

***WORK AND STUDENT LIFE:  
AN EXAMINATION OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT***

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	1
National - MSU Comparison	2
Work and Student Life	5
Study Approach	5
Population	5
Instrument	5
Administration	5
Results	6
Student Profile	6
Working Students	7
Primary Job	8
Job Sources	13
Accepting a Position	13
How are Wages Spent?	15
Reasons for Working	16
Trade Offs	17
How Many Hours Should Students Work?	18
Students Who Are Not Working	18
Attitudes Toward Work and Student Life	19
Work Patterns Among Ethnic Groups	21
Conclusion	23
References	24

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students were interviewed during spring semester, 1993, to determine the extent to which students worked while enrolled in school; details of their job, especially off-campus employment; and the impact of work on campus life and other activities. Key findings from this study follow:

1. Nearly 65% of enrolled students were working during the semester. Of those not working, 34% had worked previously while enrolled. Approximately, 24% of all respondents have never worked while enrolled at MSU. Based on employment patterns of juniors and seniors, a reasonable estimate shows that 14% of graduating seniors will graduate without working while in residence on-campus.
2. Approximately 58% of working students are employed on-campus with 33% holding positions off-campus. The remaining students held at least two positions: one on-campus, the other off-campus.
3. Students typically hold clerical, food service, retail sales, and maintenance jobs.
4. On-campus wages averaged \$5.16 per hour during spring semester 1993 while off-campus wages averaged between \$5.66 and \$6.16 per hour.
5. Students worked an average of 18 hours per week in all jobs. However, students working off-campus or holding two positions worked 8 to 12 hours more per week than on-campus workers.
6. Jobs were primarily found through friends, the Student Employment Office (SEO), and newspaper ads.
7. When deciding to accept a position, students wanted work hours to meet their schedules and to be flexible (change hours if necessary). Transportation and location were also important considerations.
8. Earnings were spent on room and board, tuition, and books and class supplies.
9. The primary reasons for working included the need to earn room and board expenses, particularly those working off-campus, and extra pocket money.
10. To work, students traded time normally spent in other activities. Time for work was taken from leisure activities, studying, and volunteer participation. Men and upperclass students felt work also impacted their social activities.
11. Students believed that individuals could reasonably work 10 to 15 hours per week while enrolled; a range considerably below the hours they actually worked.
12. Even though more women were working than men, men worked nearly three hours more per week than women and received slightly higher wages. Women were more likely to hold two or more jobs and work on-campus.

13. Minority students, particularly Hispanic and Afro-Americans, were more likely to be working: 72% and 77%, respectively. These two groups were also more likely to hold two or more jobs. Minorities tended to work more hours per week, except for Native Americans. Minorities were likely to be working on-campus.
14. Among all ethnic groups, Asian-Americans were least likely to be working, only 42% were employed; worked the fewest hours, approximately 14 per week; and had the shortest tenure in their positions (approximately one year).

Working on-campus, though often lower paying, allows students more options for participation in other aspects of campus life. This is achieved in part by on-campus students working fewer hours than off-campus workers. Also the on-campus work environment supports students wider collegiate interests, particularly academic commitments. Thus, it is more likely that on-campus employers provide flexibility in scheduling (e.g. take time off for exams) and support for participation (e.g. volunteer programs) than off-campus employers.

Regardless of their situation, the majority of college students are working while enrolled. Their work takes a significant amount of their time, resulting in a rearrangement of priorities. For faculty and university officials, the hours taken from studying and other academic pursuits may be discouraging. The extent to which work impacts academic activities is not known; although work could influence academic major and course selections. Student lifestyles, with the exception of social activities, appear not to be affected by work to the same extent as academics.

#### NATIONAL - MSU COMPARISON

During the 1992-93 academic year, the National Association of Student Employment Administrators (NASEA) conducted a national survey, involving eighteen colleges and universities and approximately 13,000 students. Several questions in the Michigan study (MSU-SEO) were similar to those found in the NASEA instrument which allows for comparisons between Michigan State University students and a broader sample. Selected NASEA results, available from a released report in the Journal of Student Employment (Vol. 6, No. 1, 1994), have been drawn for comparison purposes. Table 1 presents information from both studies and pertinent information from a typical weekly on-campus student employment report provided by the Student Employment Office (SEO) at Michigan State University.

Key comparisons:

1. More Michigan State students work than encountered nationally: 65% compared to 51%.
2. Michigan State students are more likely to be working on-campus than at other campuses -- 67% compared to 51%. First year students at MSU are particularly prone to seek on-campus employment (80%).
3. MSU students work more hours per week, except first year students, than nationally by about two hours per week (18 hours compared to 16 hours). Students working on-campus work considerably less than the overall average (11 hours compared to 16 hours).
4. Overall, MSU earnings per hour are about \$.22 less nationally, \$5.57 compared to \$5.79. This is primarily a result of low wages paid first year MSU students (\$.33 difference). Work study students in both studies received approximately the same hourly pay while MSU's non-work study students received less than those students at other schools.
5. Asian-Americans work the fewest hours among various ethnic groups. Except for whites and Native Americans, wages for African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanics are lower at MSU than elsewhere.
6. Fewer MSU students who work off-campus are involved in food service/retail positions than nationally. For MSU students working on-campus, more are involved in food service/retail and fewer in academic/administrative support than reported in the NASEA study.

TABLE 1. Comparison of MSU Students to NASEA Students on Selected Work Characteristics

	<u>NASEA Study</u>	<u>MSU-SEO Study</u>	<u>Typical On-Campus Weekly Report SEO</u>
Students Working	51%	65%	---
Job Location: Percentage On-Campus			
All	51%	67%*	43***
First Year	61%	80%	---
Upperclass	38%	53%	---
Work Study	80%	79%	---
Non-Work Study	38%	51%	---
Hours Worked Per Week			
All	16	18	11
First Year	13	12	---
Upperclass	17	19	---
Work Study	13	16	---
Non-Work Study	17	19	---
Whites	15-16	18	11
Afro.-Amer./Black	15-16	19	12
Asian American	13	14	12
Other Ethnic	15-16	19-20	11
Wage Rate Per Hour			
All	\$5.79**	\$5.57	\$5.42
First Year	\$5.20	\$4.87	---
Upperclass	\$5.76	\$5.75	---
Work Study	\$5.17	\$5.19	---
Non-Work Study	\$5.91	\$5.74	---
Whites	\$5.55	\$5.57	\$5.39
Afro.-Amer./Black	\$5.87	\$5.51	\$5.48
Asian-American	\$6.57	\$5.54	\$5.66
Hispanic (all groups)	\$6.57	\$6.57	\$5.43
Native American	\$5.33	\$6.07	\$5.23
Job Titles: Percent in Classification			
Off-Campus			
Food Service/Retail	43%	37%	---
On-Campus			
Food Service/Retail	14%	27%	26%
Academic/Admin.			
Support	48%	34%	34%

\*Includes those who held multiple jobs, one of which was on-campus.

\*\*NASEA figure reflects wage rate for public institutions only.

\*\*\*Estimated based on 65% of undergraduate class working during fall semester.

## WORK AND STUDENT LIFE: AN EXAMINATION OF STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

"I don't mean to brag when I tell you my schedule. In addition to carrying a full load of classes, I had two jobs that added up to full-time work. During the week, I went to school (11:00 am to 8:00 pm) two days and to work at one job (8:00 am to 7:00 pm) on the other three. On Sundays I worked at my second job (4:00 pm to 12:20 pm). Sometimes I wonder if I got an early look at what "real life" is going to be like...."

Sharyn Wizda  
George Washington University  
Washington Post  
(Howe and Strauss, pg. 77)

The above situation may be typical for many students enrolled in school full-time today. Conflicts between academics and work arise frequently: students leave class early -- only after failing a test does the instructor learn that the students leave class to work two days a week (only time the required class is offered and work schedule is inflexible); or the dysfunctional class team where one member is never available on weekends because he returns home (100 miles one way) on Thursday night to work a 30-36 hour weekend, returning Monday morning. The pressure to work to pay the increasing cost of school and maintain a lifestyle cultivated in high school is intense. How extensive is work and what impact does work have on student life? In this report, findings from a study of enrolled students sheds light on the role work plays in students' lives.

### STUDY APPROACH

**Population.** Michigan State University students were sorted into two groups: those currently working on-campus and all others whose work status was not known. The two groups were further stratified according to class standing, college, and ethnic affiliation. A stratified sampling procedure that captured these characteristics for on-campus workers was designed and then applied similarly to the other group. The sample population, 4,000 from among 32,000 undergraduates, reflected the existing student population.

**Instrument.** The National Association of Student Employment Administrators had developed a survey for a national study in 1992. In order to compare results, selected questions were adapted to this study. Additional questions were included on job source, decision factors in selecting a job, reasons for working, and demographics. The instrument was pre-tested on twelve undergraduates working at Career Development and Placement Services.

**Administration.** Surveys, accompanied by a cover letter from the Director of Career Development and Placement Services, were sent bulk rate to the sample population in late March, 1993. A reminder postcard was mailed ten days later. Phone calls were made to non-respondents in selected cohorts with low response rates. Approximately, 173 surveys could not be delivered, based on available addresses. The adjusted population size after administration was completed consisted of 3,827 students.

## RESULTS

Work experiences were obtained from 1339 students for a 35% response rate. Nine surveys were incomplete and thus unusable, leaving 1330 for the analyses. Missing information which explains the variation in the number of observations reported for some analyses appeared to be random and did not inject bias into the analyses.

### STUDENT PROFILE

Sixty-seven (67) percent of the respondents were women. The majority were white (82%) with 10% African-American, and 8% comprised of Native Americans, Asian-Americans and Hispanics (all groups). Class distribution was fairly uniform, although a few more upper class students responded than first year students and sophomores: first year (22%), sophomores (21%), juniors (27%), and seniors (30%). The average grade point was 2.94, ranging from 1.00 to 4.00 with a median and mode of 3.00.

The distribution of these students across colleges closely approximated the college-wide distribution of students. Slightly more responses were received from the College of Social Science, while fewer responses were obtained from the College of Natural Science than expected. Overall, 21% of the respondents were from academic programs in the social sciences, followed by business (16%) and engineering (10%). Representation for the remaining colleges ran from 3% to 8%.

During the term when the survey was administered, 21% of the students were awarded work study aid. The median and mode for credit hours carried was 14 hours, with an average of 13.3. The number of credit hours ranged from 1 to 23 with 10% taking fewer than 10 credits and 16% taking more than 16. Student profile information can be found in Table 2.



**Table 2. Profile of Students Responding to Survey**

	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>		<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Gender			Class Standing		
Men	439	33	First Year	294	22
Women	881	67	Sophomore	280	21
			Junior	349	27
			Senior	390	30
Race			Major By Academic College		
African-American	124	10	Agriculture	103	8
White	1061	82	Arts & Letters	102	8
Native American	17	1	Business	212	16
Asian-American	55	4	Communication	108	8
Hispanic	39	3	Education	69	5
GPA (Average)		2.94	Engineering	132	10
Work Study Recipient	282	21	Human Ecology	71	5
			Human Medicine	56	4
Credit Hours Carried (Average)		13.3	Natural Science	106	8
			Nursing	38	3
			Social Science	281	21
			(including James Madison)		
			No Pref	54	4

### WORKING STUDENTS

Approximately 850 students or 64% of the sample reported that they were working at the time of the survey. Nineteen (19) percent held at least two jobs. The majority of students were working on-campus (58%), while 33% worked off-campus. The remaining 9% were employed both on- and off-campus. Over 80% of work study students were employed on campus compared to 51% of those not receiving work study. The same proportion of first year students worked on campus (80%) but by the senior year only 41% (actually 52% counting those with jobs both on and off campus).

More women, proportionately, were working than men; 65% as compared to 60%. Women were also more likely to hold two jobs with 21% reporting multiple positions while only 17% of the men were doing so. Slightly over half of the first year students were working (51%). Involvement in work increased by class standing, reaching 72% by the senior year (57% for sophomores and 69% for juniors). The likelihood of holding more than one job increased by class level: by the junior year nearly one-quarter of those working held two positions.

Students typically worked an average of 18 hours per week. Men worked nearly 3 hours more per week than women, averaging 20 hours compared to 17 hours. Students receiving work study in their financial aid package worked nearly 16 hours per week; three hours less than those without work study. First year students averaged approximately 12 hours of work per week (6% worked 21 or more hours). The amount of time spent working nearly doubled by the senior year where seniors worked 22 hours per week (39% worked 21 or more hours). Employment location influenced the number of hours worked as off-campus positions averaged an additional nine to eleven hours: 14 for on-campus while off-campus and both locations averaged 23 and 25 hours, respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3. General Overview of Employment Situation According to Gender, Job Location, Work Study and Class**

	Gender			Job Location		
	Overall	Female	Male	Off	On	Both
Number of jobs	1.2 (19% ≥ 2)	1.2 (21% ≥ 2)	1.2 (17% ≥ 2)	1.1 (12% ≥ 2)	1.1 21% ≥ 2)	2.1 (7% ≥ 3)
Hours per week	18.10 (26% ≥ 21)	17.16 (23% ≥ 21)	19.96 (31% ≥ 21)	22.96 (42% ≥ 21)	14.23 (11% ≥ 21)	25.16 (67% ≥ 21)
Wage (primary)	\$5.57 (med \$5.00)*	\$5.42 (med \$4.99)	\$5.85 (med \$5.17)	\$6.26 (med \$5.32)	\$5.16 (med \$4.94)	\$5.62 (med. \$5.20)
Primary job hours	16.27 (18% ≥ 21)	15.40 (16% ≥ 21)	17.95 (22% ≥ 21)	21.41 (36% ≥ 21)	13.44 (8% ≥ 21)	16.25 (17%)
Months worked primary	16.45 (med 9) (26% ≥ 20m)	16.10 (med 9) (25% ≥ 20m)	16.91 (med 9) (27% ≥ 20)	20.65 (med 10) (32% ≥ 20)	13.32 (med 8) (18% ≥ 20)	21.24 (med 11) (36%)

\*Median

	Work Study		Class			
	Yes	No	FyY	Soph	Junior	Senior
Number of jobs	1.16 (15% ≥ 2)	1.25 (21% ≥ 2)	1.12 (12% ≥ 2)	1.22 (19% ≥ 2)	1.27 (24% ≥ 2)	1.27 (23% ≥ 2)
Hours per week	15.96 (16% ≥ 21)	18.96 (29% ≥ 21)	12.38 (6% ≥ 21)	15.80 (20% ≥ 21)	18.85 (26% ≥ 21)	21.50 (39% ≥ 21)
Wage (primary)	\$5.19 (med \$4.94)	\$5.74 (med \$5.00)	\$4.87 (med \$4.55)	\$5.27 (med \$4.94)	\$5.64 (med \$5.00)	\$6.14 (med \$5.46)
Primary job hours	14.37 (9% ≥ 21)	16.96 (21% ≥ 21)	11.39 (3% ≥ 21)	11.61 (15% ≥ 21)	16.95 (18% ≥ 21)	19.04 (28% ≥ 21)
Months worked primary	13.95 (med 8) (22% ≥ 20m)	17.31 (med 9) (28% ≥ 20m)	7.55 (med 7) (5% ≥ 20)	11.02 (med 8) (6% ≥ 20)	17.36 (med 12) (32% ≥ 20)	23.02 (med 15) (43% ≥ 21)

**Primary Job.** Respondents were asked to provide more details on the jobs they considered to be most important to them. Based on the student's job title and position responsibilities, a job classification system was developed, representing fifteen typical types of college jobs. The most frequently listed jobs were clerical or office worker at 33% and food service, 21%. Retail sales, maintenance, human services, library, and laboratory assistant accounted for between 5% and 9% of these students, respectively. The remaining jobs were spread over the remaining categories found in Table 4.

While the same proportion of men and women held hospitality or food service positions, approximately 21%, women were more likely to be in clerical positions (37%) than men (24%). Men, on the other hand, were more likely to be in maintenance and security: 15% compared to 3% for women. Women were also found more often in human services, pre-professional (nursing), and library work. Positions related to computers and farm work were likely to be filled by men.

The same proportion of work study and non-work study were found in administrative/clerical positions (33%). However, more non-work study were found in hospitality/food service. Those students working in the library were almost exclusively work study. More first year students are found in food service and library jobs than at other levels. Juniors, in particular sought out administrative/clerical positions. Seniors worked in a variety of fields including retail sales and research/experimental opportunities.

Regardless of where work takes place, clerical/administrative positions captured more than 30% of the students. Several types of jobs, especially food service, maintenance, library, computers, and research, were found on-campus. Off-campus jobs gravitated to retail sales, human services, education, and pre-professional. Those who held positions both on- and off-campus were less likely to be in food service; but more likely to be in retail sales, research, arts/theatre, and education (Table 4).

The average wage was \$5.57 with men earning approximately \$.40 per hour more than women. Wages varied by location with off-campus positions paying about \$1.10 more than on-campus at \$6.26 and \$5.16, respectively. Those who have two jobs, one on-campus the other not, fell in the middle with an average of \$5.62 (Table 3). Experience captured by class level as salaries move upward, from a first year average of \$4.87 to reach \$6.14 average at the senior year. Work study students received lower average salaries compared to non-work study though the median salaries suggest more equality actually exists.

Students had held these positions for nearly 17 months or a year and a half. Those with jobs off-campus had a tenure of nearly two years which suggested that people held onto their jobs. On-campus tenure was shorter by almost a year, at 13 months or approximately one academic year including summer sessions. As expected, tenure increased by class level with seniors having tenure of nearly two years.

**Table 4. Types of Jobs Typically Held by MSU Students (Percent)**

	Overall	Gender		Location			Work Study			Class				
		n	%	F %	M %	OFF %	ON %	Both %	Yes %	No %	Fy %	So %	Jr %	Sr %
Administrative/Clerical	271	33		37	24	31	34	34	32	33	23	31	39	33
Hospitality/Food Service	176	21		22	21	20	24	11	17	23	32	31	18	13
Retail Sales	73	9		9	8	17	3	12	8	9	8	6	8	11
Human Services	43	5		6	4	9	7	7	2	6	3	4	7	6
Maintenance Service/Security	59	7		3	15	6	8	7	6	7	8	10	7	6
Pre-Professional (medical/legal asst)	17	2		2	1	4	1	4	1	2	1	1	3	2
Education	24	3		3	3	3	2	7	2	3	1	1	5	4
Library	39	5		5	4	<1	8	1	16	1	12	4	2	4
Arts/Theatre	12	1		1	2	1	1	3	<1	2	--	3	--	3
Research/Experimental (lab asst)	60	8		7	9	3	10	12	8	7	8	4	5	11
Athletic Service	9	1		1	1	2	1	--	1	1	1	1	<1	2
Computer Technician	23	3		2	5	2	4	1	3	3	3	2	3	3
Special Events	7	1		1	1	<1	1	--	<1	1	1	1	1	1
Farm Work	7	1		<1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<1	1
Audiovisual Aide	1	<1		<1	--	--	<1	--	<1	<1	1	1	--	--

An average work week found students averaging about 16 hours per week in their primary job. Men worked 2 1/2 hours longer than women in these primary jobs. Off-campus workers logged 8 hours more per week for those working off-campus (21 hours compared to 13 hours). Those with two positions fell in between at 16 hours. This figure was a drop of nearly 9 hours from the overall hours per week without suggest that students with two jobs split their time: 15 to 18 hours in their primary job and 8 to 10 hours in their secondary job(s) (see Table 3).

Work study students allocated nearly all their working time to their primary job. The same was true for first year students. Juniors and seniors provided larger differences; yet, the primary job still accounted for 80% of their work time.

For those working off-campus, the distance to work ranged from less than a mile to 250 miles. The mode was 2 miles and the median was 5 miles. However, 10% of those working off-campus traveled 40 miles or more to work.

College comparisons revealed several interesting finds. Business, engineering, nursing, natural sciences, and agricultural majors were less likely to be working: approximately 42% of the students were not working. On the other hand, students in the College of Social Science were more likely to be working; nearly 70% were employed. Students from communications, education, and natural sciences majors were more likely to hold two jobs: 30%, 30%, and 25%, respectively. Hours worked per week (in all jobs) ranged from a low 14.7 hours for students in medicine to a high of 27.96 hours for those in nursing. Also working more than 19 hours per week were students from agriculture and arts and letters. Higher salaries were generally earned by those students from technical backgrounds, such as nursing (\$8.77), agriculture (\$6.09), medicine (\$5.88) and engineering (\$5.80). Tenure in one's primary position ran from 14 to 19 months. Students in this sample appear not to be prone to switching jobs. These characteristics can be reviewed in Table 5.

**Table 5. Job Profile for Colleges in All Jobs and Primary Jobs**

<u>College</u>	<u>Number of Jobs (Av)</u>	<u>Hours Per Week</u>	<u>Wage (\$) Primary</u>	<u>Hours Week Primary</u>	<u>Tenure (months)</u>
<b>Agriculture</b> 39% not working	1.2 (18% ≥ 2)	19.84 (33% ≥ 21)	6.09	18.26 (26% ≥ 21)	25
<b>Arts &amp; Letters</b> 35% not working	1.3 (21% ≥ 2)	19.74 (36% ≥ 21)	5.43	16.34 (23% ≥ 21)	20
<b>Business</b> 42% not working	1.2 (17% ≥ 2)	17.79 (26% ≥ 21)	5.32	16.93 (23% ≥ 21)	15
<b>Communications</b> 35% not working	1.4 (30% ≥ 2)	19.16 (30% ≥ 21)	5.51	15.13 (13% ≥ 21)	13
<b>Education</b> 36% not working	1.3 (30% ≥ 2)	15.61 (21% ≥ 21)	5.00	13.67 (14% ≥ 21)	15
<b>Engineering</b> 43% not working	1.1 (15% ≥ 2)	17.67 (25% ≥ 21)	5.80	16.91 (19% ≥ 21)	14
<b>Human Ecology</b> 34% not working	1.2 (19% ≥ 2)	17.15 (25% ≥ 21)	5.40	15.02 (9% ≥ 21)	17
<b>Medicine</b> 37% not working	1.1 (12% ≥ 2)	14.73 (12% ≥ 21)	5.88	14.50 (8% ≥ 21)	19
<b>Natural Science</b> 41% not working	1.3 (25% ≥ 2)	18.68 (29% ≥ 21)	5.62	16.30 (18% ≥ 21)	17
<b>Nursing</b> 42% not working	1.2 (18% ≥ 2)	21.96 (46% ≥ 21)	8.77	19.86 (38% ≥ 21)	23
<b>Social Sciences</b> 29% not working	1.2 (19% ≥ 2)	18.20 (23% ≥ 21)	5.45	16.50 (16% ≥ 21)	16
<b>Vet Medicine</b> 33% not working	1.2 (20% ≥ 2)	15.40 (20% ≥ 21)	5.05	14.00 (10% ≥ 21)	9
<b>No Preference</b>	1.0 (3% ≥ 2)	15.18 (9% ≥ 21)	5.35	14.76 (9% ≥ 21)	12

**Job Sources.** Friends were the primary source for finding a job: 32% of the respondents used this option. SEO provided access to a job for 16% of the respondents while newspapers' help wanted ads assisted 9%. Other sources of jobs, listed by students, included own initiative (12%) and postings in dorms, departments, and living areas (9%). Men and women did not vary on their use of the different sources with the exception that men who reported that faculty helped them more. On-campus jobs were more likely to be found through postings at SEO (20%) even though friends still provided the majority of job leads (35%). Those students working off-campus relied on friends (20%), newspapers (19%), SEO (10%), and family (9%). For those with jobs both on- and off-campus, friends provided the most assistance (27%), with faculty (12%), SEO (11%), family (8%), and newspapers (8%) also being helpful (see Table 6).

Students from the Colleges of Engineering, Nursing, and Human Medicine were more likely to use SEO services while Human Ecology, Arts and Letters, and Agriculture students relied the least on SEO. Agriculture students were more likely to find jobs through family and friends. Business and education majors tended to find jobs through friends with approximately 40% of those students using this source. Communication, human ecology, and no preference students relied more on their own initiative (19%).

**Table 6. Sources Employed to Find Job (% used)**

	Job Location				Gender	
	<u>All</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>On</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
SEO	16	10	20	11	16	16
Department	3	1	3	4	3	3
Family	6	8	5	8	7	6
Community organ.	<1	<1	<1	0	<1	<1
Newspaper	9	19	3	8	9	9
Faculty	6	2	7	12	7	5
Friend	32	29	35	27	32	33
Student organ.	1	1	1	0	1	1

**Accepting a Position.** Various factors may come into play when deciding whether to accept a position. A list of ten possible decision criteria were presented to respondents who were asked to rate the importance of each in their decision to accept their current employment. Two criteria were considered extremely important: available hours meeting time schedule (mean 4.24, 83% rated very to extremely important) and work hour flexibility (mean 4.17, 79% rated very to extremely important). Least likely to weigh in the job selection process were three factors: working with people the student knew, job fits with career plans, and availability of transportation (Table 7).

Comparing across various cohorts, significant differences in ratings were found. Women placed higher importance on meeting a time schedule, transportation availability, location, and flexible hours than men. Men rated salary and fun/interesting work higher. Several differences by class rank showed that underclass students (first year and sophomores) held salary, career plans and having a fun job lower in importance than upperclass students. Underclass students did rate location of the work as more important than juniors and seniors.

More differences were found depending on employment location. Those working on-campus placed significantly less importance on salary, fun/interesting work, and career plans and higher importance on location, job availability, and working with people known to them. Those working on-campus did so for convenience and familiarity while those working off-campus did so for higher salaries and career purposes.

**Table 7. Importance of Job Characteristics in Selection of a Job**

	Time Schedule	Flex. Hours	Job Avail.	Location	Like People	Fun	Salary	Transp. Avail.	Career Plans	Know People
<b>Overall</b>										
Mean	4.24	4.17	3.70	3.45	3.16	3.04	2.99	2.58	2.30	1.74
% Very Important	83	79	63	55	43	33	34	33	25	8
% Not Very Important	7	8	17	24	28	30	34	53	63	76
<b>Job Location</b>										
<b>Off-Campus</b>	4.14	3.14	3.23	2.39	2.90	3.52	4.12	2.42	1.64	3.16
	78	40	55	27	37	59	77	29	7	43
	10	28	22	55	39	23	10	60	80	27
<b>On-Campus</b>	4.29	*2.87	*2.91	2.66	*3.79	*3.82	4.20	*2.14	*1.81	3.18
	86	29	31	36	66	66	80	19	9	44
	5	38	35	49	15	13	6	68	73	28
<b>Both</b>	4.23	3.22	3.20	2.76	3.22	3.53	4.13	2.90	1.62	3.08
	84	43	44	37	46	59	78	45	10	45
	5	22	25	45	28	25	13	49	80	32
<b>Gender</b>										
<b>Men</b>	4.14	3.14	3.23	2.39	2.90	3.52	4.12	2.42	1.64	3.16
	78	40	46	27	37	59	77	29	7	43
	10	28	22	55	39	23	10	59	80	27
<b>Women</b>	*4.29	*2.87	2.91	*2.66	*3.79	3.82	*4.20	2.14	1.81	*3.18
	86	29	31	36	66	66	80	19	9	44
	5	38	35	49	15	13	6	68	73	28
<b>Class Standing</b>										
<b>First Year</b>	4.43	2.88	2.82	2.75	3.82	3.84	4.29	1.90	1.73	3.10
	90	30	30	38	65	68	83	14	8	39
	3	35	39	47	12	12	5	74	76	29
<b>Sophomore</b>	4.30	2.98	*2.83	3.03	3.83	3.88	4.20	2.04	1.61	3.09
	87	33	22	45	69	68	88	16	7	40
	8	33	34	38	14	14	6	72	80	29
<b>Junior</b>	4.18	3.05	3.10	*2.40	*3.37	3.62	4.07	2.35	1.79	3.18
	81	35	37	29	53	60	77	26	8	44
	10	33	25	57	27	19	12	63	73	28
<b>Senior</b>	4.15	3.02	3.22	2.36	3.11	3.59	4.16	*2.63	1.75	3.21
	80	45	48	26	32	60	77	34	10	47
	7	32	27	55	33	20	7	15	76	28



Engineers placed less importance on meeting their time schedule and transportation and more importance on fitting into career plans and job availability. Salary was more important to human ecology and nursing students with money less of a concern for communication, education and human medicine students. Other interesting college differences found students from the colleges of communications, human ecology, and human medicine seeking jobs that were considered fun or interesting; location was very important to communication, education and nursing students; natural science placed the highest importance on job availability; business majors wanted the most flexibility in their work hours; and human ecology and communications believed it was more important to like the people at work.

**How are Wages Spent?** With coins tingling in their pockets, how do students spend the money they earn from these jobs? Asked to rank order seven common types of expenditures (tuition, room/board, travel, books, phone, leisure, and savings), students did not single out one clear choice as their primary expenditure. From the rankings, two items received "1" (equal to greatest expenditure), room/board and tuition, from approximately 39% and 36% of respondents, respectively. Leisure/entertainment also received 25% of the first place rankings. Based on the mean rankings, room/board was ranked the highest (mean = 2.89) followed by books (3.17) and phone (3.28). Tuition and leisure appeared at 3.58 and 3.63, respectively with savings and travel rated lowest (Table 8). The grouping of these ratings suggest that students have a variety of priorities when spending their earnings.

Using MANOVA tests, ranking patterns were evaluated. Men and women did not differ in how they ranked their expenditures. Class and job location did, however, produce ranking differences. Class differences (Wilkes F = 2.961, .000) occurred between underclass and upperclass students. Underclass students ranked books/supplies and tuition higher as expenditures while juniors and seniors spent their earnings on room/board. The differences in ranking weights between juniors and seniors and underclass students on room/board was significant. First year students also weighed savings significantly higher than juniors and seniors.

**Table 8. Rankings on Expenditures Made From Earnings (Mean)**

Expenditure	Overall	Gender		FY	Class			Job Location		
		M	F		S	Jr	Sr	Off	On	Both
Tuition	3.58*	3.68	3.52	3.19	3.59	3.69	3.72	3.43	3.69	3.37
Room/Board	2.89	3.00	2.82	3.46	3.53	2.66	2.41**	2.66	3.08	2.49**
Travel	4.64	4.83	4.54	4.53	4.91	4.57	4.60	4.37	4.79	4.74
Savings	4.33	4.39	4.30	3.80	4.20	4.48	4.62	4.45	4.19	4.92**
Books/Supplies	3.17	3.46	3.03	3.00	3.15	3.22	3.21	3.33	3.07	3.31
Phone	3.28	3.65	3.11	3.35	3.18	3.14	3.41	3.54	3.13	3.28**
Leisure/Entertain	3.63	3.64	3.63	3.64	3.47	3.70	3.68	3.67	3.55	4.04

\* 1 = most expenditure to 7 = least expenditure

\*\* Significant differences at .01 or lower

Rankings according to job location were also different (Wilkes F = 2.07, .011). Those students with off-campus jobs ranked room/board and tuition higher than on-campus students. On-campus students spent their earnings on books/supplies, room/board, and phone bills. ANOVA tests showed that off-campus positions differed significantly from on-campus on their rankings of room/board, savings, and phone bills.

**Reasons for Working.** Given a list of eleven possible explanations, respondents rated the extent to which each reason applied in their situation. The factors considered to be very important included a need to earn money to pay for tuition, room and books (71%), to have extra pocketed money (68%), and to gain career experience (66%). Considered to be unimportant were learning time management skills, a break from studies, and conditions of financial aid package. Only 22% indicated that working was an important element in enriching academic experiences and 33% enjoyed working.

Men and women did not vary much in how they rated those reasons (Wilkes F = 1.803, .05). Both indicated that earning money for tuition and living expenses and having extra pocket money as the most important. They did differ on four factors, in each case women placed more importance on: working for personal fulfillment, meeting conditions of financial aid, learning to budget time, and establishing referrals for future employment.

First year students differed from the other classes (Wilkes F = 4.97, .000) in that they worked to earn extra pocket money (the highest rated factor) followed by paying tuition and room/board. Meeting conditions of financial aid package was also an important reason for working.

**Table 9. The Importance of Working While in School (Means)**

Expenditure	Overall	Gender		FY	Class			Job Location		
		M	F		S	Jr	Sr	Off	On	Both
Extra pocket money	3.86	3.82	3.88	4.13	3.83	3.73	3.83	3.81	3.92	3.62
Job exp/career explore	3.04	2.98	3.06	2.80	2.97	2.99	3.24	3.02	3.03	3.21
Social interactions	2.47	2.42	2.49	2.47	2.45	2.58	2.40	2.31	2.59	2.27*
Academic enrichment	2.40	2.39	2.40	2.29	2.30	2.34	2.57	2.20	2.51	2.47*
Personal fulfill/enjoy	2.33	2.72	2.88	2.74	2.69	2.77	3.01	2.79	2.82	3.03
Financial aid	1.94	1.74	2.04	2.83	2.06	1.71	1.53	1.41	2.20	2.10*
Budget time	2.23	2.09	2.29	2.49	2.32	2.19	2.07	1.87	2.43	2.19*
Break from studies	2.05	2.04	2.06	2.19	1.87	2.05	2.09	2.04	2.08	1.93
Job referrals	3.18	3.06	3.23	3.01	3.31	3.15	3.23	3.16	3.18	3.23
Career related exp	2.70	2.68	2.71	2.36	2.65	2.62	2.98	2.74	2.64	3.00
Earn tuition/room/board	3.91	4.00	3.90	3.76	3.86	3.97	4.01	3.85	3.92	4.20

1 = Not very important    5 = Extremely important

First year students did not particularly find much fulfillment in working though they did attempt to gain personal skills (e.g. time management). Upperclass students reversed the importance with tuition and room and board. These reasons were followed by extra spending money. Upperclass students placed less importance on financial aid/academic reasons and began to shift their attention to career related dimensions of work. For seniors, career related issues came to the fore.

Interestingly, those who have jobs both on- and off-campus placed more emphasis on career experiences/exploration than the other two groups. In order to acquire necessary skills, some students held multiple jobs, possibly one paying better than the other. The major differences among these cohorts (Wilkes F = 4.97, .000) stemmed from off-campus workers who placed less importance on managing time, financial aid, social interactions, and enrichment of academic enrichment. In comparison, those working on-campus appeared to derive additional benefits from working than simply earning money to meet expenses.

**Tradeoffs.** The hours spent working will take away from other activities. What do students give up when they work? Those activities affected to a "great extent" by work included leisure activities, studying, and volunteer participation as indicated by 30% of the respondents. Less likely to be affected are participation in IM sports, social activities, and membership in social organizations; falling between these two groups were sleep and exercise.

The means, obtained from ratings on the 5-point scale, showed studying and leisure to be impacted more because of work. Men and women differed only slightly with men indicating that work affected their involvement in IM sports, social activities, and leisure to a greater extent than women. Class level comparison revealed fewer differences. In general, first year students felt work had little impact on their other activities. Significant differences did appear for social activities, volunteer participation, and exercise.

Dramatic differences did appear between those working on-campus and off-campus. Off-campus work noticeably increased the conflict with participation in other activities. Particularly affected was study time where the means exceeded 3.0.

**Table 10. Impact of Work on Other Activities (Mean)**

	Overall	Gender		FY	Class			Job Location		
		M	F		S	Jr	Sr	Off	On	Both
IM Sports	2.15	2.42	*2.02	1.19	2.19	2.14	2.29	2.38	1.98	2.40*
Social Activities	2.62	2.73	*2.56	2.27	2.54	2.70	2.77*	2.87	2.41	3.00*
Student Organizations	2.35	2.41	2.31	2.01	2.35	2.42	2.44 ~	2.61	2.19	2.41*
Social Organizations	2.27	2.30	2.24	2.02	2.27	2.28	2.36	2.52	2.10	2.46*
Leisure Activities	2.86	3.01	*2.79	2.61	2.84	2.96	2.91	3.12	2.68	3.03*
Sleeping	2.62	2.58	2.63	2.30	2.80	2.65	2.64	2.75	2.51	2.82*
Volunteer	2.49	2.53	2.47	2.05	2.51	2.53	2.67*	2.74	2.31	2.81*
Exercise	2.59	2.68	2.54	2.30	2.50	2.70	2.70*	2.89	2.41	2.71*
Studying	2.89	2.95	2.85	2.67	2.91	2.93	2.94	3.07	2.75	3.10*

1 = Not very much    5 = Very great extent

\*Significant difference at .01 level

**How Many Hours Should Students Work?** Respondents shared their opinions by selecting an appropriate category of work hours that students should optimally be employed while in school. The mean of 2.9 suggested a range of 10 to 12 hours per week that a full-time student could reasonably work. Few differences were found among the cohorts except those working off-campus felt students could work more hours; in the range of 12 to 15.

Ironically, the hours that students believe to be the optimum fell well below the average number of hours they were currently working. Only on-campus student workers approached the desired number of hours.

### STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT WORKING

Thirty-six percent of the respondents indicated that they were not currently working. Of the 482 non-working students, 34% had worked at some earlier period, usually on-campus, while enrolled at MSU. Thus, 61% of these students or 24% of all respondents had never worked while a student. The majority of non-working students were first year students (38%) with each of the other classes comprising about 20%. Generalizing from these numbers, approximately 14% of all seniors graduating from MSU will not work while concurrently enrolled. Thus, many of the non-working first year students will eventually work at some point during their enrollment at MSU.

Financial support for those not working primarily came from parents (51%) followed by scholarships/grants, and savings. Loans were not an important source for financial resources among this group with only 10% indicating loans as a "most important" source of financial support.

From the list of possible reasons for not working, students indicated the need to study as a primary factor for not seeking employment. Two other reasons influenced decisions to a moderate extent: conflicts between class schedule and work hours and the desire for time with social activities. Several important reasons were not included on the list which students added. For some, family time was critical, especially for single mothers. Volunteering and unpaid internships to meet course requirements were also mentioned. Finally, some students admitted to being lazy.

**Table 11. Financial Resources for Those Not Working**

	<u>Average *</u>	<u>% Indicating 1</u>
Family	1.70	51%
Savings	2.61	14%
Budget	3.25	7%
Summer Earnings	2.61	13%
Loans	2.91	10%
Other: Scholarships	2.33	6%

\* 1 - most important, 5 - least important

## ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK AND STUDENT LIFE

All respondents were asked to reflect on their views of the impact of work on student life which was captured in response to a series of eight statements. Respondents could agree or disagree with these statements with higher scores indicating that respondents believed that work negatively influenced school life. A combined score from the eight statements produced a mean of 22.56. At this point, students leaned toward believing that work did not necessarily impact student life; but the median of 23 suggested that as a group, students were neutral toward the effects of work on their academic and extracurricular activities.

An ANOVA comparison of various cohorts revealed that job location ( $F = 19.99, .000$ ) and gender ( $F = 3.80, .050$ ) produced significant differences in beliefs. Those working off-campus, and male respondents, believed work interfered with their other activities. A job location and class interaction ( $F = 2.15, .046$ ) showed that between the first year and senior year negative views of work increased for those working off-campus but decreased for those working on-campus. An ANOVA test between those with two or more jobs and those with one job or not working found no significant differences.

Separate analyses of the eight statements found differences on key cohort descriptors, especially job location. The means are reported in Table 11 and summarized below:

**Contribute to Overall Education Experience.** In general, students felt that work contributed positively to their experience. Those working off-campus were more likely to view working as distracting from college as compared to individuals working on-campus. Similarly, underclass students, especially sophomores, felt that work interfered with their overall educational experiences.

**Skills for Job Market.** Skill acquisition was a very positive factor derived from working. Upperclass students particularly held strong views regarding the acquisition of useful skills that could be used advantageously in the job market.

**Academic Performance.** Students agreed that work affected their academic performance; particularly those students working off-campus.

**Social Life.** The biggest conflicts appeared over the trade-off between work and social life. Those working off-campus, men, and upperclass students (sophomores, juniors and seniors) reported that work interfered with social life and extra-curricular activities. Those working two or more jobs felt that work was more likely to affect their social life than others.

**Career Plans.** Upperclass students and women felt that work was more likely to contribute to their career plans than men and underclass students. Overall, however, students agreed that work generally supported their career efforts.

Campus Life. Work did not appear to influence negatively a student's campus experience, except possibly those working off-campus.

Volunteer Activities. Work and participation in volunteer activities clashed; work was viewed as a negative influence on a student's involvement in volunteer programs. Off-campus employment and upperclass students reported the highest levels of conflict. A job location and class interaction revealed that the conflicts rose over time for those working off-campus; but held fairly stable for students working on-campus or in both locations. Seniors actually reported conflict at the same level as first year students.

Fitness Activities. Off-campus workers reported that work interfered with the ability to maintain fitness program, as did sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Actually, juniors felt most strongly on this statement -- that work affected engagement in fitness.

**Table 12. Belief that Work Negatively Impacts Campus Life<sup>1</sup>**

	Overall Mean	Job Location			FY	Class			Gender	
		Off	On	Both		S	Jr	Sr	M	F
<u>Total Score</u>	22.56	23.68	20.86	22.16	20.89	22.27	22.20	21.99	22.51	21.62
<u>Statements</u>										
Contributed ed. experience	2.49	*2.55	2.29	2.32	**2.41	2.46	2.39	2.29		
Job market skills	2.25				*2.34	2.27	2.11	1.96		
Academic performance	3.15	*3.35	2.86	3.27						
Social life	3.11	*3.36	2.82	3.16	*2.71	3.08	3.09	3.12	*3.19	2.95
Career plans	2.40				*2.42	2.46	2.25	2.19	*2.45	2.23
Campus life	2.68	*3.06	2.41	2.75						
Volunteer	3.37	*3.57	3.11	3.28	**2.93	3.26	3.35	3.40		
Fitness	3.15	*3.39	2.91	3.13	*2.75	3.13	3.24	3.11		

<sup>1</sup>Eight statements rated 1 (agree) to 5 (disagree) with 3 being neutral; or for total score of 40 with 24 being neutral and greater than 24 indicating that work negatively impacts other areas.

\* Significant difference at .001

\*\* Significant difference at .050

## WORK PATTERNS AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS

While the attitudes toward work did not differ a great deal among racial groups, their work patterns showed significant differences. Minority students, particularly Hispanic and Afro-Americans, were much more likely to be working: 77% and 72%, respectively, compared to 63% of Caucasians and 42% of Asian-Americans. Except for Asian-Americans, minority students were also more likely to hold two jobs. Hispanic students reported the highest level of dual jobs at 37%. The hours spent working per week reflected these working patterns with over 18.5 hours per week reported by Afro-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic students. Native American students were engaged in work over 20 hours per week (average) while Asian-Americans averaged only 14.

Afro-American, Asian-American and Hispanics were likely to work on-campus. Off-campus positions were held by Native Americans and Caucasians students. Wages in their primary job averaged slightly higher than \$5.50 although Native Americans' average wages approached \$6.10. Native Americans held the longest tenure in their positions at approximately 26 months.

Approximately 30% of Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Afro-Americans used the Student Employment Office as a source for locating their job. For Native Americans community organizations and their own initiative provided employment opportunities. Friends who knew of openings were also good sources for finding employment

Minority groups held similar views on those facets that were important when accepting a position with flexible hours and scheduling being the most important. The one difference was over salary where Afro-Americans placed higher importance on this factor than other groups. Minorities were also more likely to be working in order to meet the conditions of their financial aid package than Caucasian students.

Asian-American felt that work affected their involvement in studying to a great extent. In general, however, Afro-American students viewed work as being less intrusive in other activities than all the other ethnic groups. Similarly, Afro-Americans believed that full-time students could work more hours per week, between 12 and 15 while the other groups indicated that 8 to 12 would be more appropriate.

**Table 13. Work Patterns Among Racial Groups while Enrolled Full-Time**

	<u>Afro-American</u>	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Native American</u>	<u>Asian-American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
Not Working (%)	28	37	29	58	23
Number of Jobs	1.29 (24% ≥ 2)	1.22 (19% ≥ 2)	1.25 (25% ≥ 2)	1.13 (9% ≥ 2)	1.4 (37% ≥ 2)
Hrs/week	18.69 (26% > 21)	18.02 (26% > 21)	20.33 (33% > 21)	14.00 (9% > 2)	18.76 (24% > 21)
Location (%)					
Off	15	36	29	17	20
On	75	55	42	74	60
Both	10	9	29	9	20
Wage (primary \$)	5.51	5.58	6.07	5.53	5.58
Hrs/wk primary	16.07 (18% > 21)	16.34 (19% > 21)	20.20 (30% > 21)	13.24 (5% > 21)	15.70 (15% > 21)
Tenure (months)	16	16	26	13	15
Miles to work	19.31	13.85	30.60	6.5	6.3



## CONCLUSION

This study was exploratory because it surveyed only students at Michigan State University to determine the extent to which they worked. The results produced surprises especially with regards to the size of the population committed to work and the number of hours spent at work each week. Sixty-four percent (64%) of undergraduates were working at the time of the survey. This compares closely with the figure of 70% Brian Silver (Silver, 1994) found in his study of student preference for extended hours of University operations. Not only were many students working, they were working an average of 18 hours per week with one-fifth of undergraduates working more than 21 hours. Among some cohorts the hours worked each week averaged 25. For twenty percent of these students, it was necessary to hold two or more jobs.

Students indicated that they worked to meet educational and living expenses. When it came to actually spending their earnings, pocket money was an important consideration, particularly among upperclass students.

Faculty and staff need to recognize that students may need support with time management, budgeting, and resolving conflicts, especially between academics and work. The impact of work was not directly measured in terms of its influence on length of enrollment or grades, for example. (Those with higher grades tend to work on-campus, earn higher wages, and have longer tenure in their positions). Work does, however, affect participation in volunteer/community service programs. Students are reluctant to trade time for personal fitness and social activities which are as important to them as work. Students appear to be quite willing to forego study time.

Work is a dominant part of students' life and has become strongly interwoven into their activities. Work influences what students do and how they perceive their college experience. Changes in policies and programs (i.e. increase academic performance levels) need to account for work. To ignore this would be foolish; study time loses in a direct conflict with work.

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