

"WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THAT DEGREE?"

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As I return home each summer vacation to the dull syndrome of working a 40-hour week to make money for school, it has never ceased to amaze me that several times during that 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. period, people would let their curiosity run away from them and ask me about my major at college. Believing that they were earnestly interested, I told them -- thereby receiving this expected response: "But what are you going to do with that degree?" Their reaction to "that" would not only redden my facial appearance but made what pride I had in me diminish. Approaching each September rather despondently in light of the increasingly worse job market, that "response" after a while became quite comfortable within the machinery of my mind. Just what was I going to do with "that" degree??? With graduation only in a year's time, I decided to find out.

The most common and logical place to look for employment is a newspaper. Everyone, myself included, turns to this unexpansive resource first. During the summer of 1974, the New York Times Employment Ads took the place of breakfast. As long as the columns contained jobs, I continued my day with hope and energy. But this was still not reliable enough. Going through my notebooks I came across the May 1974 edition of the CLIO and re-read an article entitled: "So You Wanna Get A Job: A Reader's Guide" by Drs. David Detzer and Kenneth Young. This article discussed many sources that I found useful in my job hunting efforts. Some include the Federal Career Directory: Guide for College Students, The Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Occupational Handbook and the College Placement Annual. After a brief summary of these sources, the authors filled in the necessary steps of a formal letter, location of work, resumes and

interviews that should help you obtain a job of your own choice. With nose-grinding efforts, I read and re-read the Federal Career Directory: Guide for College Students (1973 edition) and found general descriptions of the jobs available to college students with different federal agencies. Some of the offices a "Liberal Arts--History" major may consider are listed under the General Services Administration. This administration includes: (1) the PBS -- Public Building Service -- whose job is in planning, designing, constructing and leasing commercial space; (2) the Federal Supply Service -- an agency that acts as a manager of everything from procurement to public utilities and transportation; (3) the National Archives and Records Service -- known as "the memory of the nation"; and (4) the Automated Data and Telecommunications Service -- whose purpose is to provide data processing and telecommunication services to agencies of the federal government. These agencies offer training programs in personnel and budget administration, archival and records management, investigation and law.

In the Department of Health, Education and Welfare I investigated those professional opportunities within the Social Security Administration as well as teaching positions in the Federal Prison Service. (Teaching opportunities in this service, for instance, start at Government Service level # 5 -- (GS-5) -- the minimum requirements being a 4-year Bachelor's degree and certification. The highest degree you can obtain is GS-9 for which you must have had 2 years of professional experience or an over-all cum of 3.5, a GRE score of 600 or better, or else, the completion of requirements for a master's degree. There are other options in the stipulations for the levels of degrees that can be met.)

Careers in the Social Security Administration include: (1) a Social Insurance Representative who take claims through personal and telephone interviews for all types of social security benefits and thereby develops and adjudicates these claims; (2) a Social Insurance Claims Authorizer who decides

whether an applicant is entitled to social security benefits and in what amounts. In addition, there is a Management Intern Program that provides over a 2 year period of intensive on-the-job and classroom training, broad knowledge and experience in technical and administrative positions. (A person in this program is usually assigned to a different job every few months thereby enabling him to obtain experience in various bureaus and offices.) The final career opportunity the SSA offers a college grad is in Computer Programming. Not only does one keep tabs on individual earning records of almost 230 million Americans in this job, but one is also responsible for the computation of benefits as well as the utilization of SSA socio-economic data resources for research. These positions generally start at a GS-7 rating and go as high as GS-12 or GS-14. Your rating is determined by educational honors (for instance, members of Phi Alpha Theta as well as those of other honor societies are entitled to start any government position with a GS-7 rating) and your grade on the PACE (Professional and Administrative Career Examination).

Did someone mention PACE? Before I ramble any further, a few wise words about "Charley PACE" must be said. First of all, this exam is given periodically in the major cities of this country (in Connecticut, for instance, they are given in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, etc.) and lasts $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours with a ten-minute break. It begins at the early-bird hour of 8:30 A.M. on a Saturday morning, but expect to sit still until 1-1:30 P.M. If you breathe the wrong way, it could be a federal offense! -- so be careful. The test includes questions on verbal ability (similar to those found on a SAT or GRE Exam) and on math skills (that seem to date back to those learned in 7th or 8th grade). Also, there are the analyses of stories whereby one displays his ability to choose the best possible solution as well as his talent to put data in order. For instance, a question would read: "Put the following list in its correct sequence" --

- (1) He types.
- (2) He writes his paper.

- (3) He writes a rough draft.
- (4) He hands in the finished copy.
- (5) He does research.

Choices: A -- 5,2,1,3,4 B -- 3,4,5,2,1
C -- 2,1,4,3,5 D -- 1,3,2,5,4

These are fun to do in the beginning of this section but become increasingly difficult as one continues. The final sections of this exam are more math-oriented using, for instance, symbols in need of decoding. If you do not test well on tests of this kind, chances are that you'll probably do poorly on PACE. However, they can be taken more than once -- there's no fee -- and if you're really determined to get a position with the government, it's worth the $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour endeavor. (Personally, I do not feel that this exam is a good indicator of a candidate's ability to assume professional responsibilities with the federal government.)

Virtually all branches of the federal government offer career training for college graduates. So if you feel like sampling life in a Bedouin camp or hunting man-eating lions in Africa, then the Foreign Service is the place to go! No, I'm afraid that writing a "brownie" letter to Henry Kissinger won't get you very far -- so your best option is to let the Department of State in Washington, D.C. know you're interested in employment. This is one of the toughest departments to get into. Appointments are made on a very competitive basis. A candidate must be 21 years of age, a U.S. citizen, pass a written and oral exam, and (if appointed) serve one complete tour of duty which usually lasts from 2 to 3 years. The written exam is difficult and is designed to measure one's understanding of those institutions and concepts that are basic in the development of the United States as well as those of other countries. It requires a well-rounded liberal arts background with an emphasis on forms of government, political and economic practices of the U.S., social patterns, geography, literature, art, and philosophy. The written exam is broken into four sections: (1) 1 hour

exam on general background; (2) 45 minute exam on English Expression; (3) 1 hour exam on a Functional Field of Specialization such as administrative, economic/commercial, political and consular, or informational; and (4) a 45 minute essay.

Here are some examples of typical question to expect:

Question #1 -- The dismissal of the appeal is supported by reference to international law and to:

- (a) maritime regulations
- (b) the laws of other nations
- (c) municipal legislation
- (d) the statute of the Admiralty Court
- (e) intervention

Question #2 -- Rank the following countries according to the size of their 1971 per capita GNP (from largest to smallest):

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|------------|-------------------|------------|
| (a) Israel | (b) Great Britain | (c) Mexico |
| (d) Sweden | (e) Egypt | |

Those questions I found most interesting to do were in the "Information and Culture" section consisting of artificial languages. For instance: "What are these?" might be written as -- "? ardimo za uthuta utib". The correct response ("they are dogs") might therefore be written as "ardimo sy utoled lu utiba lu."

If you can get through this written exam, the only other obstacle you need fear is an oral examination in front of a Board of Examiners in Washington, D.C. testing your knowledge of U.S. foreign policy as well as your ability to get through awkward situations requiring much diplomacy on your part. Upon the successful completion of this oral, you may very well find yourself on your way to a Bedouin camp! True, it is a very difficult exam but it is by no means impossible.

It should be noted here that although there is no foreign language requirement, it is highly preferred that a candidate for foreign service possess a strong potential for language. As page 13 of the 1974 Examinations for Foreign Service Officer Careers booklet states:

Knowledge of a foreign language is not a requirement for appointment to Foreign Service. After appointment, however, officers are expected to acquire an acceptable level of proficiency in at least one foreign language, and junior officers are limited to no more than one promotion until they do so. New officers are given language tests after they enter on duty. Those who pass a speaking and reading test in one of 40 or more foreign languages end their language probation and may in some instances become eligible to receive a higher salary in their officer class. Full time training is provided at government expense as necessary.

Now that you're snowed under with information, what can you conclude? First of all, don't let anything stop you from looking for the job that best fits you. Government agencies are just one way to find a place in the working world. For instance, you could write to your Congressman and get an application for a Congressional or Senatorial aide position (full or part-time). There are also field jobs with publishing or encyclopedia companies; however, if you are looking for a guaranteed income, steer away from such "field or sales representative" positions for in such jobs you survive strictly on commissions.

Other job possibilities I have investigated as a liberal arts/history major are with New England Telephone, Alert (a Women's Legislative Review publication), area newspapers, and Traveler's Insurance. All of the above-mentioned have comprehensive college/career-oriented programs. (In addition, especially for those of you very interested in law, but can't afford and/or get into law school at this time, you can train as a "Legal Assistant" at the Paralegal Institute Inc. in New York City. The course offered there is three months long, costs about \$1500, and gives practical training in legal research, financing, divorce law, domestic relations as well as corporate law. You must be a college graduate to be eligible for acceptance.)

In closing, the French-Algerian philosopher Albert Camus felt that man should work actively and determine his own destiny. And thus my advice to all of you: "Don't be passive but be cautious." Consider the prevailing economic conditions and try to determine when would be the best time to go job hunting --

to speak in person with the man or woman who might be a future employer.
No matter what: STAY CONFIDENT! Don't let mailbags of returned resumes¹
shake you. Set your goals but realize that you may not reach them immediately.

This summer whenever someone asks me "what are you going to do with
That degree?" I shall tell them that the answer does not lie in what I do to-
day but in what I may accomplish tomorrow.