

Education program wins national award

Cultural diversity program's purpose is to benefit Southern Nevada students, associate dean says.

BY CAROLYN ROSE
STAFF WRITER

A UNLV College of Education program, designed to assist ethnic minority Clark County School District employees to complete their college education, has won a national award.

The Association of Teacher Educators awarded its 1993 Distinguished Program in Teacher Education Award to the "Cultural Diversity Bridge to Academic Success" program. The award was presented to UNLV and school district representatives at the association's annual convention in Los Angeles recently.

"This award is the direct result of a major cooperative effort between the university and the school district," said Elaine Jarchow, associate dean of the College of Education.

"We joined forces to develop a program that would benefit the children of Southern Nevada by providing them with increasing numbers of well-trained teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds. Neither UNLV nor the school district could have done this alone."

Program classes are offered at night and on weekends at locations convenient for the participants, and many of the classes are self-contained to encourage students to form a support network among themselves, according to the university.

There are currently 25 students in the program. Jarchow anticipates another 20 will enter a new phase of the program beginning in the fall which will train special education teachers.

"What we try to do is meet the needs of the school district," Jarchow said regarding the choice of special education for the new program.

Patti Hester, the program's first graduate, earned her degree in elementary education in August 1992 and now teaches kindergarten at Lois Craig Elementary School. Before entering the program, Hester had spent 18 years as a school district employee and met the program requirement of having already earned at least 60 credits toward a degree in elementary education.

Hester said there were 27 ethnic minority students in the program's pilot group. She attended the convention and spoke before a panel of judges, describing what the program meant to her. "After I finished, they started crying," recalled Hester. She said she was crying too.

When asked if she is enjoying her new status as a teacher, Hester responded enthusiastically: "Oh, gosh, yes! I love it. It's such an academic high."

Hester's advice to other older students is: "Never ever stop. When you stop learning, you stop living."

Participants in the program receive scholarships provided by various local banking institutions.

Under another aspect of the program, once a year, two minority students from each Las Vegas fifth grade class come to UNLV to learn about college opportunities, Jarchow said. The children also have lunch with President Robert Maxson and receive certificates on that day.

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Elaine Jarchow, associate dean,
College of Education

"Our College of Education and the school district work closely on many issues of teacher education, and it is gratifying to see these efforts recognized by the National Association of Teacher Educators," Maxson said of the program.

Jarchow expects about 15 students will graduate from the program in August 1994.

Graduates

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period, the number of college graduates who were in jobs that did not require a degree or who were unemployed increased by 81 percent to about 5.8 million.

Things were far different in the '60s, according to Hecker. College graduates were heavily recruited by corporations.

"Few graduates, regardless of their field of study, had difficulty finding college-level positions. The jobs sought graduates," Hecker said.

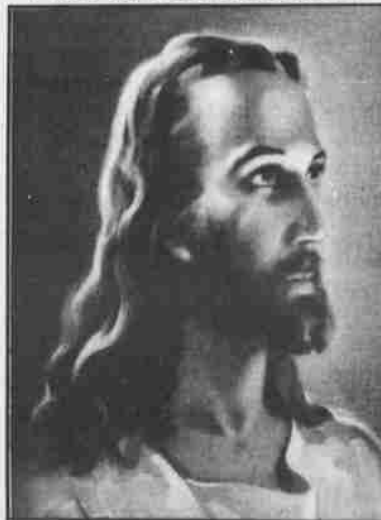
Shelley estimates that if job and education trends continue, about 30 percent of college graduates entering the work force from 1992 to 2005 will work in jobs that don't require a degree.

"My analysis is dependent on the economy going the right way. People can draw their own conclusion," she said. "I am not trying to give someone a reason for going to college or not. The fact is that more people are educating themselves, and that job growth for required degrees is growing."

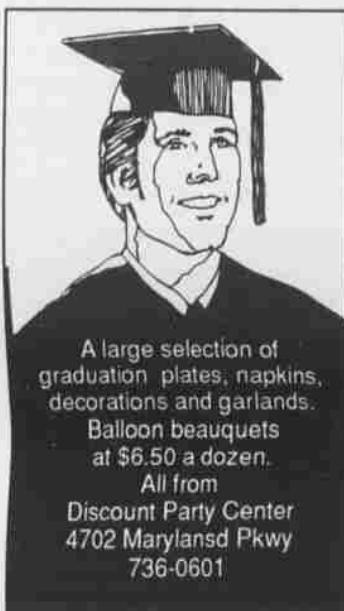
Trishia Howell, a communication studies major, said, "People attend college for many reasons, not just for what they can earn. Even if I don't get a \$40,000 a year job after graduation, at least I have the knowledge and critical thinking skills that I would of never acquired without a college degree."

"For most people, college pays. But for some, it doesn't, at least not right away."

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