Networking is the key to landing a job

By Tim Green
Enterprise Reporter

Students filed passed table after table looking for the right job at last week’s career fair. While this is a good way to find a job, students shouldn’t limit themselves to one way of seeking out employment, said Joyce Tyler, director of Career Services.

There are a number of strategies that students can use to get a job. Students should use all methods of finding a job including: Internet job sites, want ads, internships and programs provided by Career Services, she said. But students need to use one important tool.

“Networking—It’s the number one way of getting a job,” Tyler said.

The recent career fair was meant to develop students’ networking skills, giving them a chance to meet with employers face-to-face, according to Tyler. Another form of networking is to speak with professors about finding a job. “People should take advantage of the strong relationships they’ve built up with faculty members,” said Tyler. “It has helped so many students to find a job.”

In a survey of 2002 Rider graduates, it showed that they used these very strategies to find employment successfully. Seventy-eight percent of graduates who responded to the survey found full-time employment and 82 percent found work in fields related to their majors.

Some of the most popular careers are in accounting, the sciences, finance and education, said Tyler. Education majors who focus on special education, foreign languages, math or science are in particularly high demand at the moment.

But Tyler pointed out that liberal arts majors do especially well. “Liberal arts majors are hired across the board,” she said. “These majors have a wide range of skills that can get them many different jobs.”

Students in a certain major are not necessarily pigeonholed into that career, according to Tyler. She urged student to go to the “What can I do with this major?” page on the Career Services website, which will list the job possibilities for any major.

It is also good for a student to be “geographically flexible” when it comes to looking for employment.

“Here in the Northeast, we are saturated with college students and that’s competition,” said Tyler. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), Raleigh-Durham, NC, San Jose, CA and Washington, D.C. are the top three “boom towns” for careers. But, for students who want to work locally, Middlesex and Somerset Counties, as well as Philadelphia are listed as other top job markets.

NACE also reported that hiring between April and June will be higher than it has been since the first quarter of 2001. If students are looking to relocate, it could mean higher salaries depending on where the job is.

In New Jersey the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) breaks down the state into nine metropolitan areas. Those areas are: Atlantic/ Cape May; Bergen/Passaic; Jersey City; Middleses/ Somerset/ Hunterdon; Monmouth/Ocean; Newark; Philadelphia; Trenton and Vineland/Millville/ Bridgeton. Generally jobs in Trenton, Jersey City and Newark yield fewer earnings than the other areas. Yet salaries are highest in the Bergen/Passaic area, according to the BLS.

The change in salary is attributed to “industry mix”, said Soliddie Waiser, spokeswoman for the BLS, New York/New Jersey regional office.

“Occupational pay may not vary much from one area to the other within the state but average pay for the areas can vary depending on employment within each of these industry divisions,” said Waiser.

However, Tyler suggested that students who want to relocate look in areas where the cost of living is low, but salaries are competitive.

Tyler wants to remind students to make an appointment with Career Services and make use of their programs. If students would like to see the current employment outlook for their desired field and the salaries they might earn, they can visit the Bureau of Labor Statistics website at www.bls.gov.

Networking is the key to landing a job