

NTID students polish up their résumés for job fair

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Event targets future deaf professionals

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(December 7, 2005) — HENRIETTA — With stacks of resumes in hand, hundreds of students — many dressed in business attire — met dozens of prospective employers Tuesday during a job fair at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

The students, who wanted to know about job openings and summer internships, were also asking other questions: How many deaf people work there and are interpreters available?

This job fair was at RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, home to 1,100 deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

"I want to make sure we can communicate," said Gregg Campbell, 20, an NTID student from Oshawa, Ontario, who is seeking an accounting co-op. "It shouldn't make a difference if we are deaf. They need to make their decision based on the resumes."

Interpreters were there, but many representatives were fluent in sign language or were themselves NTID alumni.

David Fulmer, a 2003 graduate of NTID, works in the information technology department at Mellon Financial Corp., in his hometown of Pittsburgh. He usually relies on e-mails or instant messages to communicate with his co-workers. In addition, he has a chalkboard if he needs to resort to writing, and has taught his colleagues basic words in sign language.

Dawn Lucas, assistant director of NTID's Center on Employment, said the fifth annual fair also offered workshops for employers who have questions or reservations about hiring a deaf employee.

Peter Pecor, regional administrator for the New York State Department of Labor, said NTID and RIT have a reputation for state-of-the-art training in technology, which is attractive for employers. "The needs in the future will be people with higher education and higher training."

Some firms, such as Procter & Gamble, said they hope to further diversify. "We're still looking for qualified people, we're not lowering our standards," said Tina Kehl, a recruiter for P&G.

For a list of participating employers, visit www.ntid.rit.edu/nce.

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