc.).
- Ask the student to provide you with a copy of his or her resume and career goals. This can help you get a broader idea of the student's accomplishments and strengthen your comments.
- If you feel you cannot give a positive recommendation, it is best to let the student know!

Recruiters report stronger job market this year

This year's college graduates might find some assurance in indications that the hiring climate is getting warmer.

Though after the recession of 2001, the job market suffered a severe drop, many companies in various sectors are reporting that they plan on increasing their staff by greater numbers than past years. A report released in December of 2004 by Matt Ferguson for CNN indicated that although "old standbys" such as healthcare had increased hiring, even slumping industries including manufacturing and information technology have seen substantial improvements in hiring.

For recent alumni and soon-to-be college graduates, this could mean not only more jobs available, but higher starting salaries and more opportunities for advancement. However, a college degree will not necessarily guarantee a position. "I don't want to say they're a dime a dozen, because they're very expensive, but a college degree isn't the only thing people (hiring employees) are looking for," said Rob Weil, a recruiter for CVS,

"So many people have college degrees now that you really have to have more to show than just that."

CVS was present along with approximately 100 other recruiting companies at Ohio University's fall Career Fair on October 12. Weil said the job market for college graduates, at least for CVS, is improving because the company is making a concerted effort towards attending all career fairs.

Matt Peter, a recruiter for Parker Hannifin, said in his five years with the company, he had never had as many positions open for college graduates. The manufacturing company with a branch in Cleveland attended the career fair in search of engineers. According to an article on www.jobweb.com, engineering firms are high on the list of companies most earnestly seeking new graduates.

U.S. Steel was another company that indicated a major surge in hiring of college graduates. Jinnyn Tata, Manager of Personnel and Labor Relations, and Rick Mahon, Manager of Employee Relations for the Lorain branch of

the company, attended the career fair seeking employees for many positions within the steel-making company. "We have a big commitment to hiring; we plan on hiring at least 200 grads in the next 2 years in our management training program," said Tata.

"We have a major initiative in our hiring program, and it reflects a change in the work force demographics," said Mahon. "We're looking for the next generation of leadership. There was a gap, and that is because the health of the industry has changed...There are opportunities for advancement and you can work your way up much quicker than ever before," he added.

Recruiters at this fall's career fair and recent reports are both indicative of a turn around in the job market. Though having a college degree does not eliminate competition in the workforce, 49 of the 50 highest paying jobs require a college degree, according to *The Occupational Outlook: Tomorrow's Jobs*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Career Services for Ohio University Faculty

FACULTY ASSISTANCE

Career Services devotes an entire section of our Web site to Ohio University faculty and staff. Here, you can find helpful tips on writing letters of reference, the Faculty Guide to Ethical and Legal Standards in Student Hiring, a list of Fortune 500 companies that recruit at Ohio University and the Faculty Advising and Referral Manual. Visit the faculty page of the Career Services Web site at <http://www.ohio.edu/careers/faculty/>.

OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Do you have an event that requires

you to miss class? Don't cancel! Staff members from Career Services will come speak to your students on one of the following topics: resume writing, cover letters and references, basic and advanced interviewing, career planning, career search strategies, or planning for graduate school. Or, you can arrange for your class to visit Career Services, where a staff member will describe our services and give them a tour of the Career Resource Center.

To schedule an outreach program, call our office at 593.2909, send an e-mail to career.services@ohio.edu, or complete the form found

on our Web site to submit to our office. Presentations--which last approximately 50 minutes--should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance and are also available to Regional Campuses through the compressed video system.

RESOURCES AND HANDOUTS

On the Career Services Web site, students can find useful information, including links to the Registration Session and Seminar handouts as well as career development information. These resources can be found in the Student section, under 'Resources and Handouts.'



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Office of Career Services
Career Update Newsletter
Fall Quarter 2005

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