

Hiring and Recruitment as Rhetorical Strategies: An Analysis
of the Way Businesses Approach Graduating University
Students and Influence their Choices

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If one cannot get beyond the net of words or the “text,” if in the course of Vietnam one did not come to the realization that “light” casualties lay just as still as “heavy” casualties, then it all threatens to become too complex, too confusing for those who are not privy to information available to officials.

--- P. Wander

Abstract

To answer the question, which rhetorical strategies are most persuasive to university graduates regarding hiring and recruitment, I surveyed three classrooms with a questionnaire that gauged university graduates attraction to three different types of rhetorical strategies. The rhetoric came from three major businesses that recruit university graduates: College Works Painting, Peace Corps, and Hewlett Packard. Each one of these businesses uses a different type of strategy to recruit university graduates. College Works Painting uses an Experience Illusion strategy based on the premise that the company will help train university graduates to become managers and leaders in business. Peace Corps' uses an Altruistic strategy that sells the idea that university graduates will have superhero-like jobs, helping others. Hewlett Packard's rhetoric is classified, in my research, as being a Fun strategy, as they advertise fueling individual's curiosity. I predicted that the Experience Illusion strategy would be most attractive to university graduates, but, I found, through my analysis of the survey data, that the Altruistic strategy is most the attractive strategy to university graduates. I realized, though, that my survey could be expanded upon to yield a more accurate representation of university graduates' attraction if a new survey were created. If a survey with more options of the same rhetorical strategies, the Experience Illusion, Altruistic, and Fun concepts worded in different ways, was administered to university graduates, the perceived entrapment of succumbing to the rhetorical strategy would be less thus yielding more true and representative results.

Introduction

I believe that I have become privy to the information available thanks to my time with the Communications department at San Luis Obispo's California Polytechnic University. My professors have encouraged me to ask more questions and to free myself from the "net of words". This encouragement sparked the idea that I could research anything that is of interest to me. I turned my focus to the rhetorical strategies that affect university graduates because I had been persuaded before by recruiters. I thought other university graduates would benefit from a research of these strategies, so I began outlining my approach to the project. The way I came to the full realization that I would turn this idea into my senior project is through an interesting chain of events that happened in my life. I detail the events in the following narrative.

Though they were there showing me the way through the rhetoric, I had to experience the strategies of businesses for myself. Often the beginnings of my classes would start with an announcement from an energetic college-aged recruiter, someone who told enthusiastically about a career opportunity coming up, a job fair, or some kind of program to travel the world helping people. These talks sounded great and I wanted to pursue them all. Along with the talks were countless flyers from these recruiters that covered the walls of the hallways and my classrooms. In my undergraduate years, I thought I knew what I wanted after graduation. I set out on several interviews for internships that sounded like great opportunities for me. In my button down shirt and tie with pressed black pants I nervously offered myself to companies. I hoped they would help me earn the financial security I so strongly felt I needed. With one company, I advanced through the face-to-face and the phone interview, and I even attempted some research on my own to decide if this was the right career choice for me. I was excited by the momentum built by successful interviews. The job which started out with a simple pamphlet turned into a big

project. Before I knew it, I had a binder full of materials, phone calls to make, and assignments to research leads. The company had consumed me and I wasn't even working for them yet. Was this really what I wanted? I had to really look at what I was doing before committing anymore.

I did a quick bit of research and started to uncover some interesting facts about my potential career. I found the same types of rhetorical strategies on the company website and in their literature and advertisements that I had been studying in my communication classes. More enlightening than finding the strategies was realizing that I had been swayed by them. It was my worrying about the future that made me vulnerable and miss the forest for the trees; that was the blind spot I could not guard against, and the net of words had swept me away. So there I was, stressed and confused, my desk covered in pamphlets, training packets and phone lists from a company I didn't want to endure for another minute. Luckily, it wasn't too late for me to explain to my recruiters that I had made a mistake. Though they didn't let me go easily, I was firm and persistent, so I wriggled free from the grasp of this company, vowing never again to be blind to the rhetorical strategies inherent in recruitment efforts.

I would not be tricked again. I was cautious to research all future recruitments and career fairs before going on second interviews or committing to their programs. I continued at school with a new awareness of rhetorical strategies in real life. In the future when considering my career options, I would do so carefully.

A unique opportunity became available to me about a year later. It was a travel program dedicated to helping people all over the world. I felt you could not go wrong helping others, and the fact that I got to travel appealed to me. I spent days filling out forms, preparing medically for travel, doing surveys and meeting with volunteer coordinators. I was ready to go, but I received a letter from the organization denying my request to be placed in my desired location and

position. The letter read “there are currently more qualified applicants.” I was determined, so I began to plan out a course of action to become more qualified by enrolling in classes and training programs so that I could help people in impoverished areas. During this time a friend returned from his years in Africa as a volunteer with this same organization. He told me about his experience, and, though he did not regret it, I learned that the organization was not exactly what I thought it was. Again, the rhetorical net had swept me away! In a totally different scenario relating to a completely different type of work, the rhetoric proved still too complex for me to comprehend. After some months, further removed from these experiences, I found the real application of rhetorical strategies used by business in hiring and recruitment. I felt extensive research into these hiring strategies would help me determine what I really wanted to do after graduation, and that the research would be useful to other students facing the same decisions. I decided the research would be my senior project.

I realized the project would be an aid to me and to other university students. The project could help others avoid making the same mistakes I made. I got excited to research the realities of hiring and recruitment strategies as they are happening on college campuses every day.

Goal and Importance

The project operates on several levels. First is the research detailing with hiring and recruitment strategies of three major companies that pursue university graduates. Second, a survey of four upper level classes (approximately 120 students) was devised and administered. The raised awareness in classes that are surveyed may be the most direct operation of the project. Lastly, I will work to get my research published in newspaper articles (especially college newspapers) to help reach university graduates. The articles will help to explain the project and include data analysis in as many college newspapers as are willing to publish this research.

My goal in this project is to free myself, and potentially others, from the net that ensnared me over and over again. I also want to discover which rhetorical strategy is the strongest persuader of university graduates. In both experiences I was not “privy” to the rhetorical strategies, as Wander describes them. Another goal in this study is to spark an interest in university graduates to continue this research for themselves and raise awareness among us so that together we are able to discover our best future paths.

I think the survey will show that each rhetorical strategy is equally effective. University graduate students who are unaware of one rhetorical strategy will be unaware of another. I proved this for myself in my experiences with recruiters.

I will look at previous studies of three different businesses that hire and recruit university graduates. These studies acknowledge and highlight aspects that relate to this project. Aspects relating to coursework and studies from rhetorical analyses done in the communication field will be included. I will dissect the specific strategies that each business employs. The dissection will be demonstrated by research categorized by the three elements that I found in my dealings with hiring and recruiting businesses: Experience Illusion Strategy, Altruistic Strategy, and Fun Strategy. I determined these categories by the nature of the rhetoric of each business and how they convey the message of recruitment. The results and analyses of the methods, surveys, and the process of administering them will be explained in the Research Project and Analysis of Research portions of this paper.

Bitzer’s Rhetorical Situation of Graduation

Devotion to helping university graduates understand how the rhetorical strategies used by potential places of work, hiring firms, and recruiters is the driving influence for this criticism. It is already apparent that current rhetoric employed by these organizations is persuading, and is

effective in persuading university graduates. Understanding how these rhetorical strategies persuade students will require several close examinations of different artifacts: the documents, actions, and rhetoric used by some of the most popular businesses and organizations among university graduates. Students want solid careers working for prosperous businesses. They want the experience of a lifetime. They want to find success in fun work environments. There are many attributes of careers that usually are on the forefront of university graduates minds; salary, benefits, healthcare, and location are just a few.

Where does this all come from? What inspires businesses to act this way? There is a rhetorical situation that occurs for university graduates. College graduation creates a situation that businesses react to, and I argue, exploit. The situation is like any action in an interaction between two things, something happens, the wind blows, and someone comments on it. For every action there is a reaction. In rhetorical theory the action (blowing of the wind) is defined as an exigence by Lloyd F. Bitzer. Bitzer explains in his article “The Rhetorical Situation” that every act of rhetoric is due to an exigence (245). He defines exigence as a situation that calls for some type of action, a situation that requires a solution. This solution, for Bitzer, takes the form of rhetoric. The answer to the situation of a graduating university student is rhetoric provided by businesses and organizations. Following Bitzer’s method, we can see that university graduates encounter the question of how to determine their careers and lives. Recruiters, then, provide the answer with their rhetoric.

Graduation brings many feelings and hopes to the forefront of students’ minds. What is the most important thing to them? University graduates themselves are searching for the answer to this question. There are many paths; some become teachers daring to change the youth of the nation and some set forth into technological fields. All need to be aware of the rhetorical

strategies at work that persuade their choices. These rhetorical strategies influence their choices, and have been persuading those choices for generations. To understand what these strategies look like, and what they do, a close analysis of three different organizations and businesses that regularly recruit university graduates by use of rhetorical strategies follows.

There have been many studies that focus on the rhetoric that persuades audiences, even studies of student audiences, but previous studies have focused mostly on effectiveness of rhetoric in media. McQuarria and Mick are two researchers who studied rhetorical strategies in commercial advertising and rhetoric of businesses such as major car companies, television and cigarette companies. McQuarria and Mick look at the persuasive strategies that are most commonly seen by the general public today. The way the public reacts to familiar ploys ranges from annoyance and avoidance to outright acknowledgement of the persuasion. Specific rhetorical analyses such as these have laid solid foundations for modern analysis of pop culture, studies of oratory and more. The research and analysis of this study will examine a new type of rhetoric.

Most rhetorical criticisms, as rhetoric was originally defined by Wilhelms, mainly deal with effect on the audience. Wilhelms distinguishes the differences between rhetorical criticism and literary criticism by asserting that oratory is concerned most with effect on an audience where literary criticism focuses on prose-related attributes like eloquence and beauty in language. For the purposes of this evaluation I intend to look deeper into rhetoric employed by organizations targeting university graduates.

Introduction of Case Studies

To best understand the businesses and the strategies they use I am including references, analysis of previous research, and interviews. I will discuss and refer to studies that will provide

a more balanced representation of how the three organizations operate. The first business I encountered in my college experience was College Works Painting. This is the company that advanced me from interview to interview and enticed me with the promise of big money and the hope of making me a manager in their training program. As this is a relatively new company (founded 1993) there are not yet scholarly journals (that I have found) to reference for my purposes. Instead, an article regarding modern recruiting and apprenticeship programs will be referenced. Hopefully this research will start a trend of analyzing new companies and their rhetorical strategies around hiring, and it is a privilege to become one of the first in the field to attempt a critical analysis of such a pertinent situation. Apart from some blogs and personal opinion pages regarding involvement with College Works (which may provide some insight) there are few to rare occurrences of actual research that has been done on the company, so it will be, in part, my task to contribute to that research area where there is a need and provide my careful explanation of the company through personal involvement and from a scholarly perspective.

The Peace Corps is my second point of research. It is, of course, an organization that has been the subject of many scholarly articles and testimonies. My research will include articles regarding the origination of the organization, personal opinion articles, and an interview with a college university student who has returned from completing a two year volunteer service assignment with the Peace Corps. These combined pieces of information should give a good enough overview of the organization to connect the dots of my project from introduction into the strategies and analyses of the strategies used by Peace Corps.

One other organization highly sought after by university graduate students is Hewlett Packard (HP). This business and the analysis of their rhetorical strategies create an interesting

twist in my research. Students seek employment with this company and companies like this (Apple, Microsoft) more than any other organizations. They employ thousands of people, provide financial security, and demonstrate an enormous capacity for skill and resume development. Noting the fact that there is an element at work here that we might call reverse recruitment, I will highlight HP's recruiting strategies like I do the other two main organizations of interest. I will preserve the fact that HP is powerful without strategy, thus making their actual rhetoric simple and effortless. Their reputation, then, plays into their style of rhetoric, as we will see.

Introduction of Experience, Altruistic and Fun Strategies

The analysis is sorted into three different rhetorical strategies; Experience Illusion, Altruistic, and Fun. The Experience Illusion strategy is what business use as a ploy for graduates to broaden their horizons by working at their company. Altruistic meaning that the businesses true desire is to help others. Fun asserts that the business is less grounded in reality than other businesses. Though there is overlap in use of strategies by organizations, it is essential that university graduates see these examples of how rhetorical strategies function.

All I wanted was a secure job where I was making enough to have a nice reliable car, pay my rent, and have a fun life. I was taken by the Experience Illusion and convinced that if I learned to be a manager and a leader with some company that everything would fall into place. When I overcame that false reality I fully embraced the Altruistic strategy in that I felt the need to travel and help others; I needed to get out of my hometown which became my college town. If I escaped the social pressure to succeed maybe things would be different. I grew up in the same place where I went to college so the drive to travel and help people who were less privileged than me was strong. It was revealed to me that the people living on the other side of

the world might not want help at all, and that maybe my perspective on them was skewed. I also learned the organization to send me there was not as structured as it claimed to be when it came to accomplishing its objective of helping others. What was left? How about a successful cutting edge computer company? HP is, innovative, well known, and good to their employees. They are one of those companies with an arcade in the lobby and a ping pong table in the meeting room. To work for them would be like going back to elementary school and getting paid for it! I was enthralled by the Fun of it.

Classification of Strategies and Rhetorical Analysis

Experience Illusion Strategy: The Rhetoric of College Works Painting

“Learn about how you can embark on a journey unlike any other where success begins and leaders are made. Join the elite students at College Works Painting and gain the experience you will need to realize your dreams.” (Peace Corps Web)

The College Works Painting (CWP) organization presents an attractive hook in its opening statements. This rhetoric is an excerpt taken from the homepage of their website, which is geared toward students and graduates. The excerpt begins, “Learn about how you can embark on a journey...”(PeaceCorps.org). The non-threatening approach helps ease students into the business. The word “Learn” shows students that they are able to do this first step because they are already engaged in the act of learning in school. If the word choice was different, then some other potentially unattained skill might be called upon that some percentage of students may not possess. Asking a “student” to learn is like asking a hungry, thirsty traveler to sit down at a feast, raise a glass, and toast to good health. A student in the traditional sense of the word “student” assuming that the student has hopes to achieve and gain as much knowledge as possible is a term that could be characterized as an ideograph. As Michael McGee details, “Society expects a specific perception of what a word stands for. Because these terms are

definitive of the society we have inherited, society is defined by the use and expectations of certain words, in this case the idea of student exists in society before a student becomes a student, so the expectation to fulfill the meaning is defined by, and in societal values.” (57). Mcgee furthers the case that society engrains these terms into our value systems through asserting “they are conditions of the society into which each of us is born,” as beings that are taught to crawl, walk, and talk, we also learn societal terms and restraints (58). These “material ideas which we must accept to belong,” are what keeps students misunderstanding the difference, for example, between the way “light” and “heavy” casualties lay. One may argue that people value belonging to society more than coming to realizations of language and truths that Wander would hope for humanity.

“Learn about” offers an illusion of experience as it masks the true intentions of the company to enlist university graduates as employees. The phrasing prevents their true motives from being displayed but helps university graduates to engage with CWP’s next step. Asking someone to learn about an unknown topic is a non threatening gesture. The person who would deny the chance to learn seems stubborn. Thus begins the rhetoric of CWP. They work to influence university graduates’ choices with an open invitation that requires strong denial to avoid. To resist this strategy means a university graduate will have to say, “I choose not to learn about this subject.” It is worded in such a way to create the feeling of fulfilling a beneficial duty: to learn. The phrase is inviting, requires no commitment, and asks the university graduate simply to learn.

The wording of “...embark on a journey...” offers the idea of CWP being more than a job. Using the words “embark” and “journey” creates the feeling of necessity to life’s completeness. The “embark on a journey” phrase thus gives the CWP job a sense of duty and

purpose, almost as if it were a pilgrimage, upon which university graduates will discover magical truths about life. The ideas of adventure and excitement are thrown into the mix thanks to this rhetoric. The sentence continues, "...unlike any other where success begins and leaders are made." The tactic known as scarcity in "Psychology of Persuasion Strategies" by Robert Cialdini, is at work in the second half of this impactful first sentence of the initial recruitment paragraph. "Unlike any other" scores big in the minds of university graduates as it is such an end all be all statement. The possibility that this opportunity may be different from all the other job options and career paths available to university graduates is a ludicrous idea. Initially, the impact of the statement is clear and interesting, but is a fallacy to maintain, as every "journey" is, in essence, "unlike any other". "Unlike any other", then, is a device to persuade rather than an informative assessment of CWP. Any business could use this phrase and justify that the rhetoric is legitimate because they have a special kind of letterhead on their stationary in their offices. Compare every hike there ever was, from across a field on flat terrain, to hiking the top of Mt. Everest. Some hikers kneeled down and smelled a daisy; others were washed away by avalanches or rockslides. Each hike could be called a journey "...unlike any other..." for the fact that one hike had a specific set of details about it different from the next. CWP's rhetoric thus gives a false impression of rarity aimed at persuading university graduates. The sentence continues, "...where success begins and leaders are made." The definitive language and how this sentence is pieced together creates the impression that CWP is the only place where success can begin or leaders can be made. The reality of the job industry is that success can begin and leaders can be made working for the city as a garbage truck driver, or at a Taco Bell, or in any work environment. The other side of this coin for CWP is that not everyone who joins their business becomes a leader and is successful. This rhetoric, when explored even briefly, can help

university graduates make more informed decisions regarding career choices and planning for the future. CWP is not the only company to employ rhetoric to persuade university graduates, but they are a good example and a relevant one on college campuses.

“Join the elite students at College Works Painting and gain the experience you will need to realize your dreams.” (College Works Painting Web)

“Students” are only students by definition, when they are enrolled in school, and actively studying their discipline. A student takes on many different roles through the course of the day, though it is true that many employees of CWP may have been students at one time, or are students at the time of employment, their title when working for this company does not remain student. Used to help potential recruits identify with the employees at CWP, this tactic of defining groups and assigning representational titles to people has been used as a rhetorical strategy by government and in military propaganda to focus understanding of particular ethnicities and religious sects. These tactics were originally studied by Burke. He details the way Hitler piled the social and economic problems of Germany onto the Jewish title. CWP says come work with the “elite students”; in most cases, the employees at CWP are graduates or must also be classified as working students. If one is working at CWP and also enrolled at a university, then they are not just a “student” they are a working employee and a student. This half true title encourages university graduates to join the team and become one of the elite students. The rhetoric also lends to the idea that it is possible to attend classes while working for CWP. The CWP program is constructed on the premise that students will work 60+ hours a week, and that they will work over the summer. This is how their program is set up and explained on their website for reasons regarding weather and in order to maximize the full availability of employees who may be students.

The second half of the introductory paragraph is a more forward invitation, building on the rhetoric already established. Now that readers are acquainted with the idea that they are capable of the action they are being presented, learning, they are invited to be a part of the “elite” group of “students” at CWP. This use of the word elite seems to imply a current deficiency in the students who are reading. To be invited to “join the elite” asserts that the students outside of CWP are not elite. The hope here is the challenge of outside students’ ability will attract university graduates to the company. The position is advertised as an internship, so the phrasing and word choice of “gain the experience” defines the job as beneficial even if the experience is a bad one. Presented in this way, “gain the experience”, will always appear most appealing. Gaining experience is always seen as a positive term, as Weaver describes it, it is a “God Term” (211). God Terms are words and phrases that are associated with feelings and connotations that give more weight to a word than its original definition gives. “Patriotic” is an example of a God Term that carries more meaning than its literal definition. Patriotic embodies values and the ideas of Americanism, faithfulness, and unity. It is a God Term in that it is irrefutable and infinitely associated with positive values, actions, and people. The rhetoric from CWP employs the God Terminology “Gaining experience” that is associated with learning, evolution, and money. University graduates will have a difficult time seeing through this rhetoric because in their own minds they have assigned different values to God Terms but, in general, the associations are universal.

An unusual piece of rhetoric caps off this second sentence of CWP defining introductory paragraph. They conclude that the experience they provide is the one that will help the students realize their dreams. CWP is an institute of work, a business, a company, not a charity, or a school. Businesses that recruit have screening processes because they want the candidate with

the biggest earning power. Any sensible and ordinary business model has the goal at hand to produce, and that production of capital gain is the true interest of CWP. The biggest difference between a business and a school of true learning is that education is the primary purpose. Businesses may offer similarities to schools of true learning such as turning away low GPA's as unqualified applicants may be rejected after an interview. A business could contend that they provide a service to their clients just as the colleges do to their students, but the motivation of profit is what distinguishes a business from a school of true learning. From a financial standpoint in business the goal is to gain, that gain is always numerical, measurable, and on the side of the business lest it cease to exist. Gain occurs in a school of true learning, in that environment through scholastic profits. The education a student receives, elevates, and expands upon can't be quantitatively assessed. CWP asserts that they create, in their opening message, an environment of providing similar experiences.

The rhetorical strategies are acting upon students, and while some similarities may exist between education and working for this business, the primary purpose of CWP is a profit defined by dollars. CWP presents the illusion that they are providing an experience to university graduates when their primary purpose is to make a profit. Through analyzing their rhetorical strategies it becomes evident that the offer of an "experience unlike any other" is an illusion. At no juncture is this study supposed to stand alone as an authority on truth about the company CWP and the recruiting and hiring strategies of businesses like it. I hope that further investigation of it and other companies who are using these strategies is sparked by this research.

Analyses by The Adler Group who specialize in recruiting and hiring university graduates will provide a deeper look into the workings of reasoning behind businesses strategies. The Adler Group published in 2007, "College recruiting isn't cheap - according to a recent

NACE survey, the average overall budget for campus relations and recruiting was \$386,634... Whatever your budget, the more effective your program is, the lower your cost-per-hire will be.” (Adlerconcepts.com). The main goal of this recruiting ideology is to spend as little as possible on each university graduate they hire. This ideology supports the argument that CWP and recruiting businesses like it are focused on their profits as a business rather than on providing students with an “experience”. It is not considered a bad thing for a business to have a primary concern of financial gain and profit. It is considered misleading to advertise rhetoric that persuades university graduates to make a choice to pursue employment based on fallacies. The Adler Group’s techniques for hiring are to communicate quickly and mostly electronically as they are aware that most all university graduates are online and using cell phones as their primary sources of communication. The Adler Group suggests to recruiters to seek out the career services centers if a business is trying to recruit on university campuses. They suggest hiring a student who is familiar with the campus as the university student will best know where to advertise to the student body.

Altruistic Strategy: The Rhetoric of The Peace Corps

“The most significant accomplishment will be the contribution you make to improve the lives of others.”

Peace Corps is no doubt an experience providing organization, so it is not similar to CWP in creating any illusions of that regard. However, the organization is using rhetorical strategies visually and in its main self-descriptive statements. The evidence of this is in the Peace Corps website, that which is laden with pictures of ethnic people in foreign places doing daily tasks that are foreign to university graduates. The images depicted range from swinging long sharp blades of metal in fields of grain or wheat, for example, to malnourished looking kids playing with old

sports equipment to strange figures wading through waist-high grasses. Images like these, coupled with statements such as the one listed above, pull on the heartstrings of readers and graduates. These images are strumming a tune on university graduates' heart strings that they can make a difference in these starving childrens' lives and that it will be impactful on a personal level as well. Much goes unsaid in this imagery. The statements that the pictures make about the lives of the people volunteers will be aiding is unknown to university graduates but the attraction of altruism is strong and can result in persuasion. Meridan Bennet, a returned volunteer and current employee of the Peace Corps writes about a personal experience and outlook on what the Peace Corps does well and what they could improve upon; "The Peace Corps is important and has relevance only so long as it is effective in assisting the development of those nations which have requested its help." Bennett provides an insight that is overlooked by university graduates influenced by altruistic strategy. The insight is that nations must play a large part in developing their own countries, and some of these nations Peace Corps is reaching out to are reluctant to receive help. So a university graduate, inspired by the altruistic rhetoric may venture out like a superhero where a hero is not welcomed.

Bennett is commenting on the facts she realized during her time with the Peace Corps. The experience proved the reality that people of the world may not want help from an American, or a university graduate. People of the world may not even be suffering, by their own standards; but by American standards they "need" help. Rhetoric such as this can lead university graduates to believe that they will be improving the lives of others when the reality that Bennett describes is different: "These solutions, which smack more of disaster relief than development have been tried singly or in various combination and have not worked in the past, and show no sign of working in the future." (Bennett). The issue of true representation of the organization is

examined here, not whether Peace Corps is a successful enterprise. It is now seen that the nations that welcome aid still must maintain their own strengths, so it could be argued that to improve the lives of others, as the Peace Corps originally stated, may be an altruistic rhetorical strategy. Improvement implies building, and the idea of helping nations to build neglects individual strength of the particular nation. It would be a more open statement to explain the precise means of assistance by Peace Corps in areas that are weak in specific nations. "Helping" them improve assumes the tone of Peace Corps volunteers being greater than a specific nation. When Bennett explains it is most essential to keep strength in these needy nations it is non-productive to imply an organization or a nation to be superior to another. The rhetorical strategy in these statements by the Peace Corps creates an illusion of great service to people who are down and out. Bennett's article states that some countries to which volunteers are deployed do not welcome the aid and in some situations are set back, not helped by these altruistic actions. University graduates who truly care about helping countries who voice a need for aid ought to research the truth of nations who are desperate rather than allowing Peace Corps to assign them to a place that may reject their enthusiasm to work.

This organization is not only employing the use of the altruistic rhetorical strategy, the experience strategy overlaps in some areas of their rhetoric. The rhetoric is, however, primarily altruistic as there is more truth in Peace Corps being an experience than anything else. In their advertisements and promotions there are a few pieces of rhetoric that linger on the edge of being classified as experience oriented rhetorical strategies. "Departures" is the first visual that appears at peacecorps.gov. It is displayed in big letters next to a picture of a plane. Although there are instances in the introductory pages that describe the Peace Corps volunteer program as a strict service-oriented job, and they state outright that it is not a service to take advantage of if

all you want to do is travel, this is the initial rhetoric university graduates see. If Peace Corps' aim is to attract service-oriented people, there is a cognitive dissonance within the Peace Corps' advertising mechanism. They must realize that using this visual of "Departures" in their website is, in fact, attracting people who want to travel.

Cognitive dissonance occurs when a belief structure is stated to be one thing, yet through the actions do not match up and a demonstration of the opposite sentiments are displayed. Take a business man who promises to his company and himself he will be totally open and honest with his clients, but when he meets them he gives a deceiving sales pitch that influences them to buy his product. Upon realizing what he has done, the salesman would experience cognitive dissonance. This type of realization occurs often in persuasive speeches and statements given by politicians and businessmen working to appease many different lobbyists at once, so when they talk about education being most important and then alter the budget to diminish funds in schools they experience the realization of thought not matching action, which, again is defined as cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 35). To me, cognitive dissonance is when my actions do not match up with my thought process or what I know is good for myself. If I say I don't like people speeding on the freeway and cutting other drivers off, then if I am reckless and go 100 miles per hour on the 101 then I would experience cognitive dissonance for that contradiction. The Peace Corps is saying they want dedicated service-people, but then they advertise enticing travel aspects of their programs. These strategies create cognitive dissonance within the organization which may lead to their realization of their own recruitment strategies.

Similar strategies are at work to recruit volunteers in other areas of Peace Corps rhetoric. In their defense, the nature of the job does require travel, so one could argue that there must be some amount of advertisements dedicated to that aspect of the job. It is not an accident,

however, that the most attractive and fun looking places are put on display. The equal representation of possible job destinations, attractive and ugly, would be an honest portrayal of possibilities to university graduates. Those considering volunteering would have a chance to assess the reality of the job, and through that assessment, candidates looking only for a fun vacation would be less likely to apply if all aspects were truly defined. If the Peace Corps is attempting to provide an accurate presentation of the job, that it is not a vacation and travel junkies' dream job, then their representation must not deceive potential volunteers and university graduates, else they may suffer cognitive dissonance and recruitment of misguided volunteers.

So with this assessment of Peace Corps rhetoric finding that there are altruistic and experiential strategies in place, a third yet unmentioned strategy occurs. It is not easy to determine every single strategy at work in rhetoric that influences the choices of students and graduates, but some are more easily detected than others. One strategy worth noting that occurs in an unusual way within the rhetoric of the Peace Corps is the benefits strategy. University graduates key in on statistics, numbers, and advantages when making important decisions. The benefits listed by the Peace Corps are not necessarily of that same nature. As university graduates navigate through the informational tabs on Peace Corps' website, an interesting description of benefits is found. A section titled "What are the benefits" is a display of values in a strategic way that don't seem to match up with intentions; another case of cognitive dissonance. Only one benefit is listed in a brief sentence that displays the benefits provided to people in need who are receiving the valuable gift of aid from a Peace Corps volunteer. Compare that quick summary that states the volunteer's impact on people's lives to the list of 10 personal financial gains entitled "Dollars and Sense". Here, all the financial benefits are showcased; health insurance, free travel, compensation, career building aspects, and graduated

school options are detailed. All these benefits to the students and graduates who might volunteer are presented. With analysis of Peace Corps benefit strategy rhetoric there appears to be a disagreement between their altruistic intentions and this list of all the benefits available for volunteers. The list could be so enticing to some university graduates that they might apply for the volunteer positions just for the benefits. The continued healthcare coverage plans, living stipends and travel time may make their benefit strategy offer too appealing. I think the same idea behind paying teachers small salaries ought to apply to businesses like the Peace Corps because the most important driving factor to doing either job is the desire to help others, not for personal financial gain. The way the Peace Corps has their website balanced and dressed does not match up to their mission statement. They advertise travel and the financial benefits in a potentially misleading way. University graduates must be aware of the net of words here which hope to catch them and persuade them to dedicate their skills, careers, and lives to organizations who are potentially misleading.

A Cal Poly university graduate who volunteered for the Peace Corps offered personal experience for my research in an interview. This university graduate, Devin Rippner, was dedicated to improving use of resources for local farmers in Malawi Africa and that training in the Peace Corps lead to a graduate program at Virginia Tech. We talked about all kinds of things from soil research in Africa and Virginia to the recruitment strategies employed by Peace Corps. When I commented on the notion that some of the rhetoric on the Peace Corps website may be a form of trickery and strategy there was a pause and a response, “We trick ourselves into thinking we are something more than we are. I can’t say Peace Corps tricks you, I can say one thing Peace Corps does do, they don’t highlight people’s negative experiences. When people talk about Peace Corps, they never talk about the negative. It’s a Peace Corps wide thing; you just

don't talk about the negatives.” We talked about the recently publicized rape of a Peace Corps volunteer and how important it is for volunteers to be aware of the dangers one can encounter, but Peace Corps does not directly advertise this. It makes good business sense to highlight the positive over the negative, but to lead people to believe there are no risks or to cover up rape can be harmful to future Peace Corps volunteers. A better way to handle the situation might be to address the fact that Peace Corps volunteers need more training or security. They need to take precautionary action against future rapes, rather than acting like it did not happen. On this subject, in May of 2011, the New York Times reported a brief synopsis of the Peace Corps' overall stance on this, “...from 2000 to 2009, on average, 22 Peace Corps women each year reported being the victims of rape or attempted rape, the agency says. During that time, more than 1,000 Peace Corps volunteers reported sexual assaults, including 221 rapes or attempted rapes. Because sexual crimes often go unreported, experts say the incidence is likely to be higher...” (Stolberg 2). Devin said, “these are definitely things that I wish I knew about going into it, but who knows, you could scare a lot of people away by advertising all the negatives, things are different for each person.” The personal testimony allows us to see the good and bad of Peace Corps through a new lens.

I found through the interview with a returned Peace Corps volunteer that it is not fair to put responsibility for responsible use or interpretation of rhetorical strategy all on the side of an organization, or set the responsibility fully on the side of the university graduate. From the discussion with Devin, I found that some information is better left unsaid. The Peace Corps is a good example of why an organization can not fully disclose all information about itself to applicants, as it would be too much for any university graduate to assess and synthesize. I learned this lesson also in that much of the experience of the Peace Corps is unpredictable. With

the responsibility equally resting, resting on both sides of the fence, with the organization and the applicant, we can see that there is a balance. The Peace Corps demonstrates for us that an organization does need to work to be open and honest with university graduates about the nature of the work and some potential things to be cautious of. This does not, however, mean that an organization, such as the Peace Corps, ought to fully disclose every minute detail about themselves to university graduates, as such total disclosure might be too dissuading and overwhelming, or hurt the enthusiasm of university graduates.

Fun Strategy: The Rhetoric of Hewlett Packard

“Class may be over, but curiosity doesn’t have to end there” (Hewlett Packard Web).

With each analysis there are overlaps and dual strategies at work, and the better companies with the more persuasive rhetoric seem to have more and more overlap and types of strategies. Initially HP arouses thinking of big profit, so it tends to be perceived as laden with rhetoric regarding financial strategy. It is more that word of mouth and public perception of HP revolves around profit. By virtue of being a successful organization, I believe that society has given HP a label and character of its own. Upon initial examination, however, HP’s rhetoric gives a much more lighthearted and attractive approach than being a big money maker. More attractive than a financial approach, are the rhetorical strategies that embody the creativity and curiosity that HP asserts is most important to their business model. The efforts HP makes to convey this sentiment of creativity and fresh thinking builds an idea of fun. Most creative modern work environments feature play-like work areas to help nurture the notion of free thinking and independence. Some features of such work environments that might come to mind for university graduates are ping pong tables, arcade games, pinball machines, sporting equipment such as basketball hoops, and more; the list can go on and on. Boiled down, the

sentiments and statements coming from HP create an air of fun which gives reason to classify their rhetorical strategies into the fun strategy grouping.

HP is not trying to hide the fact that they are aiming for university graduates. They are proud to advertise their attempts to net university graduates by creating a specific link on their website called “students and graduates”. Navigating through the link there are some key statements that help build the aforementioned sentiments of creativity, curiosity and fun. It seems to work in their favor to be up front with the notion that they are interested in this specific brand of recruitment, and they serve up several persuasive tactics to lure university graduates closer to submitting applications and resumes. The following is a detailed examination and listing of several tactics that further this notion of fun.

HP is proud to say that they recruit university graduates yearly to keep their organization fresh. One of their chief slogans in this area is, “Class may be over, but curiosity doesn’t have to end there” which begins their employment of rhetorical strategies to ensure university graduates consider HP in a different way than any other company. This is the first title that is displayed after clicking into the “students and graduates” section. The phrase does a few different things to contribute to building the fun strategy. It implies curiosity is stifled without HP and it assumes that previous classes taken by students and graduates were full of curiosity. Also its assumption that the reader is a free thinker works as a compliment to university graduates who interpret the statement personally. The rhetoric builds up the company and the university graduate who is reading the statement. The association of strength and confidence in oneself to HP is created here and drives the university graduates desire to pursue the company. HP’s rhetoric thus empowers the reader and encourages university graduates to continue their free thinking and curious nature at HP.

Another persuasive statement that HP introduces to graduates is this sentence which is the first thing one sees after clicking the graduate program link; “We seek your fresh ideas, energy, and enthusiasm, and look forward to your becoming an HP leader of the future.” Success via fun is the synthesis of this statement. To some university graduates this language could translate into ideas of easily earned promotions by having high energy and being talkative. Any one mind will interpret this statement to mean something different than any other one mind; however it is a statement that leads university graduates strategically. Enthusiasm does not earn promotions, nor do fresh ideas, or energy. Combinations of the three will not even lead to becoming a leader at HP. However, the rhetoric leads to the conclusion that the process is that simple and that it will be a fun thing to do. This is a very nice way of stating the possibilities for university graduates at HP. It is a nice summary of what may happen for someone that works there. Such a nice sounding and general synthesis of the facts of what actually happens at an organization is what rhetorical strategies are based on. It is a persuasive strategy because there are many important factors that are left out of the statement. It is not the aim of this analysis to list all of these factors, but university graduates must see that many exist. University graduates should be aware that these details, when excluded from introductory statements such as these, are strategically constructed to help create the feeling of fun.

Both statements appeal to the idea of fun and freedom in the workplace and give expression and individuality a priority that one would not expect from a traditional corporation. “Opportunity never sleeps” and “Our members never turn off curiosity” are another two ideals that HP hopes students and graduates will gravitate toward. These demonstrate mixed use of strategy in personifying the concept of opportunity by giving it a human trait. Never sleeping may be an appeal to a habit university graduates are familiar with as they are coming from study

intensive environments, and college social scenes. It may be comforting to university graduates to see a familiar ritual such as staying up all night. Similarly, the concept of curiosity is attributed a technological trait of never being turned off. When these creative ways of discussing their ideals are presented HP does two things. First, they establish the importance of these concepts, and then they demonstrate their ability to actually do them. The language shows students and graduates that HP is going to follow through immediately with their values of creativity. Immediacy is something university graduates of this generation are highly attracted to, as The Adler Group made reference to in their suggestions for recruiters in the section on CWP.

HP, and organizations like The Adler Group, give university graduates a great insight into the strategies of hiring and recruitment strategies. The Adler Group makes information regarding on-campus tactics and recruitment available to university graduates and recruitment businesses alike by posting their strategies online. Any university graduate can assess the information The Adler Group publishes and become more aware of the strategies happening on-campus and decide with a more informed opinion whether the organizations on-campus are misleading, or if they are just doing their best to be successful. HP offers a successful image for future employees and uses the fun strategy to increase interest among university graduates. The fun rhetorical strategy can be persuasive, but university graduates must distinguish between reality and misleading rhetoric. HP offers a lot of the same career options that any other company or organization might offer a university graduate. I infer that HP uses its success as a tool to entice university graduates, coupled with the fun strategy; they use a lot of persuasive rhetoric.

Further Understanding and Analysis through Use of Survey Data

Hypothesis

In surveying three courses of university graduates totaling 73 students (see Appendix C for total subjects) I estimate over 60% will select the experience strategy as the “most attractive statement” (see Appendix F for survey). My estimations of how individual courses will survey depend on the subject matter of each course, assuming the students enrolled in these courses are focused on the material of the lecture, and the notion that students are honestly answering their first impression to the survey without any internal struggle. It is very possible that not all students will fit into the criteria of which I am basing my predictions on, but my estimation is that each class will generally fit into these categories. Though these strategies will influence each class slightly differently dependent on how dedicated the students are to each subject, I speculate that each strategy will be similarly affective. My prediction is that communications will tend to the experience strategy, philosophy will tend to the altruistic strategy, and history will tend toward the fun strategy. My predictions for each course’s tendencies equate to the notion that a “tendency” is defined by the greatest percentage of the whole. For example, in the history course, if it were true that its tendency was toward the fun strategy, then, it would be that its percentage of students who selected the fun strategy would accumulate one third or more of the total data from that course. I predict this one third majority for each course in my aforementioned hypotheses. It is true that each student has his or her own background and current life situation that will make each strategy attractive to them in some way.

Description of Survey and Survey Process

I decided that a survey of university graduates would be a useful part of this research, so I created a quick questionnaire. The results from students of a survey regarding their attraction to rhetorical strategies would be of great interest to my project in that it would highlight which strategies are most persuasive. This data would be useful to university graduates and organizations alike for many reasons. Organizations might use my data to tailor future strategies to university graduates, or, when this data is analyzed and the results are made available, university graduates could become more aware of the most attractive rhetorical strategies and could, potentially, be misled less often.

I administered the survey in three different classrooms. The first class was a COMS 385 (Media Criticism), a communications class consisting of juniors and seniors. The second was an upper division History course HIST 210 (World History). I also surveyed a Philosophy class consisting of sophomores and juniors, PHIL 331 (Ethics). The process of administering the survey took just a few minutes. The lengthiest part of the process was when the students read the informed consent waiver which took a minute or two. The passing out of papers and returning them took two minutes as well. The actual survey the students took only required the circling of one answer, the most attractive statement to them.

To debrief the students I handed out small slips of paper disclosing the specific nature of the survey. I chose to debrief the students of the full weight of the experiment after they selected the most attractive statement to them so that I would not raise the students' awareness too much and spoil the authenticity of their answers.

I gave a brief introduction of the survey and myself as I began to hand out the consent slips and the surveys. I explained to the students that they did not have to fill out the survey, if

they did not want to, and that it was an anonymous matter.

Results of Survey and Response to Survey

The students in the COMS 385 (Media Criticism) responded well to the topic as I explained how my research was started and founded in the principles of that course. It is important to note that Bitzer and Vatz and their theories of analyzing rhetoric, were fresh in the minds of the students. After filling out the survey one of the students asked to know the true source of the rhetorical strategies in the survey. I disclosed that information to them after every survey was completed and handed back to me. They were intent on listening as I told them that HP, Peace Corps, and CWP were the businesses in question. I saw some of the students eyeing each other responding silently to this new information. Their responses made me aware of the fact that I am hitting on a poignant topic for my peers and that they may benefit from my study sooner than I could have imagined. Originally I only expected the potential for benefit to arise once all the data was collected and analyzed, but I think the act of surveying the class brought a heightened awareness to this relevant issue of rhetorical strategies used by businesses on university graduates. I expect this class to be most attracted to the experience strategy because the fun and altruistic are most like the strategies they are used to seeing and deflecting in the communication course work. The diction in the experience strategy is least aggressive, so I anticipate that this class will be most attracted to the non-threatening feel of that statement.

In PHIL 331 (Ethics), the students all filled the survey out quickly and as I collected them Professor Ball began discussing the ethics of conducting experiments on human subjects. His lecture that day was already planned to be regarding the Milgram experiment where subjects were tested for obedience. I debriefed the class as the researchers in the Milgram experiment would debrief their subjects to a much more emotionally charged situation. I felt my timing

divinely inspired to be there the day they discussed the famous Milgram experiment. The philosophy class strikes me as a group that would select the altruistic strategy more than fun or experience as it is a discipline based in sensitivity to values and morality. I imagine the students in a philosophy class would be hyper aware of helping others, in contrast to a business or accounting class where the focus is more on finances.

Another interesting result of surveying in the classrooms occurred the day I went to survey HIST 210 (World History) class. The class responded well by giving me their attention and completing the survey, but one student surprised me with his answer by circling the instructional statement on the top of the survey of “circle the statement that most attracts you.” Maybe this student was already aware of the rhetorical strategies, and sought refuge from them all. It made me realize that for future surveys a researcher might include a choice for “none”, i.e. “if none attract please indicate so here.” It was a small surprise for me, but a bigger shock was in store for the class. I walked out, and a recruiter for a travel program skipped into the classroom and started shouting off a pep-rally-like speech. She talked about the koalas and kangaroos “down under” where students could spend a year or two helping underprivileged people and work to restore the environment. I listened from the hallway, baffled at the proximity of my research to a hiring and recruitment strategist. I waited outside the door, and when she came somberly waltzing out of the room she remarked to me how difficult it was for her to connect with the class because of my survey. She said she usually has much more excitement and reciprocation of energy in classrooms, but my survey having been administered before her speech changed her audience. We talked about her program and how it was a good thing for her to leave her home in New Zealand and come to California. She was an example to me of how university graduates can benefit from a travel program, as she said she was enjoying her work.

She and my Peace Corps interviewee provide true testimony to the fact that these organizations can provide meaningful careers for university graduates. It was good for me and my research to have crossed their paths. I believe all jobs serve a purpose and there is someone for every job, but the travel program recruiter from New Zealand is also an example of the use of altruistic strategies to recruit university graduates. My prediction for the history class is that the fun strategy would be most attractive to students. The statement “curiosity doesn’t have to end at the classroom” is relative the desire for knowledge, as history courses are a fulfillment of some form of curiosity.

Analysis

As noted in Appendix 1, the results show that none of my hypothesis predicting class behavior was entirely accurate. The communications class tested to be most attracted to the altruistic strategy, as half of the class selected that strategy and the other half of their surveys denoted they were split almost equally between the fun and experience strategies. In that class, experience was slightly more attractive than the fun strategy. My prediction that students in a communications course would select the experience strategy as most attractive was proven incorrect.

The altruistic strategy was most popular in the philosophy class as well. The altruistic strategy won by a closer margin this time. There were two more surveys counting for the altruistic strategy than the experience in the philosophy class. This class was the most evenly distributed of any of the classes. My prediction that philosophy students would tend to the altruistic strategy was correct.

More than a quarter of the history class selected the fun strategy as most attractive, but the most attractive in that class, was again, the altruistic strategy. This class selected the

experience strategy the least of any class surveyed. My prediction was incorrect that history students would tend to the fun strategy.

With all of my predictions being proven incorrect I am forced to realize some major facts about rhetorical strategies and university graduates. I examined the data and found that each class invested in the altruistic strategy more than any other. From this I conclude that the most successful strategy is the one that is based in being helpful to others. The reality of each job is that it is a service for someone else. I think when a strategy is composed from the angle of being helpful and useful to others, it is most attractive. The other organizations function in this way as being a service for others, but they do not present their rhetoric from that angle. If you are working at HP you work to develop computers and computer systems for other people in business and technological industry, and if you work at CWP you are painting people's houses making their lives happier because they have a nicer looking house. Peace Corps uses their rhetorical strategy precisely to promote the fact that they are improving people's lives. What I find from my research results is that, when highlighted, the concept of helping others, as a rhetorical strategy, is the most powerful aspect of attraction.

Conclusion

My research analysis of the three organizations reveals potential for future application to other rhetorical situations. What I have discovered here can be used by university graduates in situations where rhetoric is employed to persuade, such as in recruitment speeches, commercial advertising, and in online media, among others. Organizations who mold persuasive rhetoric such as the ones analyzed in this research may also borrow from my analysis to be less misleading and more honest with the new rhetoric they produce. University graduates who realize there is a true exigence that organizations are responding to will be more aware of

Wander's net of words. My research expands on Bitzer's original theory of exigence in how it is created and fulfilled. This exigence is a Self-created and fulfilling exigence. Most rhetorical situations are caused by subject x and then fulfilled or answered by a separate entity, subject y. In this rhetorical situation there is a self-created and self-fulfilling exigence in that the university graduates who work toward graduation and a career are the ones who secure the career to fulfill the situation. University graduates create the exigence themselves, and then respond to their own situation with more action, as they graduate and find a career. The university graduate is the x and y of this rhetorical equation. This phenomenon of the self-created and self-fulfilling exigence could be a topic of future research, and may occur in other forms of rhetoric. My research thus lends a new perspective on rhetoric to university graduates who will become web editors or parts of businesses who create rhetoric to recruit future university graduates. The hope is that the conclusions that I have reached not only give university graduates a better understanding of the rhetorical strategies that are used to influence, but my results also aid organizations to better serve university graduates by representing themselves more accurately.

My research shows rhetorical strategies have several forms and functions, and that when employed by organizations and recruiters, they serve many purposes. Some serve the purpose only to enhance the business and organization with little regard for the accuracy with which they represent themselves to university graduates. Other rhetoric employed for hiring and recruitment purposes is potentially encouraging and helpful to university graduates working to fulfill their exigence after graduation. University graduates who work for, or are involved with organizations who use hiring and recruitment strategies in misleading ways can potentially enjoy careers that are satisfying. My interviewee, Devin Rippner, and other testimonies prove not all recruiting fueled by rhetorical strategy leads to disappointment for university graduates.

Although the ignorance of some university graduates has not proved to be financially or morally fatal for them, I do believe that lack of awareness of rhetorical strategies could diminish the quality of choice for university graduates. Being “privy to the information available to officials”, as Wander puts it, could only increase university graduates ability to make choices for their careers and future (999).

For future analysis to learn more about how university graduates are actually influenced by rhetorical strategies, researchers ought to consider formulating surveys to submit higher numbers of classes of university graduates. I also believe that more examples of each strategy could help define the categories and more accurately represent the students’ attraction. Generic examples of Experience Illusion, Altruistic, and Fun rhetorical strategies could be presented in a revised survey to collect more accurate data. I believe the data would be more accurate in a revised survey because university graduates would be more likely to identify with one of twenty one questions, as opposed to their chance to identify with one of three. The example rhetorical strategies could be different examples of experience, altruistic, and fun strategies equally represented by including seven from each category. Restrictions of time and resources kept me from implementing these survey revisions in this study. For the purposes of this research I was forced to keep the survey as simple as possible.

To further improve upon a revised experiment a researcher might also bring the results back to the group of students and graduates and inform them about how they were persuaded. This step of any future research would be the truest essence of the actualized purpose of my research: to better serve university graduates, and to help them become more aware of their tendencies to be persuaded by rhetoric. Bringing results of the study back to the classes surveyed would truly awaken university graduates to the reality of rhetorical strategies,

universalizing the susceptibility of them and their classmates to the net of words, granting them the advantage to become privy to the information available to organizations who would recruit them through misleading rhetorical strategies. To help make this information available to the university graduates when the weight of all the options and the net of rhetoric is cast out in hopes to sweep them up I am sending my results back to the three classrooms that I surveyed. I am sending a brief synopsis of my research and results to the Mustang Daily, our university newspaper, in hopes to reach as many university graduates as possible with the message of my research.

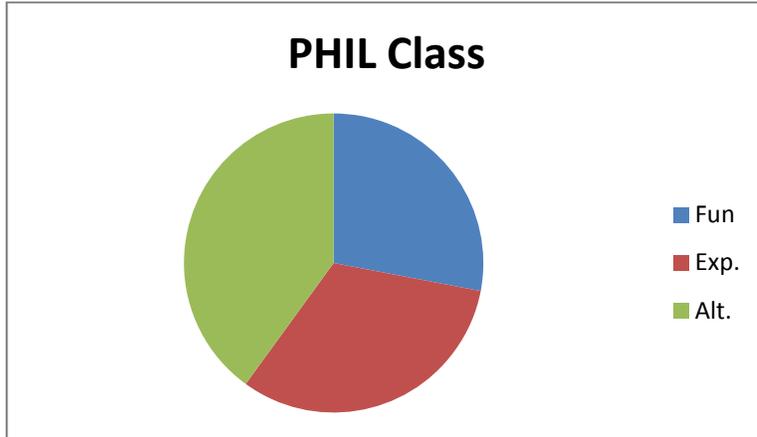
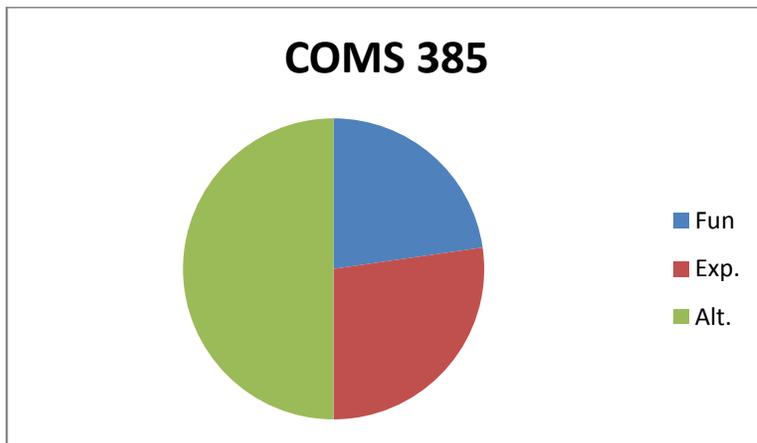
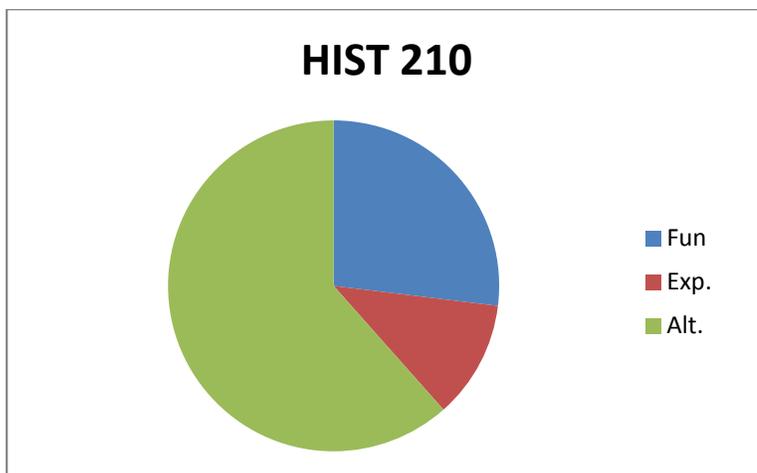
I have benefitted greatly from this research as my senior project. Instead of dismissing the situation with Peace Corps or CWP I took the facts and information available and assessed it rigorously. I learned that others face the same struggles I do, and that some of the situations created by rhetorical strategies can lead to fulfilling careers. I benefitted largely from the self-diagnosis that I experienced in writing my story of how I came to this project. Looking over the events and processes I navigated gives me a sense of accomplishment in knowing that I did not sell out to jobs or careers that I was quickly attracted to because of rhetorical strategies and how I tricked myself into thinking that that was the choice for me. I have developed a skill of assessment now and a heightened awareness that will pervade my future decision making processes and which allows me to now have a vital tool to be shared with others. I think the most people will find the most satisfying and worthwhile experiences in careers by having the process that I have had. If people will learn the rhetorical strategies in organizations through their own experiences, and then work to share their newfound knowledge with others, then more and more people will find themselves in a meaningful life profession.

The process of complexity Wander refers to is likely to be too much for university

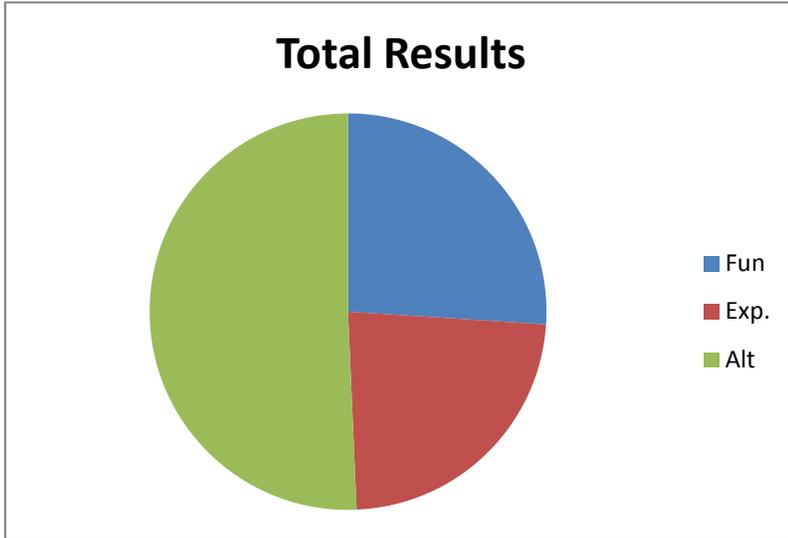
graduates. In many scenarios students are unaware of the rhetorical strategies used by businesses and recruiters. University graduates have so many fantastic opportunities available to them that it is difficult to know how to make the choice to decide what comes next. Available to university graduates are leading technological companies and leadership management development firms who use urgency and misleading attractions in their rhetorical strategies to recruit these talented young minds. The genre of rhetoric at hand is a business strategy that influences choices of university graduates. This rhetoric exists in print and oratory; travels by handout, flyer, by career fairs, and resides in institutions of higher learning. University graduates have a weak spot; their desire to find the perfect career, and, as we have seen, it is exploited by businesses hire and recruitment strategies. By implementing this study and continuing analysis of these rhetorical strategies university graduates can overcome the net of words.

Appendices

Appendix A

*PHIL 331**Fun %28**Exp. %32**Alt. %40**COMS 385**Fun %23**Exp. %27**Alt. %50**HIST 210**Fun %27**Exp. %12**Alt. %62*

Appendix B



Total Results
Fun %26
Exp. %23
Alt. %51

Appendix C

Actual raw data collected

HIST

7 Fun %27

3 Exp. %12

16 Alt. %62

1 – Non compliant

COMS

5 Fun %23

6 Exp. %27

11 Alt. %50

PHIL

7 Fun %28

8 Exp. %32

10 Alt. %40

Totals;

19 Fun %26

17 Exp. %23

37 Alt. %51

Total number of subjects; 74

Appendix D

Approval Notice from Dr. Steve Davis in Human Subjects Department

Dear Sean,

Attached is a draft of your informed consent form with suggested modifications (deletions in red, additions in blue.) If you make these changes your proposal, "Rhetorical Strategies of Businesses that Influence Choices of College Graduates", is approved by the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee under the criteria for "Minimal Review".

Your subjects will not have to do anything with the informed consent form except read it before completing your brief survey. You should discuss possible adverse effects of the information in the informed consent form with your advisor, Dr. Blau. If you think the information in your informed consent form will bias your subjects' responses, you can change the wording in your informed consent form so that it is more vague. However, if you do employ "minor deception" by not describing specifics, then you will be required to "debrief" your subjects after they complete the survey. You can do this by giving them a piece of paper that describes the true nature of your research, or you can debrief subjects verbally.

If you decide to modify the wording of your informed consent form to reduce the potential for bias, and to debrief your subjects, then please run the new informed consent form and debriefing information by me before you begin to recruit subjects.

Otherwise, your study is approved following modification of your informed consent form as indicated in the attached draft. Best wishes for successful research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Davis
Chair, Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee

Appendix E

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN Sean Gibson's Senior Project; Rhetorical Strategies of Businesses that Influence Choices of College Graduates

A research project on Rhetorical Strategies used on college graduate students by businesses is being conducted by Sean Gibson in the Department of Communication Studies at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The purpose of the study is to learn what rhetorical strategies are most attractive to college graduate students regarding deciding what businesses to pursue a career with. The objective of the research is to discover the most attractive strategy to students and provide that information to them through the Mustang Daily newspaper so they can be aware of the rhetorical strategies that are most compelling to them that persuade their choice.

You are being asked to take part in this study by completing the attached/enclosed questionnaire. Please circle the most attractive statement as it would pertain to your pursuit of a career with a given company. Your participation will take approximately 2 to 3 minutes. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also omit any items on the questionnaire you prefer not to answer.

The possible risks associated with participation in this study include awareness that potential businesses you might work for are using rhetorical strategies to procure your employment. If you should experience emotional distress related to the realization of these rhetorical strategies, please be aware that you may contact Cal Poly Counseling Services, Health Center via 756-2511 or Sean Gibson at (805) 215-3505 for assistance.

Your responses will be provided anonymously to protect your privacy. Potential benefits associated with the study include bringing awareness to your fellow Cal Poly students who will soon be faced with the same difficult task of making a career choice for post Cal Poly life.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Sean Gibson at (805) 215-3505, or the advisor to the student researcher Jnan Blau (805) 756-2510. If you have questions or concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at 756-2754, sdavis@calpoly.edu, or Dr. Susan Opava, Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at 756-1508, sopava@calpoly.edu.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by completing and returning the attached questionnaire. Please retain this consent cover form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

Appendix F

Survey

Please circle the statement that attracts you most. Note that these are maxims from three different organizations hoping college graduates pursue them.

Experience Illusion

"Learn about how you can embark on a journey unlike any other where success begins and leaders are made."

Altruistic

"The most significant accomplishment you will make will be that of improving the lives of others."

Fun

"Class may be over but curiosity doesn't have to end there."

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