

Headhunters on the Campus

the recruiters are out in force in the annual search for the best colleges have to offer

By CAROL J. BURR

ON COLLEGE and university campuses throughout the country, an intensive search is under way, and the University of Oklahoma is right in the midst of the activity.

The object of this search is the graduating class of 1963; the participants are recruiters from business, industry, government and schools, each with a quota to fill and job specifications to satisfy. With more specialized jobs available than specialists to fill them, the recruiter's job isn't getting any easier—or as one veteran of the search explains, "We're looking more to find less." The problem is as old as business itself. You can always find a man for the job; finding the man is a different matter.

Playing the middle man in this matching

process is the University's office of employment services. The office does not attempt to get a Sooner graduate a job. Rather the placement advisers attempt to give the graduate opportunities to win a position for himself. Their efforts have met with a great deal of success.

Last year 230 business and industrial employers and 63 school systems conducted 2,597 personal interviews on the O.U. campus. Employment services referred the names of its 1,266 registrants to inquiring employers nearly 14,000 times, both in person and by mail. Ninety-six per cent of those registering with the office were placed in jobs. So far in 1962-63 the number of interviews and inquiries is running considerably ahead of last year. In the month of February alone 92 employers visited the campus compared to 77 in February, 1962.

Of course graduates in some fields are easier to place than others. Employment Director Leonard D. Harper verifies that the emphasis is still on the sciences where rapidly expanding research programs are a tremendous drain on the supply of technically trained personnel. But the demand is also particularly high for accountants and management trainees, as well as for chemists, physicists, mathematicians and engineers. Advanced degrees are much more important, especially in scientific fields.

While Harper's office handles most of the organized placement work on the campus, it is not the only source of jobs for Sooner graduates. Many graduates who never register with employment services secure jobs through their own efforts—personal contacts, former employers, alumni, etc. Some employers go directly to the department involved, making inquiries through department chairmen or profes-

sors, a practice common in many areas such as journalism, library science and law.

Even organized placement is somewhat decentralized. The College of Engineering, for instance, still handles all its own placement work, with its own placement director scheduling its own interviews. Geologists, while coordinated more closely with the general placement office, are still interviewed in the geology building rather than in the central interview facilities in the Union. This partial decentralization is a major complaint of several of the larger companies who must send three recruiters to conduct separate interviews for engineers, geologists and business graduates rather than one man to interview all three. Some employers, on the other hand, prefer interviewing in the department facilities where student records and professors are more readily available for reference.

But the recruiters face many problems more serious than finding a convenient place to talk to prospective employees. Most of them are professional interviewers with many years of experience in sizing up applicants. Although few can offer a prospect a job on the spot, they must be able to determine in a 20-minute interview whether the applicant satisfies the basic requirements to merit further investigation, such as a visit to the company headquarters.

Not only must the recruiter find men who can do the job, but he must also find the type of men who will satisfy the personal preferences and prejudices of the company supervisors for whom they will eventually work. "I'm just a headhunter," a recruiter for a major oil company admits, "but I have to come back with the kind of heads the departments want." This task is becoming more and more difficult.



Conferences with employment recruiters allow for closer examination of work opportunities.

One recruiter interviewing at O.U. this year confided that he had 230 vacancies to fill—50 engineers, 150 research technicians and 30 business graduates. He termed his task almost impossible. Commissioned to find 12 petroleum engineers, he felt he would be lucky to hire three of the caliber his company desires since demand will so far exceed supply in this field this year.

Of course many factors complicate the final decision on employing a new college graduate. Some recruiters make a point of talking to the wife of a young man they are considering. Does she mind moving? Will she be happy in the area of the country in which the company is located? Can she accept the social responsibilities accompanying the job? These are all issues which the recruiter must resolve in his own mind before recommending her husband for the job.

In the initial contact most recruiters look for the same qualities in a prospect—alertness, good scholastic record, stability, neatness, proper attitude toward the job and the company he is interviewing. Yet each interviewer has his own particular gauge for evaluating a man.

"I'm not interested in a chap who puts restrictions on his employment," an interviewer for a large food company states flatly. "I look for a fellow who is positive without being cocky—a fellow who has faith in himself."

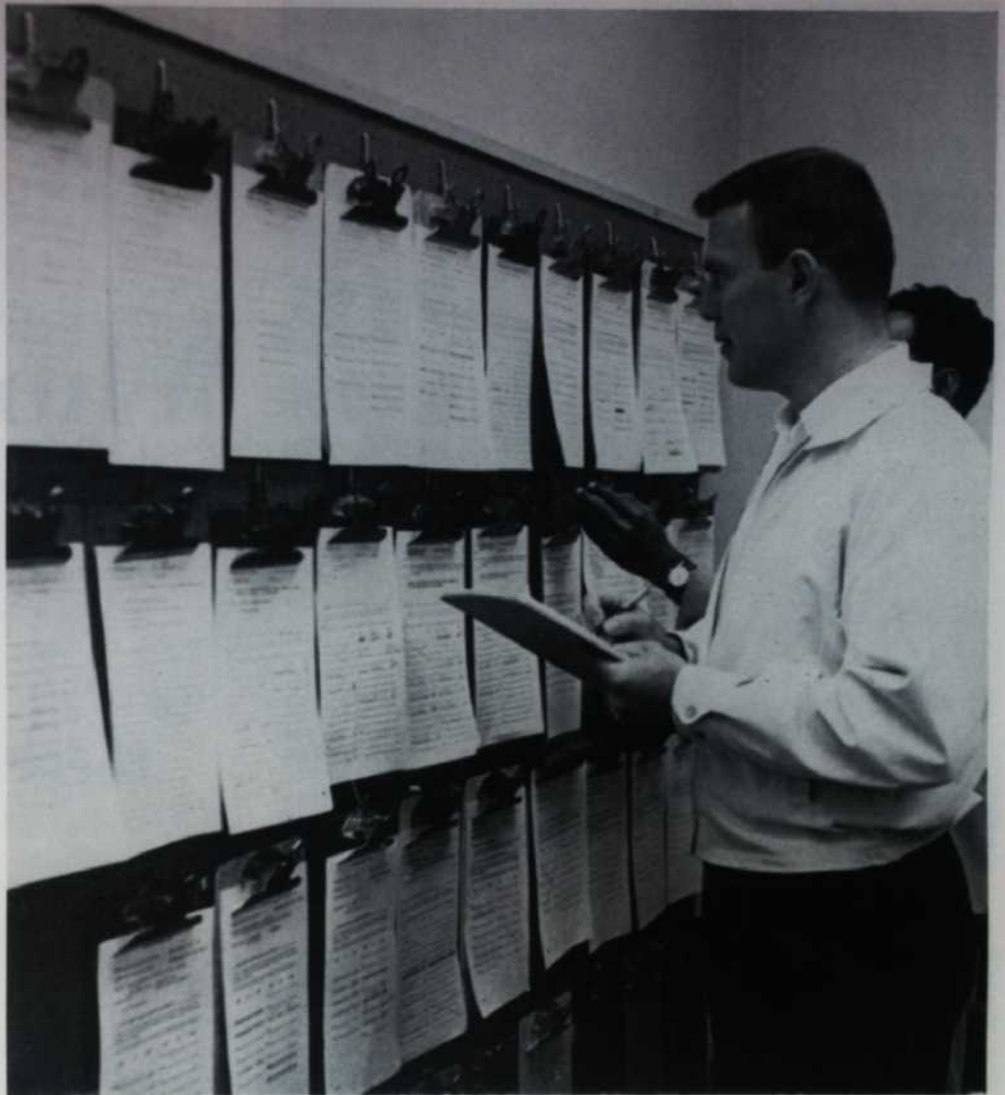
The first thing one interviewer for civilian Air Force employees looks for is "that sparkle in the eye." But he also looks for a certain amount of drive in the manner of the scientific technicians he interviews. "We want men who can ride with developments in research, who adapt quickly."

RAPID changes within the industries they represent is altering the recruiters' approach. The food company man, for instance, finds supply of personnel adequate since in his business "you no longer need as many people to do the same amount of work."

The civil service interviewer must spend much of his efforts in acquainting prospective graduates with the recently improved civil service benefits and in convincing them that while government employment may not be competitive with industry in starting salaries, it is competitive in the over-all career situation.

An interviewer for airline hostesses feels his major obstacle is in overcoming the impression that these are strictly "party jobs" and in finding the maturity in the applicants that his company seeks.

The oil company representative complains that business education has not kept



Constant reminders to all students interested in scheduling interviews for job placements are posted on a clipboard-covered wall of O.U.'s business and industrial placement office.

pace with the mechanization of business procedures, i.e. computers, and he cannot find business graduates with adequate mathematics backgrounds. The engineers he interviews, on the other hand, have strong math and science preparation but little preparation in dealing with people, with their greatest weakness in the ability to express themselves either orally or in writing.

The professional recruiters are not alone in fitting the applicants to the jobs, however. The employment services office must do more than keep books in this matching game. Director Harper, who also supervises part-time student employment and University staff employment below the administrative and professional levels, has some able assistance in the placement phase of his job.

In charge of the business and industrial placement office is Mrs. Virginia Farmer, '36fa, who moved to that desk from teacher placement this year. A sympathetic, favorite-aunt type of person, Mrs. Farmer is a worrier whose major concern is seeing that

students have an opportunity to present themselves to employers in the best possible light. To better advise the hard-to-place graduates, Mrs. Farmer has even gone back to school herself with a course in educational psychology centered on vocational information.

Traditional placement problems have been the social science majors who do not wish to teach. This situation is improving, however, since most sales departments are interested in majors in any fields. A large Fort Worth department store, for instance, is showing a preference for applicants with a broad, liberal arts background.

More difficult to place are the students who have the wrong major for the occupation they prefer. They have trouble securing interviews in the field they favor because they do not fit the registration qualifications set by the employers. Mrs. Farmer can only attempt to persuade the recruiters to allow the "special cases" to register for interviews.

On the other side Mrs. Farmer often has

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The Night People

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For the part-time students, completion of the MBA program generally takes three years. A total of 36 hours of course work is required for the degree, with at least one course in each of the six major departments of the College of Business Administration—accounting, economics, business management, finance, marketing and statistics.

"The presence of professional people in

Scholar-Athletes

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wrestling champion and recent winner of the Big Eight tournament's outstanding wrestler award, led the wrestlers in grades and again made the dean's honor roll. Center Harvey Chaffin was high grade point man for Coach Bob Stevens' basketball team with a 3.20 average.

First baseman Don Finkenbinder and pitcher Doyle Tunnell led the baseball squad with honor roll caliber grade averages.

The track team, last year's Big Eight outdoor champions, consistently brings in high grade averages and now has thirteen men with B averages or better. Noteworthy scholastic performances came from shot-putter Mike Miers, 3.80 in history; hurdler Steve Morelock, 3.29 in journalism; middle distance runner Walt Mizell, 3.19 in government, and co-captain Dick Neff, 3.0 in engineering physics.

Combining athletics and academics in an exemplary fashion is nothing new. Just go down the list of Sooner alumni who excelled on the playing field as well as in the classroom. To name a very few, they are men like former basketball stars William F. Martin, '38bus, secretary-treasurer of Phillips Petroleum, and Victor Holt Jr., '28bus, vice president of Goodyear Tire and Rubber; trackman Dillon Anderson, '28bus, prominent Houston attorney; footballer Hal L. Muldrow Jr., '27bs, former 45th division commander and now state senator; polo player Marion W. Hefley, '27eng, a chief engineer with the state highway department; tennis stalwarts J. Claude Monnet, '20ba, '22Law, and Paul G. Darrough Sr., '13ba, '15Law, both Oklahoma City attorneys, and the late geologist Pollok (Polly) Wallace, '27ba, '35ms, who earned his letters in football and wrestling and a Phi Beta Kappa key.

These Sooners must have broken the "big, dumb athlete" mold years ago—when no one was looking.

our classes enriches and enlivens the discussions considerably," says Dr. Dennis M. Crites, professor of marketing who teaches a night course in sales management. Other instructors in the MBA program hold similar views.

Dr. O. D. Westfall, David Ross Boyd professor of accounting, feels that "it definitely tones up the class to have people with practical experience making contributions to the discussion. Since my class is small (10 students), it can be conducted in seminar style, where everyone can talk freely."

James M. Murphy, professor of finance, has 60 students in his section, but he is still keenly aware of the presence of career men in the classroom. "There are several geologists and engineers in my class. As a whole, students in the class have had more undergraduate training in mathematics than the average group. The diversity of backgrounds makes the class more interesting."

Professor of business communications A. L. Cosgrove, who teaches advanced report writing, explains, "The part-time students can associate what they learn in class with their daily experiences in the business world. Because the material is so meaningful to them, they are apt to be very attentive. On the other hand, full-time students are in a position to see the same instructional material from a broader perspective, since they are planning for the future rather than the present."

The evening program was instituted in 1961, after a period of intensive study by

the College of Business Administration's long-range planning committee. The result was an answer to six years of requests from business firms and military establishments throughout Oklahoma for a night-time MBA program at O.U.

Committee members, all still at O.U., were Dr. William H. Keown, David Ross Boyd professor of business management; Dr. Jim E. Reese, David Ross Boyd professor of economics; Dr. Ronald B. Shuman, research professor of business management, and Westfall.

But even while establishing the MBA program to meet the needs of professional management people, the business college has been quick to point out that graduate schooling does not assure administrative competence, just as business employment itself does not necessarily result in personal development and preparation for executive leadership.

"It is apparent, however," Associate Dean Childress contends, "that through business study a qualified college or university graduate can become more knowledgeable in the disciplines underlying business operations and considerably more skillful in facing complex administrative situations and making decisions about them. He has genuinely more understanding of both the internal, human and social environment of the business firm and the economic, political and international forces shaping the external environment in which it must operate."

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difficulty finding applicants for "problem jobs"—such as a recent inquiry for a business manager for the state mental hospital at Taft. The applicant had to be a Negro with a business degree.

Mrs. Barbara Ballentine, who is in charge of teacher placement, finds a similar problem in finding teachers who wish to interview for teaching positions on Indian reservations in Arizona and New Mexico. The teacher employment situation in general is a very good one for the graduates. In some fields—home economics, women's physical education, library science—the teachers can pretty well have their pick of jobs, and only social science teachers seem plentiful.

Engineers also have a wide choice. Dr. William E. Carson, dean emeritus of the College of Engineering and director of engineering placement, reports that this year's engineering graduate will be able to choose from six or seven job offers. The demand for accountants is second only to that for

engineers. Geologists, alternately sought after and ignored as petroleum industry fluctuates, are once again being courted by the oil companies.

It seems unlikely that supply and demand in employment will ever come out even. Business, industry and government will continue the endless search for quality in the right quantity, and the institutions that do the best job of keeping pace educationally with the employers' needs will also do the best job of placing their graduates. But part of the responsibility for seeing that the colleges and universities keep pace will rest even more heavily with the employers themselves. Many of them recognize this fact.

"Too often business and industry ignore the colleges," a representative of a large industry contends. "We don't care what they are doing or what they need until we need something from them—then we can't understand why the colleges can't give us exactly what we want."