

Students handle business at hand despite economy

The stock market is ebbing and flowing, banks are seeking bailouts and businesses across the country are struggling.

The bad news, though, is not reflected on the campuses of the three colleges within the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Career centers at Mount St. Mary's University, College of Notre Dame of Maryland and Loyola College in Maryland all say business-related majors remain the most popular, just ahead of education and government.

The gloom and doom has not dampened enthusiasm for those just starting their final year of schooling.

"They read the paper," said CreSaundra C. Sills, director of Loyola's career center. "It's a little early. The rubber will hit the road next spring when they're ready to graduate. At this point, students hope things settle down when they graduate."

Businesses are still ramping up recruiting efforts on the Mount's campus, said Sabira Vohra, director of Mount St. Mary's Career Center.

"Accounting firms are pretty much the No. 1 recruiter on campus," said Ms. Vohra.

Diane McCann, director of the Academic and Career Enrichment Center at Notre Dame, said she doesn't "see any panic or crisis" at the women's college.

While business-related majors continue to thrive, there are others that are popular on all three campuses - like education. Annually, there are stories across the country about cost-cutting measures in the classroom, but there are other whispers as well. "It is a very popular major," Ms. Sills said. "Public schools are looking; private schools are looking. Everyone's looking."

Both the Mount and Loyola are experiencing a rise in students going into government positions, particularly since the creation of the Office of Homeland

Security in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

Because of the relative proximity of both campuses to Washington, D.C., each can provide easy access to interviews for other federal agencies as well.

All three schools have been proactive in promoting their operations on campus. Loyola's career center has created a Facebook.com page and extended its hours well into the evening. The Mount has created a class to help ease the transition from college life to the work world. Notre Dame offers activities to promote business attire and deportment for its students.

"We're here to help them and meet them where they are at in life," Loyola's Dr. Sills said.