

AT CAP COLLEGE

MERCHANDISING HAS HAD A FACELIFT

THEY'VE TAKEN the fluff out of the retail merchandising program at Capilano College, and co-ordinator Marilyn Taylor couldn't be happier about it.

Taylor, an attractive dynamo who radiates enthusiasm, is proud of the dramatic change the former retail fashion program has taken -- and to show the community the results, the department is having an open house today and a fashion show next week.

The most obvious change is the name, but the new merchandising label is only part of it. Instead of focussing on fashion, appearance and presentation, the courses now concentrate on marketing and merchandising.

"People think buying is going into the Vancouver Show Mart, but while this is a part of it, it is by no means all of it," Taylor says.

"In order to make those buying decisions, you require an awful lot of knowledge of consumer behavior and knowledge of your market."

"With the program's name change, the students have changed too. Of the 60 students now enrolled in the two-year program, three are men -- an unheard of situation less than two years ago.

"The name change takes the fluff out of the program," Taylor says. "We're now trying to get even more men in."

What is merchandising? Taylor says it is essentially marketing in a retail store.

By **NANCY CAMPBELL**

The functions include buying and selling merchandise, with a necessary background in math, accounting, budgeting, economics, business knowledge and forecasting, and charting and understanding consumer trends.

That's not all. Selling requires skills in training staff, salesmanship, advertising and promotion, and visual merchandising.

Because of the small number of students allowed into the first year of the program, Taylor says the department now has to interview prospective students and select just 30 of the 100 applicants.

"We're looking for highly motivated, enthusiastic personalities, who enjoy meeting the public and have some selling skills," she said.

"We're certainly keen on talking to people who are interested in redirecting their careers."

Taylor herself is the best advertisement her program could have, even if North Shore students are not already aware of the course. Organized and calm despite the maelstrom an infant son and four year old daughter can create, her knowledge of her department and students is obviously paying off in the high percentage of jobs held by recent graduates.

One is now a sales manager for Eatons, several are sales reps for clothing lines. Another is a promotions manager for a shopping centre, and some are assistant managers and management trainees for chain stores.

"Our reputation is getting better all the time," Taylor says. "We've put a lot of hard work into developing a program to fit the industry's needs.

"We keep in constant contact with industry advisors, discussing how to update the

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A hopeful future for grads

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graduates and helping to place them." The open house today, from 3 to 8 p.m. is just another part of the pro-

gram's change and development. Students will be displaying many of their skills, the public can learn about the program, and pro-

spective students can decide if merchandising, Capilano College style, is for them.

There will be several video programs, a textile demonstration, a mini-fashion show, display window examples and a presentation of creative ad productions in the A tower building at the Lynnmour campus.

Next Wednesday, April 7, the students will be hosting a gala fashion show, complete with choreography, gym-

nasts and brass players. The annual event will be at the Centennial Theatre, and tickets are available at the college's information centre or by calling 986-1911.

Merchandising is a major change for the 9-year program, but one which Taylor is confident about. Now that they've taken the fluff out, it looks like the students are getting the lead out in a dynamic and interesting program, rivalled by none in the Lower Mainland.

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