

Under Cover

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ON FEBRUARY 10, the *Sooner Magazine* mailed 500 questionnaires to seniors in the College of Engineering. The seniors were asked:

- 1) Have you accepted employment yet?
- 2) Do you expect to be employed in-state or out-of-state?
- 3) Please list reasons for your choice of employment area.

We did not expect to prove anything from the questionnaire. We did expect to have a little clearer picture of what the senior is thinking about job-wise. We also expected the results to indicate the intensive search out-of-state companies are making for engineering talent. We were not disappointed on either score.

More than 40 per cent of the seniors completed their questionnaires. The figure is large enough to give validity to the scope of the answers. Here are the answers:

1) Have you accepted employment yet? A full four months remained of school work when the question was asked. Yet 27 percent of those answering had already accepted employment. Of the remaining 73 percent, several indicated they were about to make their selection.

2) Do you expect to be employed in-state or out-of-state? (Included in the percentage figures are those who have already accepted employment and those who merely express a preference.) Of those reporting, 76.8 percent have or expect to accept jobs out-of-state; 19.09 percent expect to remain in Oklahoma, and 4.09 percent were undecided.

A further breakdown seemed necessary. Percentage of in-state students electing to remain in Oklahoma is higher than out-of-state who wish to remain. In-staters who expect to remain figure 26.31 percent; 70.39 percent expect to leave, and 3.2 percent were undecided. Out-of-state students answered that 2.79 percent expect to stay in Oklahoma; 91.1 percent expect to leave, and 5.88 percent are undecided.

3) Please list reasons for your choice of employment area.

Those expecting to leave offered as their reasons better opportunities elsewhere,

availability of employment in their specialties elsewhere, better starting salaries, etc.

Some sample replies:

"Major reason is the initial salary is much higher out-of-state."

"I think Oklahoma tends to lag behind the times in state government, road building, and other factors which will attract industrial growth."

"My main reason for accepting employment outside of Oklahoma was that I found the out-of-state offers in the field in which I am interested more attractive not only in starting salary but in employment benefits."

"The opportunities in-state are not as numerous as out-of-state. There are many places I would rather live. Oklahoma has too much politics in just about everything."

"The in-state employers have not had as much to offer nor have they shown as much interest in me personally."

"More opportunities in the aeronautical field out-of-state."

"I am a chemical engineering major and the opportunities for Chem.E's in this state are rather limited. I do not particularly want to work for an oil company."

The 19.09 percent who have elected to stay in Oklahoma were not as explicit in their reasoning but just as firm.

"I like living in Oklahoma and intend to make my permanent home here."

"I prefer to work in an area in which I am most interested, familiar and comfortable."

"I like the state. In my type of work I believe I will find the best opportunities for a beginning architect."

"Oklahoma is my home, and that's where I want to work."

In brief, those who are leaving Oklahoma are nearly unanimous in believing that other areas offer greater opportunities. Those who elect to stay prefer to live in the Sooner state's environment.

Many of those planning to take out-of-state employment expressed a desire to see Oklahoma expand industrially so they might be able to return some day.

As the tempo of industrial development is ever increasing, the prospects of the state holding a major share of engineers in the future seems dim.

But as one young man phrased it, "It doesn't make any difference whether I stay in Oklahoma to live and work or not. In the engineering business, wherever you are, you are trying to continue the technical advancements of the past few years for all the people."

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