I attended UMass’s Career Blast this week. For those of you unfamiliar, this is where the school brings to campus droves of employers who are looking to snap up eager, intelligent college students for jobs and, occasionally, internships.

The result is a mob of stressed, excited, nervous, and/or overwhelmed kids swarming a hundred or so booths and their attendants.

What also tends to happen is that there are a lot of people looking for STEM majors and little else. Still, I did my homework the night before and knew which companies were looking for humanities folks such as myself, so I was optimistic!

That is, until reality hit.

A lot of these companies will either post that they are hiring “from all majors,” but don’t really mean it, or someone in this long set-up process “hits the wrong button.” The latter is what I heard from four of the eleven booths I visited. Still, another five were interested in me. Once I found out more of what they would be having me do, though, several of them lost their appeal. I don’t know about you, but even if a job is lucrative, I don’t want it if I’ll hate what I’m doing.

I’m sure that the jobs I’m disregarding would make others quite happy. Furthermore, for your comfort, the business school kids don’t really have a leg up on anyone else, it would seem. After talking to a dozen people in the staffing, marketing, and management industries, employers will take an English or history major just as willingly as a business major. The only thing that matters is that you get relevant work experience, meaning internships and the like.

For people like me, though, who find many of the options coming to UMass unsatisfying if not outright undesirable, there’s still no reason to fret! There are multitudes of industries and innumerable companies, big and small, that work in them. We just need to find the motivation to seek them out. I mean, look at us! We’re at UMass, and honors kids to boot! Motivation and perseverance are in the job description for successful
students. The jobs we want are out there. It'll just take a bit of extra hunting and a few more applications than some of our peers.

I have to keep reminding myself of that, but it’s true.

Also, for you English majors, I HIGHLY recommend Professor Janis Greve’s career course (English 491AC). I believe she will make it mandatory for students at some point, but even if she doesn’t, the class is invaluable. Those who have taken it agree that it provides more detailed, customized information plus resources that you might not even know to ask for in the Career Services office. Keep your chin up, as my grandparents would say!

Song of the Week: Figured I’d put on a good old band that my father introduced me to in junior high. I’ve been feeling like a throwback and this song has just enough hope and melancholy mixed in that it suits this week’s entry, even if the subjects are different.

Enjoy R.E.M.’s “Try Not To Breathe!”

Blog Column:

Love, The Old Man

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