Career Center Statement on Referral by Departments – Feb 15, 2007

Recently, several Texas A&M University academic departments have been contacted by organizations asking faculty and staff to refer students for particular jobs and employment opportunities. Often, these organizations offer monetary incentives to those who would refer “top quality” candidates. The Career Center has been asked by many departments to provide our guidance regarding these organizations, helpful considerations for faculty and staff to keep in mind when asked to refer students for employment opportunities, and the University Rule regarding the coordination of employment interviews.

First, the Texas A&M University Career Center does not support the publicizing of job listings by such third parties for the following reasons.

- It has been our experience that often these organizations offer positions that are already advertised by the employers they represent, usually on large commercial job boards. In contrast, all of the positions advertised by the Career Center uniquely target Texas A&M students and there is no charge to employers using the Center’s services.
- Because these organizations purport to offer many of the same services provided by campus career centers, this is confusing to students and can cause them to miss opportunities that are available through the Career Center.
- And, when faculty and staff refer students for employment, there is the potential to violate ethical and legal standards of employment recruiting.

Secondly, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) provides a set of ethical standards for guiding the job-search process. Entitled *Principles for Professional Conduct for Career Services & Employment Professionals*, these standards are based on notions of fairness, confidentiality, and lawfulness. Specifically, NACE’s position paper, *A Faculty Guide to Ethical and Legal Standards in Student Hiring*, states:

- “Employers may contact you to request the names of students who would be excellent candidates for job opportunities. At first glance, it seems harmless to provide the names of your best students. However, there are some potential legal and ethical pitfalls. If you or a colleague receive a job lead from an employer and choose only to refer a few individuals without publicizing the position to all students who may be qualified, you are not maintaining a fair and equitable recruiting process.

- "Also, by identifying individuals for employment on a "regular" basis, you may be considered an "employment agency" for purposes of compliance with equal employment opportunity laws. For example, if it appears as if you are (innocently or otherwise) referring only male students or only minority students, you may be open to charges of discrimination."

- It is recommended, instead, “if you receive a request for student referrals, you can, of course, notify individual students who have declared an interest in such positions and encourage them to apply. However, also post the position in your department and announce it to your classes. At the same time, contact the university career center so that the position can be listed campus-wide.”

Third, in recognition of the potential for employment discrimination and the advantages of the centralized coordination of campus recruiting, University Rule 13.99.99.M1 states that “all student interviews conducted on the Texas A&M University campus for the purpose of obtaining professional employment outside of the Texas A&M University System, both full-time and co-op/internships, must be Coordinated through the Career Center.” Therefore, please contact the Career Center should you have any questions about student referral for employment.