

Web page helps alumni, students seek out careers

By Erin Holmes
Daily Staff Reporter

University alumni and students searching for jobs now have another option right at their fingertips.

The University Alumni Association's recently updated and colorful Career Center Website appeared on the Internet last fall, replacing the center's Alumnet page. It features Alumni NetWorks — a current listing of job connections that supplies users with information about career opportunities across the nation.

The page received a facelift when Career Center Coordinator Chanel DeGuzman realized it needed to be updated to reflect the opportunities available to job seekers.

"The homepage needed to be changed," DeGuzman said. "I wanted it to be functional, sophisticated, and to come alive."

DeGuzman helped expand the site's original listing of three job services to more than 1,400 "career coaches" which provide information about thousands of job opportunities.

The Alumni Center originally provided placement services in its office, but this was time consuming and inefficient.

"Part of putting our services on the Web was to make it easy for everyone," DeGuzman said. "It cuts out the mailing and paperwork process."

Users can search for job and internship opportunities and internships by occupation, state or specific company. The site will generate an identification number for the "career coach" by matching the user's requirements and a profile of the job's responsibilities.

At this point, only Alumni Association members are given the name and phone number of the coach they need to contact.

"You need to be a member to get all the way in," DeGuzman said. "But you can sign up for the association right on the spot."

The yearly dues — \$10 for students and \$40 for graduates — do not impede the Website's success, some students said.

"I heard about the page and went

right over and joined the Alumni Association," said LSA senior Lori Goldberg. "After that, it was absolutely simple."

Goldberg said she searched for job prospects on the East Coast using her father's computer.

"I found lots of good connections," said Goldberg, who was looking for opportunities in the field of psychology. "I e-mailed the Alumni (Association) with the ones I wanted more information on."

Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are provided by the Career Center after the user is confirmed as an Alumni Association member.

"I was curious about grad school and opportunities in New Orleans," said Brian Vernellis, who graduated from the School of Literature, Science and the Arts in 1995. "The site's information was extremely helpful."

Jacques Habra designed the new, more-colorful Webpage.

"I wanted the representation of diversity and the University environment to be obvious on the page," said Habra, the founder of the Ann Arbor Web design firm Web Elite.

Familiarity with the University did not present a problem. Habra is a Michigan alumna who knows what the campus represents.

"Having such a strong familiarity with the essence and culture of the University helped me to identify how the site should work and feel," Habra said.

The Web page offers links to several other career-related sites, and will eventually feature a strong interest inventory and a personality assessment to aid users in their search. With more than 1,000 users since its creation, the site promises to be successful and expansive, Habra said.

"Most sites are static and not unique," Habra said. "This one is different. It makes sense that it is the University of Michigan who is pioneering it."

The NetWorks site address is <http://alumni.umich.edu/career-center>.