

Job picture mixed for 1983 grads

BETHLEHEM, Pa. (UPI) — With college recruitment down and economic recovery slow, this year's 965,000 college graduates face a "mixed picture" for getting jobs, the College Placement Council says.

The council's report also indicated that graduates should consider taking the first job offered to them. If they don't take it, the report indicated, someone else probably will.

The council's report said a telephone survey of 185 job placement offices "revealed a mixed picture" regarding employment for students who earned bachelor's degrees.

"We are starting to see some trends," said Linda Pengilly, spokeswoman for the College Placement Council.

"There is a time lag between the first upward movement of the economy and the impact on employment," she said.

"This year's report indicates recruiters decreased the number of campus visits (by 50 percent) because they are finding it easier to fill a position," Pengilly said. "Due to the tight job market, students are accepting offers almost as soon as they get them."

Liberal arts graduates will continue to face a competitive job market, the survey said.

They "still have to go out and market themselves" because of little recruiter demand compared with their counterparts with technical degrees, Pengilly said.

Starting salaries, the council said, also were affected by economic conditions.

"Salaries are pretty much in line with inflation," said Pengilly, adding "they are not much higher" than many of those reported this time last year, and even less for some disciplines.

She said that despite an average salary increase of less than 2 percent over the previous year, petroleum engineering graduates still commanded the highest salaries: an average \$31,044.

NEA scores president on school funds

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The National Education Association has denounced President Reagan for suggesting that no more federal money is needed to improve America's public schools.

"It is shocking and sad that a president makes absurd responses to a serious and thoughtful national report," said Mary Hatwood Futrell, the association's secretary-treasurer. She referred to a report by a presidential commission that said schools are not providing adequate education.

The president "answers his own committee's report to provide national leadership by saying the solution is at the local level," Futrell told the House Education and Labor Committee in prepared remarks.

"He responds to the need for increased federal support by saying education should recycle existing education dollars when funds are drying up in thousands of school districts nationwide," she said.

In a commencement speech at Seton Hall University at South Orange, N.J., last month, Reagan said, "We spend more money per child for education than any other country in the world. We just aren't getting our money's worth."

The president also said there have been no cutbacks in funding for public education.

"The only thing that has limited the cuts in education is the fact that Congress has given him a different budget than he wanted," another NEA spokesman said. "The cuts were proposed, but a lot of the money was reinstated by Congress."



Westside graduates Kendrick Felder, left, Kevin Ross and Nicholas Wells. UPI

At 24, he's no longer a Quixote — he can read

By Keith Gave

Associated Press

CHICAGO — This is how he puts it: "I am no longer doomed to be a 20th Century Don Quixote."

Kevin Ross was talking about his ability to read and write — skills he picked up for the first time in his life after returning to high school last fall.

He knows about Quixote, Ross beamed, because he read about him — something he couldn't do before.

Quixote was the dreamer ill-equipped for his life's dream in the book by Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes.

When Ross entered Marva Collins' Westside Preparatory School in September, he couldn't read a restaurant menu.

"My back was against the wall," he said. "I didn't know which way to go. But I knew I couldn't conquer the world in a pair of gym shoes."

Ross received his first high school diploma from Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, Kan., where the 6-foot-9 basketball hero was vigorously recruited by several universities. He enrolled at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., which promised him remedial help, he said.

Ross said he knew he was unprepared for college, but Creighton officials "told me all I had to do was attend classes and the degree was guaranteed."

"But they didn't really care," Ross said. "They just passed me on through because of my basketball ability. I did what I was told . . . but I was just an athlete, a piece of meat."

He left Creighton after four years in 1982. He had no degree, and his reading and writing skills were abysmal.

Were it not for a knee injury that sidelined him for much of his senior year, his lack of

education might have remained his secret. He claimed Creighton was trying to force him out by taking away his scholarship and offering to get him into a vocational school, a police academy or on a basketball team overseas.

But he wanted an education.

"I knew I couldn't go through life hiding behind a facade," he said.

Creighton responded by paying his tuition at Westside Prep, a private school with a reputation for helping youngsters to overcome educational deficiencies.

"Naturally, we're glad to see that all's gone well for him," said Ron Paradis, sports information director at Creighton. "The thinking around here was that it (further schooling) was something he needed that was not to be had at Creighton and that what we needed to do was find the best alternative. And it looks like this was it."

But as with Don Quixote, even the simplest journey was fraught with obstacles. When Ross drove from his home to Chicago to begin school, his car broke down in Hammond, Ind., 30 miles out of the way.

He remembers calling Collins, who firmly suggested: "Leave the car behind and get to school. We've got a lot of work to do."

Now he has read Plato's "Republic," works by the ancient Greek dramatist Euripides and other classics.

Recent test scores show his reading skills to be at the national average for high school seniors. In spelling and mathematics, he is a semester behind the national average.

Ross plans to enroll in college again, but knows it will take two or three more years to earn a useful degree.

Ross gave the commencement address at Westside Prep, which he wrote, titled "Relighting the Candle of Excellence."

Report: Push study of English

NEW YORK (AP) — The federal government should use money earmarked for bilingual education to promote efficiency in English, and not teach other subjects in a foreign language, says a group of educators.

The recommendation came in a report for the

Twentieth Century Fund, a private research foundation. Diane Ravitch, a panel member, said the federal government should support programs as soon as possible that teach children to speak, read and write English by "immersing" them in the language.