

HOW DO YOU LIKE YOUR JOB?

A reminder that Caltech's Alumni Placement Service can help you do something about it

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TWENTY YEARS AGO a placement service was established at Caltech, under the joint auspices of the Institute and the Alumni Association, aimed primarily at assisting alumni when a new job was necessary or desirable. It has always been called the Alumni Placement Service, though it has for many years included both students and alumni in its activities.

In time, the Placement Service became a fair-sized operation, requiring funds that were considerably above the resources of the Alumni Association. Today it is completely supported by the Institute, and through a small amount contributed by alumni receiving employment through the service. The staff consists of a Director, who is a member of the faculty; an Assistant to the Director, who is employed full-time to administer the detail work of the office; and three office assistants.

A placement service in any college or university has four areas of activities: (1) placement of students in part-time work while attending school; (2) placement of students in summer work between academic sessions; (3) placement of students receiving degrees in their first full-time positions; (4) placement of alumni in new positions.

The first of these services has been very helpful to Caltech students in financing their way through school, even though they are limited to 10 or 12 hours a week because of the heavy academic load here.

Greater effort is being devoted each year to helping students find summer work, which is valuable not only for the financial assistance but for the experience. Alumni could assist in this program by notifying the Placement Service of openings in their organizations during the summer months.

The placement of students receiving degrees is a good-sized job, for it entails interviews by many large organizations on campus. In 1954-55, exactly 120 different organizations visited Caltech and interviewed 209 men who were receiving degrees and 211 men who were looking for summer jobs. These interviews took up 165 working days and involved 2,437 appointments.

The placement of alumni is really one of the most important functions of any placement service—but the assistance we can offer alumni here at Caltech is not being utilized to its fullest extent.

The placement of alumni involves a matching pro-

cedure—matching the qualifications of the man with the job. An alumnus advises the Placement Service that he is considering a change of position. He is asked to fill in an application form which will supply information about his qualifications and interests. The man is then listed under each type of employment in which he indicates interest, and after this listing a search is made in each of these fields for job openings that have been given to the Placement Service by organizations. The man is then notified of the openings for which he is qualified.

A similar system is employed when a request is received from an employer—but when the Placement Service has on file the applications of only about ten or fifteen men, the probability of finding a Tech graduate for that opening is very small. The fact is that, in the year 1954-55, there were 1162 requests for 2453 Caltech alumni—but only 109 alumni registered with the Service during the year. The placement record—i.e., the number of men placed on jobs—was not particularly good, of course, because the men did not match the jobs.

How can this condition be improved?

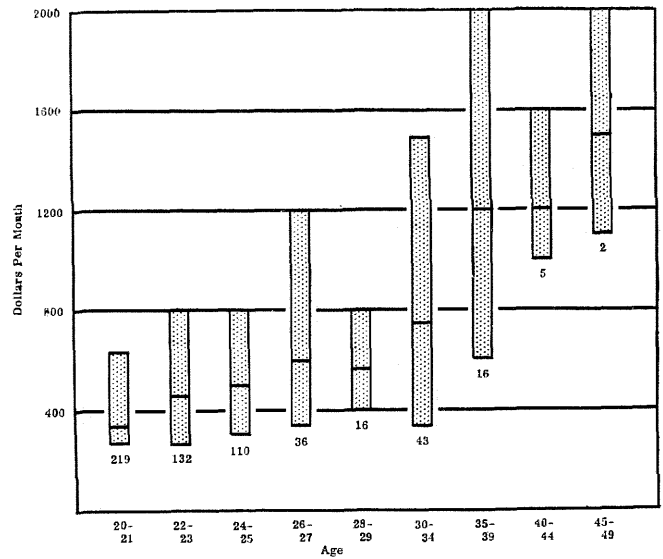
Men who are thinking about changing jobs seem to be reluctant to register with the Placement Service. Some of these men realize that they have reached a block to further advancement in their present jobs. Others believe that a different position might give them a better salary and a greater chance for advancement. Most of these men do not take any active steps to survey the field. One of the easiest ways of making this survey is to register with the Placement Service.

At present, with the small number of applicants, the Placement Service is reduced to contacting members of the Caltech faculty to get the names of men who might be interested in a particular opening. Such procedure means complete dependence upon memory, and is neither orderly nor effective.

Probably a most satisfactory method would be to have an IBM card on every alumnus. With the proper information on the cards, it would be possible to pull cards on those men who meet the requirements of each job opening. However, a system of this character involves an expensive operation that seems to be greater than the operating funds available. The next best thing is to have more registrants.

The Placement Service gets a great number of requests for men with a minimum of experience, but some very choice positions become available for older, more experienced men. In many instances the salary is not specified, but is dependent upon the qualifications of the applicant. In some cases a minimum salary is given. The minimum, median, and maximum of minimum salary specified on 579 job orders where the BS degree was required are shown for the year 1954-55 on the accompanying graph as a function of age. A look at the graph will show that positions with quite suitable salaries have been available.

It should be apparent by now that to make the alumni portion of the placement activities more effective at Caltech, more applicants are needed. There is no reason for alumni to consider the Placement Service as the place of last resort when a job is needed. There is no reason for alumni to feel that it is beneath their dignity



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to file with a placement service. It doesn't cost anything to file an application, and there is every possibility that some good might come of it. (Though there is no fee connected with the placement operations, it has been customary for anyone obtaining employment through the efforts of the Placement Service to contribute 10 percent of his first month's salary to the Institute for support of the service. Such a contribution is completely voluntary.)

What about participating in the work of the Caltech Placement Service? If an alumnus is an employer, he should send in his requests; if he is thinking about a change of job, or wondering what opportunities may be available, he should send for an application form. All information is confidential, and the present employer will not know that the market is being surveyed. There have been several cases in which the applicant decided, after surveying the market for several months, that the present employment had the greatest opportunity for advancement and recognition.

Comments and suggestions on the operation of the Caltech Placement Service are solicited. Address your comments and questions to the Director of Placements.

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