

# Student Employment Task Force

## Executive Summary

### I. **The Charge:**

Maximize the opportunities for students to work on campus and regardless of on- or off-campus to link their work to their academic program of study whenever possible.

### II. **Approach to Task:**

Determine the state of on- and off-campus student employment at UNI and recommend meaningful and practical ways to link their work experiences with academic programs.

### III. **Findings & Recommendations:** (See also Tables in Attachment A.)

- A. The percentages of incoming students who *expect* to work while attending UNI have remained constant since 2000.
- B. The number of hours they *expect* to work while attending UNI have also remained constant.
- C. The percentage of students who *actually* worked for pay on or off campus was less than half.
- D. The number of hours *actually* worked was less than expected and *has gone down*.
- E. A separate survey of students in 2004 indicated that 80% of students working on campus worked 1-15 hours per week. Among students working off campus, 28.5% worked 1-15 hours/week, 46% worked 15-25 hours/week, and 25% worked 25+ hours/week.<sup>1</sup>
- F. Among students who work on and off campus, the average number of hours worked per week was 15.
- G. Most students who work *recognize it takes time from their studies*.
- H. Since 2001-02, the cost of attendance at UNI has grown by \$3,506 or 30%.
- I. The cost of attendance not covered by Gift Assistance has grown from \$9,620 in 2001-02 to \$12,497 in 2004-05.
- J. In the same period, the *average annual undergraduate student loan amount has grown* from \$6,020 to \$7,121.
- K. *Average debt loads* upon graduation have also grown from \$16,716 in 2002-03 to \$20,239 in 2004-05.<sup>2</sup>
- L. *Federal Work-Study funds* available to UNI have plummeted from \$1,010,391 in 2002-03 to \$675,192 in 2005-06.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Jana Chmelar and Tim Baluka: An Assessment of Student Employment

<sup>2</sup> Undergraduates. Does not include parent loans.

M. As a result, the number of UNI students with Federal Work-Study Jobs on campus has dropped from 750 in 2002-03 to 460 in 2005-06, necessitating more work off campus.

N. Recommendations:

As a result of conversation with several UNI faculty, staff and students, the following suggestions and recommendations were raised:

1. The high percentage of incoming freshman who anticipate working while enrolled at UNI reflects students' and *parents'* concerns about paying for college and the degree to which students will be responsible for the costs of attendance.
2. There is a need for consistent, standardized, and annual collection of data about student employment. Opinions differed about the appropriate time, place, and sampling mechanism to gather this data, although some suggested returning to the collection of data among students at commencement.
3. There is confusion among some staff, faculty, and students about the differences between cooperative education and off-campus work-study opportunities.
4. Off-campus work study seems to be underutilized. Although thousands of UNI students qualify for the program, only 30-40 took advantage of the program in 2005-06.
5. There are no campus-wide guidelines or forms for off-campus student work experiences that are used for internship and practicum experience. Some departments require advisor or department head signatures to register for internship/practicum credit, others do not. One suggestion is draft standard practices for enrolling in paid off-campus internships, practica, and experiential learning credit.
6. The willingness and ability of professors to make off-campus work experiences meaningful are mixed. By "meaningful," most participants in the campus conversation indicated ways to link the work experience with the student's major and academic and career goals. This is related to the notion that attending a university should some how be a transformative experience and that working (on or off campus) can be a valuable part of that transformation. (Some faculty felt strongly that the University already places too much emphasis on "experiential learning" and that providing academic credit should not be provided for work not directly related to the major.)
7. One final recommendation is to establish a central office to coordinate and promote off-campus internships, practica, and work study experiences. In effect, this may mean a

dramatic expansion of the role, mission, and staff of the cooperative education office.

***Members of the Student Employment Task Force***

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Attachment A

**Table 1: Percentage of New Students Who Expect to Work While Attending UNI<sup>3</sup>**

|         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
| 84%     | 86%     | 85%     | 87%     | 89%     | 86%     |

**Table 2: Percentage of New Students Who Expect to Work 1-10 Hours Per Week While Attending UNI**

|         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
| 33%     | 34%     | 31%     | 34%     | 32%     | 36%     |

**Table 3: Percentage of New Students Who Expect to Work 11-20 Hours Per Week While Attending UNI**

|         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
| 38%     | 39%     | 40%     | 37%     | 41%     | 40%     |

**Table 4: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working On Campus for Pay<sup>4</sup>**

|       |       |       |                   |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| 2000  | 2001  | 2003  | 2004 <sup>5</sup> | 2005  |
| 46.4% | 46.8% | 31.7% | 49%               | 43.7% |

**Table 5: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working Off Campus for Pay**

|       |       |       |                   |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| 2000  | 2001  | 2003  | 2004 <sup>6</sup> | 2005  |
| 46.9% | 48.5% | 36.3% | 46%               | 38.5% |

**Table 6: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working On Campus 1-10 Hour per Week**

|       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2000  | 2001  | 2003  | 2005  |
| 22.3% | 22.3% | 16.7% | 13.5% |

**Table 7: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working On Campus 11-20 Hours per Week**

|       |       |      |       |
|-------|-------|------|-------|
| 2000  | 2001  | 2003 | 2005  |
| 20.7% | 21.6% | 13%  | 19.4% |

**Table 8: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working Off Campus 1-10 Hours per Week**

|       |      |       |      |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 2000  | 2001 | 2003  | 2005 |
| 13.1% | 13%  | 12.1% | 9.4% |

**Table 9: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working Off Campus 11-20 Hours per Week**

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 2000 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 |
|------|------|------|------|

<sup>3</sup> Source: ACT Class Profile Reports

<sup>4</sup> Sample of Students: Snapshot Data from the College Student Experience Questionnaire  
No data available for 2002

<sup>5</sup> Source: Jana Chmelar and Tim Baluka: An Assessment of Student Employment

<sup>6</sup> Source: Jana Chmelar and Tim Baluka: An Assessment of Student Employment

21.2%      22.9%      13.3%      16.7%

**Table 10: Percentage of Students Who Reported Working “Takes Some Time” or “Takes Lots of Time” from School Work**

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 2000 | 2001 | 2003 | 2005 |
| 57%  | 59%  | 57%  | 52%  |