Needed—a college degree plus

By James L. Roberts

The decade of the 1960s was a period in which we saw a tremendous shortage of college trained individuals.

This was also a period in which we were behind in the space race and a period in which many corporations were beginning to look for college graduates for the many positions that were available with their organizations.

As a result of this, we were beginning to see more and more individuals matriculating at various colleges and universities across the country. Ultimately in 1970-71, 839,730 individuals received their bachelor's degree.

This was a 43 percent increase over 1960-61. It is projected that over 1 million individuals will receive their bachelor's degree in 1980-81.

However, inspite of the significant educational gains made by the American people, we are finding that jobs are not increasing at the same rate.

We are beginning to find not only a tremendous number of underemployed college graduates, but also a significant number of unemployed college graduates.

Many people, particularly black people were led to believe that a college education would be the answer to their financial problems and would insure them a part of the American dream.

To the contrary, we are finding that many black college graduates are becoming frustrated when they find that no longer is the college degree their ticket to get a job.

The intent of this article is not to disillusion anyone about a college education. Its intent is to inform one of other experiences they will need to be more competitive in the job market.

BLACK COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

The number of blacks in colleges more than doubled in just seven years — from half a million students in 1970 to 1.1 million in 1977. Blacks now account for 11 percent of the nation's college enrollment.

Much of this increase was brought about because of the National Student Defense Loan Program, as well as financial aid, various grants and scholarships that were made available to black students at predominately white institutions.

In addition to enrolling more black college students, there was also a significant number of blacks earning their degree on all levels. In 1976, blacks earned 6.3 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded, 6.4 percent of the master's degrees and 3.4 percent of the doctorate degrees.

However, in examining these figures closer, one will be able to see that the proportion of degrees earned by black graduates is higher in education and in the humanities.

These are areas that are not in demand as it relates to the job market. Not only these students, but those in academic areas of demand need to do many things while in college in order to secure a meaningful job.

MORE THAN A COLLEGE DEGREE

It is important that in addition to receiving a college degree, that one take advantage of other experiences that are offered to them as a college student.

Many of these experiences will make it possible for a college graduate to have more to include in their resume than just their educational background.

Needless to say, one

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A job is like jogging. It's good for your health — but it's no fun to go around in circles. It's much more satisfying if you're getting somewhere.

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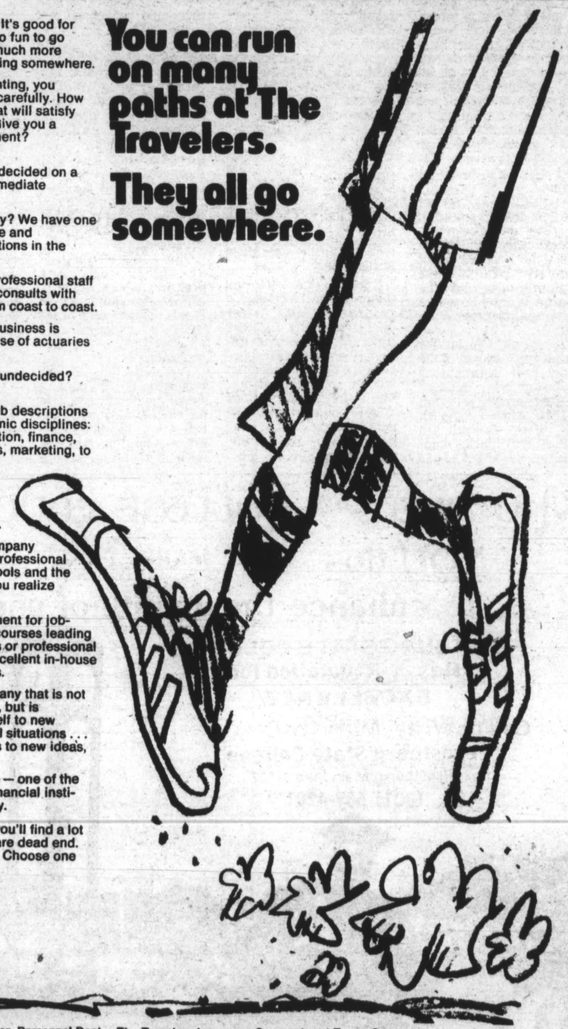

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important factor in achieving good grades. Although grades are not the only factor involved in selecting a person for a job, it is one of the considerations.

You will find that for many technical positions, e.g. engineering, computer science, chemists, mathematics and also accounting, that an employer will put a lot of emphasis on grades.

Another important point is taking advantage of the Cooperation Education Program. This program involves an integration of academic study and practical work experience in the professional world.

Students alternate semesters of full - time academic study with semesters of full - time work in private business, industry and government agencies, both federal and state.

The basic idea is to have the student acquire some meaningful, yet useful, experience that can be related to theory being taught in the classroom. The program also allows the participant to decide on an eventual career while at the undergraduate level.

Another program that is similar to the Cooperative Education Program is the Summer Internship Program.

This program is also designed to give the student some significant work experience, as well as paying them for this experience.

The Summer Intern program is offered generally for students who are in their junior year.

There are also many internship programs that are offered to college students that involve no pay. Although a student is not paid for this experience, it is another excellent way for a college student to gain some meaningful work experience.

Anyone of these experiences will give the college student an added edge whenever taking a job interview.

In addition to having a college degree, the student or soon to be a graduate, can intelligently converse about a career field and some of the things they did while working for a particular organization.

Many employers are particularly interested in those students who had a cooperative education or internship experience. Also, those employers who had good summer interns or cooperative education students working for them will usually make job offers to them.

Not all students are able to participate in extra curricular activities, because their schedules might not permit this.

However, it would be advantageous for the student who has the time to be involved in extra - curricular activities.

Many employers feel those students who participated in extra - curricular activities are well rounded. Also, the student who might have been an officer in one of these organizations can convey to an employer his or her leadership potential as well as organizational skills.

CAREERS OF THE FUTURE

This is an age of technology, one in which we will see even more technological gains. This is the age which Alvin Toffler refers to as Future Shock.

We will see home computers, which will allow people to figure their taxes, obtain information on entertainment, pay their bills and send messages to friends and relatives.

With the spread of cable - television systems and communication satellites, hundreds of electronic highways will be created to bring families an almost endless variety of data and entertainment possibilities.

In essence, the 1980s will be the golden age of the computer — the period in which inexpensive calculating devices and electronic machines will become a [illegible] part of Amer[illegible] life.

Because of this, there will be a tremendous demand for individuals with technical backgrounds such as electrical, mechanical and industrial engineers, computer operators, technicians and programmers. Opportunities for accountants will also be increasing at a rapid rate.

New gains will be made and will continue to be made in the health area. In addition to the demand for more doctors and nurses, we will be needing

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