

## OPENING DOORS

By Skip Sturman, Director of Career Services  
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Hey Jed,

It's hard to believe that your graduation is just around the corner. Seems like yesterday when your Mother and I dropped you off for freshman year at Bucknell in the midst of a raging rainstorm. Sure hope that the sun shines for you on graduation day. Given the war and the economy, we could all do with a break in the clouds, if only for a day.

Although I graduated during a different war and a different weak economy, I still don't find it difficult to relate to what you and the Class of 2003 are going through. Of course, given my role as Director of Career Services, I live your experience daily with seniors at Dartmouth. Like you, many of them aren't sure what they are going to do next year. Much as I try to reassure them that there is a there, there; I can see in their eyes (and yours) the question: "Where, where?"

I don't blame them or you for having mixed feelings as you approach graduation. Even in good times, depending upon where you sit, the graduation podium can look like the site of a coronation or a place where you will soon be swinging in the breeze☺ This year, in particular, a sense of eager anticipation seems to be combined with a sense of foreboding and... of being let down somehow (or, perhaps, being sold a bill of goods). We wear the Dartmouth Green, why isn't that enough? Given the booming economy when you entered college in 1999, it is only natural to be disappointed by the diminished opportunities in 2003.

Much as I, too, sometimes scratch my head and wonder why, figuratively speaking, the son of a shoemaker has no shoes so close to graduation, I have a slightly different spin on the situation you and so many other seniors find themselves in this year. First, I know in my heart of hearts that you- and they- will soon be gainfully employed. It may take weeks or months longer than all of you hoped for but it will happen. Not to get too carried away with sports metaphors – too much NCAA tournament viewing- but it will be easier to reach your goal if you keep playing the job search game. Hard as it is to get back up after being knocked down several times, it is important to stay competitive. Of course, it doesn't hurt to take some time outs now and then, either. Remember how much you enjoyed time-outs as a kid?

The Seniors at Dartmouth have heard it before but I heartily recommend the Camilleri strategy. Robert Camilleri '02 is someone, like you, who went at on-campus recruiting with a vengeance, labored long and hard over cover letters, networked up a storm but still found himself without work as of graduation. He took a short breather in the spring and then, in his own words (too much N.B.C. News viewing):

"my most intense job search began AFTER graduation! I spent approximately one month searching and interviewing in New York before receiving an offer from an ad firm. I actually expected it to take me longer than a month but was lucky with timing! Seniors should know that this option is not at all uncommon. A good number of my friends started their job search for the first time after graduation.... The one thing that I learned about the job search process is to be patient and extremely proactive....I can not emphasize how important it is to NETWORK!"

Back, for a moment, to my slightly different spin on the situation you and so many other seniors find themselves in this year. What I want to say is that, sappy as it sounds, job or no job, your Mom and I are really proud of what you have accomplished the past four years. Just as I often marvel at the fact that Dartmouth actually pays me to find typos in mind-boggling achievements such as 'high school valedictorian or salutatorian' on so many students' resumes, I marvel at the fact that you, too, have achieved so much. You have travelled far and wide-studied finance and theater in London, gotten great grades, taken some incredibly challenging courses, participated in Habitat for Humanity in West Virginia, made some special friends and transformed yourself into

a really interesting person who can speak knowledgeably about Kant or Keynesian theory, not to mention, play the banjo. So what if your four finance internships and recruiting interviews haven't yet paid dividends. When you do get hired, you will pass the consulting airplane test with flying colors ("Is this someone I could imagine myself seated next to all the way to Pittsburgh? Denver? Honolulu?").

Well, that's about all I have to say for the moment. I have to go knock off some e-mails. The main point is that, while you look forward to the end justifying the means, take pleasure in the means that have brought you to this end and new beginning.

And, thanks, Jed, for that great suggestion about having a weekly feature on our web site entitled, "Jobs I Have Never Heard Of..." That book which Mom just gave me, *Odd Jobs*, will really come in handy as a source for inspiration. It even features 'dog walker' (I know a graduate of your sister's school, Colgate, who is doing just that in Hanover). Hey, Jed, have you ever thought about going into career counseling? I will worry about your sister later.

Love, Dad