

College job market to see slight rebound

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The national job market for college graduates should rebound slightly next year as many large corporations end hiring freezes and small, fast-growth companies continue helping reshape the economy, according to Michigan State University's 2010-11 Recruiting Trends report.

Overall hiring is expected to increase 3 percent, with bachelor's-level and MBA-level hiring both surging 10 percent, said Phil Gardner, director of MSU's Collegiate Employment Research Institute, which conducted the survey of some 4,600 employers.

Geographically, the Great Lakes region, which took the brunt of the recession, will see a robust 13 percent increase in bachelor's-level hiring, which is tops in the nation, Gardner predicts. The region consists of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

But the good news should be taken with a word of caution, Gardner said. An uptick in job growth is simply the first step out of a very deep hole, he said, and hardly represents a return to the heady economic days of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

"The national economy is certainly not returning to its previous high production base," Gardner said. "And even though the economy has shown early signs of sustained recovery, the overall job market has remained relatively anemic."

From an industry perspective, hiring will be driven by a core group of employers in manufacturing, professional services, large commercial

banking and the federal government, the annual survey found.

Gardner said smaller banks that didn't receive federal bailout money will continue closing their doors and slashing positions. And unlike the projected growth in federal government hiring, state governments and colleges and universities could see a drastic reduction in hiring, he said.

While mid-size companies (500 to 3,999 employees) will continue shedding positions, Gardner said large companies (at least 4,000 employees) plan to hire 114 bachelor-level employees per company next year.

That's good news for graduates – but only if they are prepared and start working toward a position early in their college careers, said Kelley Bishop, MSU's career services director.

Typically, Bishop said, large corporations now hire about 50 percent to 75 percent of new employees from their own intern pool.

Among the fast-growth companies (nine to 100 employees), hiring is expected to increase 19 percent, the survey said.

"These fast-growth companies in many ways represent the new economy – that bold employer that can adjust quickly, that sees a niche and runs with it," Bishop said. "This is an important group for our students getting jobs."

Other details of the report:

- Hiring is expected to decline for those with associate, master and professional degrees, with professional-degree hiring seeing the biggest drop at 13 percent. The professional category includes

law, medical and veterinary degrees.

- Ph.D.-level hiring, on the other hand, is expected to increase 5 percent.
- [Hiring](#) of engineering majors appears sluggish, with the exception of computer science and information technology students. Demand should be very strong for IT workers.
- The Northeast, Southeast and Pacific Northwest could see a much weaker expansion of jobs than the Midwest.
- For the past two years, starting salaries have remained stagnant for [college graduates](#). "Remember the words 'signing bonus?'" Gardner said. "Don't expect to hear them again anytime soon."
- Some 36 percent of all companies said they'd consider any major for a position – an all-time high. "Most employers are out there are looking for the best candidate they can find, regardless of major," Gardner said.

Provided by Michigan State University

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