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What Do Economics Graduates Do?

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Economics Newsletter

Economics Department

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WHAT DO ECONOMICS GRADUATES DO ?

This question is frequently asked by students in high school, or by college students who have yet to make a firm choice of a major area of study. The fact is that South Dakota State University students who graduate with a major in Economics fan out in a wide variety of vocational activities. The range in the types of work in which our graduates are engaged is probably related to the breadth of educational experience which is covered by their college training.

Four Majors Available. The Economics Department offers work leading to the B. S. degree with majors in either Agricultural Economics, or in Agricultural Business, in the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences. In 1972 about 100 students were enrolled in these two programs, with a slightly larger number in Agricultural Business than in Agricultural Economics.

The Economics Department also offers curricula leading to both the B.A. and the B. S. degrees in the College of Arts and Science. These programs of study are likely to be selected by students whose educational goals call for little or no emphasis upon technical agriculture. In 1972, a total of about 100 students were enrolled in these programs. An overwhelming majority were working toward the B. S. degree. Thus, a total of about 200 students were majoring in Economics in 1972 under the options offered.

Principal Areas of Employment. The following types of activity represent the major outlets for our Economics graduates in recent years.

1. Business, including manufacturing, distribution, and sales.
2. Finance, including banking and other lending agencies.
3. Farming and ranching, and other private enterprise.
4. Civilian government agencies.
5. Military services.
6. Graduate school.

Placement Services. The University provides a Placement Service which coordinates and arranges interviews with potential graduates by representatives of firms seeking employees. Many firms, agencies, or individuals will get in touch with the Economics Department, or a member of its staff, to inquire as to the availability of one or more graduates, perhaps with special interests or abilities, who might be interested in their type of work. The Department transmits this information to any likely prospects who might fit these particular needs.

Geographical Preferences. Most of our Economics graduates are South Dakota natives. Many of them have a preference for remaining in South Dakota, or the Upper Midwest, following graduation, if the opportunities here are reasonably competitive with those in more distant locations. Certainly our economic future is closely related to our

ability to retain the services of our most capable young people.

What Employers Like About S.D.S.U. Graduates. Visiting with employers who recruit on the SDSU campus has brought out some interesting reasons why they like to hire our graduates. Many have expressed it this way.

1. Our people know how and are willing to work.
2. They are resourceful and usually can improvise when a situation requires immediate action.
3. They have generally had some exposure to leadership experiences and organizational structures.

Training Periods Utilized. Although new employees may be carefully selected, a training program is generally set up for the initial period of employment. Such a period may cover several months. During this time, the employee becomes acquainted with organizational procedures, personnel, and policies, and the employer has a chance to observe, at closer range, how the new recruit responds to the challenges and responsibilities of his new work. Some

of the more selective employers have gone so far as to set up summer trainee programs for students who have completed two or three years of their college program. This device permits the employer to get an early look at some promising prospects. It gives the student a preview of potential career employment--and a chance for summer earnings. Yet neither party is bound to any long-range future commitment.

Some Continue Education. A number of able students continue their education beyond the Bachelor's degree. Schools of Law, Business Administration, and specialization in General Economics or Agricultural Economics are only a few of the opportunities open for further study.

What do Economics graduates do ? They find places in such widely diverse fields as marketing and management, insurance and industry, cooperatives and credit services, farming and finance, ranching and real estate, statistics and securities, transportation and trust management, and environmental economics and education.

William Kohlmeier, Professor - Economics

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