

**The effects of student employment on success in college and faculty
perceptions of employed students**

By

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APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Student employment trends have many implications to administrators, educators, counselors, as well as the employers. The major purpose of this research was to study the impact of student employment on achievement and retention of MSU College of Technology post secondary students in Great Falls. The secondary purpose was to assess the perceptions of MSU College of Technology instructors in regard to employment. Is there conflict between teachers' academic priority and the students' work priorities?

The students at MSU College of Technology are changing. The typical student is over 30, female, single and working. The majority of students have responsibilities of work, family and school. The college needs to be proactive in determining and meeting the needs of this new student population. Of the students who are at risk, 16% have considered quitting, 11% have dropped a class, and 10% are not confident in their success at college.

The review of the literature indicated that employment is a determining factor in student retention and academic success. The results of the survey indicate that more than work, motivation and organization are the determining factor in student success. Respondents who worked tended to be more efficient in managing their time and setting priorities. Also, as the number of hours worked increased, GPA tended to increase also. A majority of students are working in related employment that allows them to use the skills acquired at college.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The danger is a downward synergistic spiral. As teachers lower expectations for performance, students feel more comfortable devoting more time to their jobs which negatively impacts classroom performance; this in turn, reinforces further lowering of standards, a situation with dire long term consequences for the community as a whole. (Goldstein, 1991)

The quotation by Goldstein seems to imply our student population is settling for learning less and earning more. Are teachers facilitating this concept by lowering expectations for working students?

Statement of the Problem

Student employment trends have many implications to administrators, educators, counselors, as well as the employers. The major purpose of this research is to study the impact of student employment on achievement and retention of MSU College of Technology post secondary students in Great Falls. The secondary purpose would be to assess the perceptions of MSU College of Technology instructors in regard to employed students. Is there conflict between teachers' academic priority and the students' work priorities?

Since student employment is unlikely to decrease, research in this area is necessary so we are better able to meet the needs of a changing student population and

maintain the quality of programs.

Terms

The following terminology is given to aid the reader of the study

<u>Full-time Student</u>	Enrolled in 12 credits or more in a semester
<u>Part-time Student</u>	Enrolled in less than 12 credits in a semester
<u>GPA</u>	Grade Point Average is a 4 point scale used to grade students. Four is the highest grade
<u>Employment</u>	Used interchangeably with the word work

Questions to be Answered

Primary Purpose

1. Does student employment affect academic achievement?
2. Does student employment contribute to academic difficulties and retention?
3. Are students from different programs affected differently by employment?
4. Does the number of hours-worked affect academic achievement?
5. Are students working in jobs that increase their level of skills and knowledge in their choose fields.

Secondary Purpose

1. Are teachers aware of their students' employment? Do they perceive student employment to be too costly to the students?
2. Do teachers relate course work to their students' employment experiences?
3. Do teachers tend to lower their expectations and standards of grading for students

who work.

Limitations of the Study

The researcher limited her study to college students from the Montana State University College of Technology located in Great Falls Montana. The MSU College of Technology focuses primarily on a two year education.

The research will not be limited to any particular curriculum and will include students from Allied Health and Business and Technology

The research will also be limited to surveying full-time faculty members. The adjunct faculty would be a hard to reach population and do not have in-depth insight into the students, as do the full-time faculty members.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

High School Employment

In the early eighties educators began to see a trend emerging with high school students; upward of fifty percent of high school students in the United States and Canada were working while attending school, in comparison, only 2% of Japanese and 20% of Sweden teenagers worked. (Hadley 1990, Winkler 1993). Teachers began to question whether this trend was a detriment or an advantage to the students. Studies were conducted to measure the affect of employment on student achievement, retention, and absenteeism. It has long been a popular belief that working lowers GPA. Goldstein (1992) reports that most teachers thought that outside employment impacted classroom performance, 88% felt it had a negative impact and 7% felt it had a positive impact. Research seems to support the fact that employment did **not** have an adverse affect on GPA as long as the employment was moderate, 1-15 hours a week. (Goldstein, J. 1992, Winkler, 1993). Chang's research with high school students in Toronto, reported that students who worked less than 10 hours a week had a modest academic edge over students who did not work. Students' grades tended to lower as the number of hours of work increased above the 15 hour threshold (Winkler, 1993). "A close look at school habits indicated working students sometimes resorted to cheating and copying assignments to compensate for less time spent on school work." (Winkler 1993).

Goldstein also reported the absenteeism rate increased proportionately as the number of hours worked increased.

This early research also seems to support the fact that most high school students were working, not to supplement family income, but to gratify material needs. (Hadley 1990, Chang 1995). Students were spending their money on luxuries and consumer goods and they were motivated to work by peer pressure and personal desire (Winkler 1993). Teachers in the Goldstein's study perceived that work led to a greater focus on immediate goals versus long term goals.

Like GPA, research showed that retention was negatively affected by working if students were employed for more than the threshold (1-15 hours a week). (Balunas 1986). Previous research found that students tend to think more of leaving school, as their work hours increase.

In summary, student employment did not emerge as a significant indicator of academic achievement as long as the students did not exceed the threshold. Above the 15 hours a week threshold, GPA was negatively affected as well as absenteeism and retention. In Hadley's 1990 study, one of the principals responding to her survey described the dilemma as "a choice between academic excellence and responsible work ethics".

College Students' Reality

The Government publication, School Enrollment-Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, October 1994, reports that 62.9% of college students are employed. The percentage of working students in 1993 was reported as 59.7%, an

increase of 3.2% in one year. The percentage of working students is even higher in two-year colleges at 66%. (Miller, 1997). Although there is no significant difference between the percentages of working males as opposed to working female, there is a marked increase in the percentages as you compare the ages of the students. In the 35 and over category, 76.1% of the student population is employed, 60.2% full-time and 15.9% work part-time. The number of college students who are employed is on the increase, due largely to the changing composition of post secondary students. Students are older, with that comes family and career responsibilities (Fjortoft 1995). The cost of education has increased dramatically in recent years and students may simply have no choice but to work to cover tuition and expenses. Fjortoft (1995) explains that students are experiencing a shift in attitude. Students are seeing college as a place to obtain employment skills. The trend among college students that is showing the greatest increase is "being well off financially" (Fjortoft, 1995). Students perceive that they can not obtain the skills and "real life" experience in a college setting. This idea is in direct conflict with what college counselors are advising students. Academic counselors continue to suggest that student not work, especially in their first year. Astin (quoted by Fjortoft 1995) suggested that student time may be an institution's most precious resource. "Employment exerts a prominent in some case preeminent claim on students time" (Hexter 1990). What happens when the student becomes more committed to their employment relationship than to their education commitment? Horn (1994) reports that among undergraduates who initially enrolled full time the more hours they were working the more likely they are to drop to less than full time or stop attending. Are students who

are successful in their employment endeavors prone to dropping out of college? The research conducted in college settings seems to support the research at the high school level. Fjortoft (1995) reported that working students fared equally as well as non-working students in terms of academic achievement; working students simply became more efficient.

Faculty Perceptions

Very few studies have been conducted to attempt to examine teachers' perceptions of student employment (Goldstein 1991). The research that has been done seems to indicate that teachers perceive student employment in a negative light (Goldstein M. 1991, Chang 1995). Teachers at the high school level felt that students were more in tune with short term material gratification as opposed to long term educational goals. Goldstein M (1991) stated that teachers lowered expectations of students giving fewer outside assignments and placing greater emphasis on in-class work.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The major purpose of this research is to study the impact of student employment on achievement of MSU College of Technology post secondary students in Great Falls. The secondary purpose is to assess the perceptions of MSU College of Technology instructors in regard to employed students.

Chapter III will outline the following: sources of data, construction of the survey instrument (2), time line for data collection, population demographics and sample selection.

Sources of data

The majority of secondary resources were obtained from Montana State University Bozeman, Renne Library. The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), a department of the National Institute of Education was a major source used. Mr. David Farrington, MSU College of Technology Registrar, was an excellent source for demographic information. The secondary research included articles in professional journals and professional magazines. The researcher was especially interested in the research in the area of high school employment trends and whether the findings apply to college students. The resources cited date from the years 1984 to 1997.

There will be two distinct instruments used to gather the primary data. A paper questionnaire will be administered to students to study the impact of student employment on achievement of students at MSU College of Technology, Great Falls. Focus groups will be conducted with faculty to access the perceptions of MSU College of Technology instructors in regard to student employment.

Construction of Survey Instruments

The survey instruments that will be used for the study are included in the Appendix. The questions were selected to answer the questions posed in Chapter I as well as questions that arose from the current literature review. The questions for the focus group are general in nature to avoid leading the participants. The focus groups will be conducted by a professional facilitator to avoid researcher biases.

The survey administered to students was designed to be completed in 10-12 minutes. The survey is divided into three question areas

1. Demographics of the student sample
2. Employment trends and issues
3. Student opinions and perceptions of the work/study mix

The survey will be administered to a cross section of first and second year students enrolled at MSU College of Technology. The students will be from two departments, Business and Technology and Allied Health. Both instruments were reviewed by Dr. Norman Millikin and the BUED 532 graduate students in the summer of 1997. The survey will also be submitted for input to David Farrington (MSU College of

Technology Registrar) and Heidi Pasek (MSU College of Technology Retention Specialist).

Time Line for Data Collection

July 1997	Completion of instrument
September 1997	Submit to MSU Administration
October 1997	Final Approval
November 1997	Survey students and Faculty
December 1997	Data Analysis
April 1998	Completed Draft
July 1998	Complete research

Population Demographics

MSU College of Technology, Great Falls, is an affiliated campus of the Montana University System. Its unique role in the system is to prepare students to meet current and future workforce demands. It does this by offering certificate and diploma offerings in the areas of business, allied health and trades and technology as well as transfer core course.

The total student population for 1996 was 955. Of these, 72% were female and 28% male. The average age was 29, with 68% non-traditional students (out of school three years) and 32% traditional students. Sixty-eight percent of the student population are full-time students (649.07 of 955). Seventy-five percent of the student population use financial aid funding. MSU College of Technology graduates on average 150-175 students each year. The typical MSU College of Technology student would be a thirty year old white female.

The total full time faculty population for 1995-1996 was 33 full-time faculty members.

Sample Selection

The student sample will be a cluster sample including three classes each from the of the two major areas on campus: Business and Technology and Allied Health. The students will be first and second year students in their respective programs. Cluster sampling will represent male/females proportionately to the population. A total of 152 students were surveyed 72 from the Business and Technology programs and 80 from the Allied Health programs. This represents 16% of the total student population. The instrument was administered and collected on site so a 100% return was received.

The faculty sample was selected based on expert opinion. A letter was sent to the Dean, Will Weaver (see appendix). A good mix of the following characteristics was used: age, gender, teaching area, and years of experience. Seven faculty members participated in the focus groups. Marilyn Besich facilitated the group discussion to alleviate any biases that the researcher might have towards outcomes. The focus group was conducted in a non-threatening environment, lunch was supplied and faculty felt comfortable sharing. The focus group was videotaped so that it could be reviewed and summarized.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction:

Surveys were administered to 152 MSU College of Technology first and second year students in the Business and Technology department as well as the Allied Health Department. The surveys were administered during class time so the return rate was 100%. The surveys were used to collect data on student demographics and student Employment trends and issues, and the work and study mix.

The focus group was conducted with seven faculty members participating. An unbiased faculty member facilitated the group discussion. The focus group lasted 1 ½ hour and was videotaped.

The findings are divided into four categories; Student Demographics, Student Employment Issues and Trends, Work and Study Mix, and Faculty Perceptions on Working Students. Each figure or table represents a specific question or questions and the data illustrates the responses.

Student Demographics

Table 1

Age of MSU College of Technology Students						
	Under 20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Over 40
Business	20%	19%	13%	15%	15%	17%
Allied Health	21%	29%	20%	11%	8%	11%

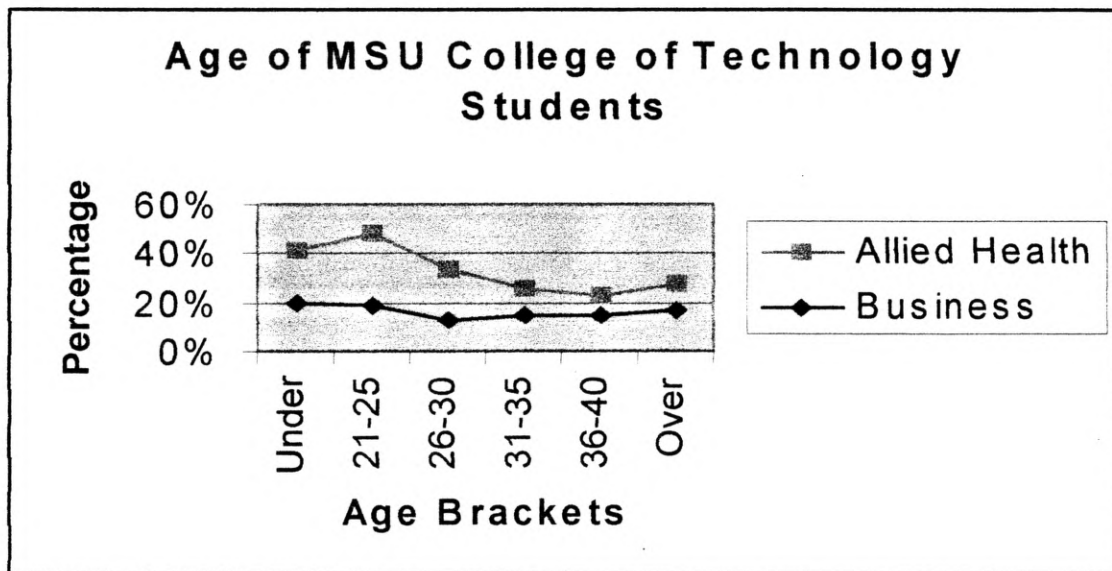


Figure 1

The sample size was large enough to be representative of the population. It appears that Allied Health students are younger than Business students. The data indicates that 47% of Business students are over 30 years of age while Allied Health has only 30% of its students in the over 30 age bracket.

Table 2

Students' Marital Status	
Married	Single Includes single, separated, divorced, widowed
45%	55%

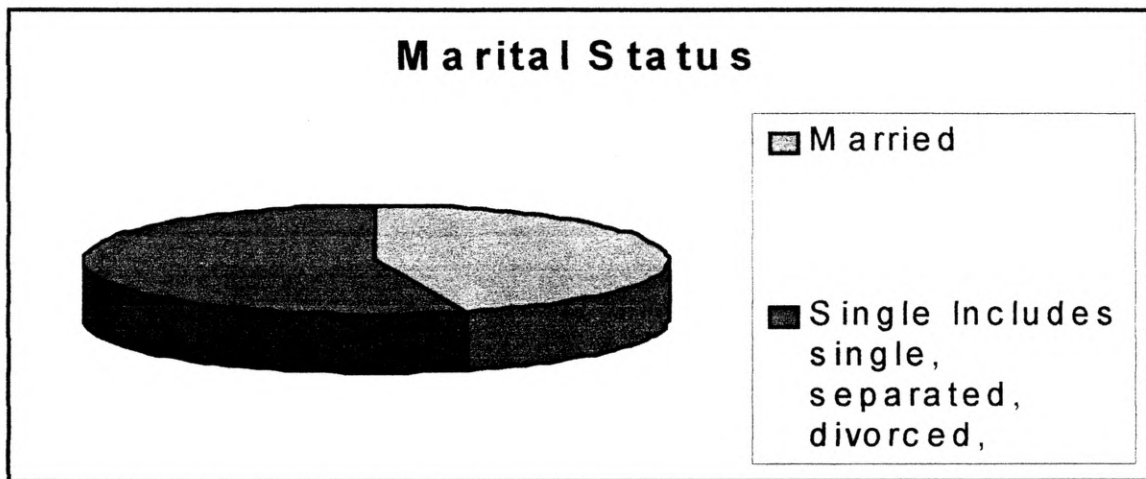
**Figure 2**

Table 2 illustrates that 55% of MSU College of Technology students are single (includes separated, divorced, and widowed). Based on the literature this is typical of two year colleges. Students are enrolling in college after marital life changes such as divorce, separation and widowhood.

Table 3

Number of Dependent Children in the Home				
	None	One	Two	Three or More
Married	26%	3%	42%	29%
Single	68%	4%	18%	10%

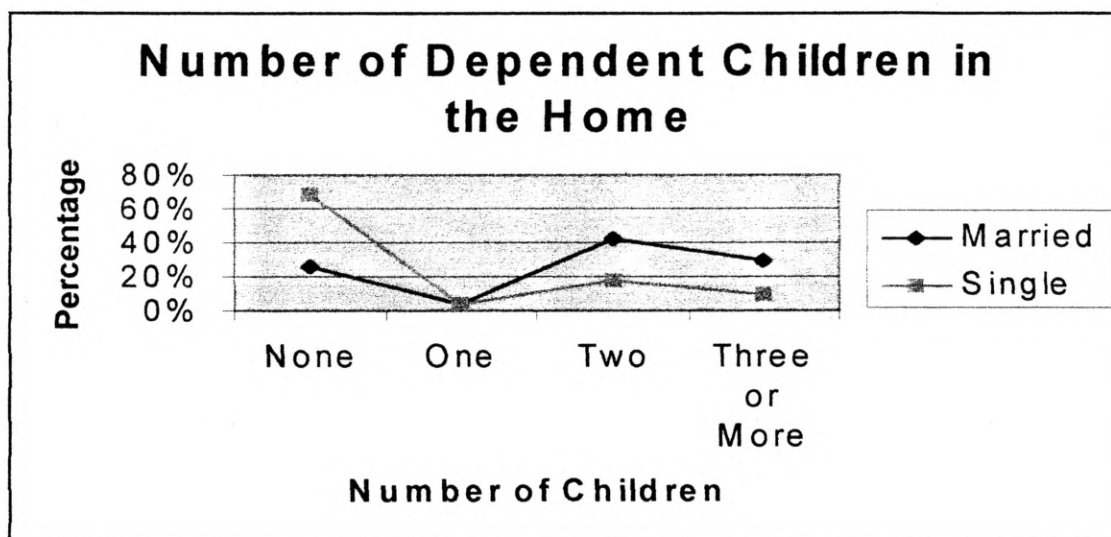


Figure 3

Table 3 and Figure 3 deal with students' family obligations. An astounding, 71% of MSU College of Technology married students have 2 or more dependent children living in their home. Of the single students, 28% have 2 or more dependent children in their homes. This seems to indicate that students have many family obligations as well as school obligations.

Table 4

Gender		Independent of Parental Resources	
Male	Female	Yes	No
28%	72%	86%	14%

The sample indicates that there is a majority of female students (72%) at MSU College of Technology. This represents a 2 to 1 ratio of female to male students. The lack of traditional male programs such as Trades might be the reason for the disproportionate number of females to males.

Table four indicates that 86% of the students consider themselves independent of parental resources. This seems to indicate that parents of older students are not financing their education.

Table 5

Major Source of Funding for College					
Parent Support	Spouse Support	Student Loans	Scholarship	Employment	Other
8%	5%	42%	7%	19%	19%

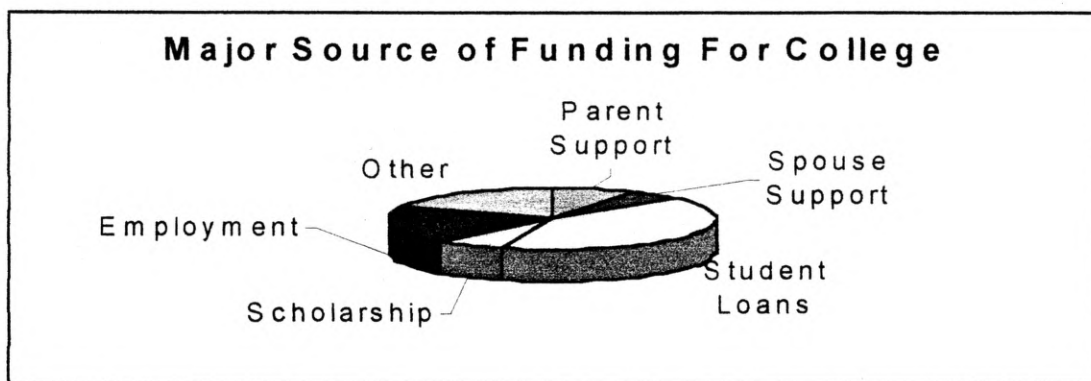
**Figure 4**

Figure 5 clearly indicates that the majority of students depend on student loans to finance their education. It also indicates that 20% of the students rely on employment to fund their education.

Table 6

Full-time or Part-time Students		
	Part-time	Full-time
Population	29%	71%
Business	33%	67%
Allied Health	25%	75%

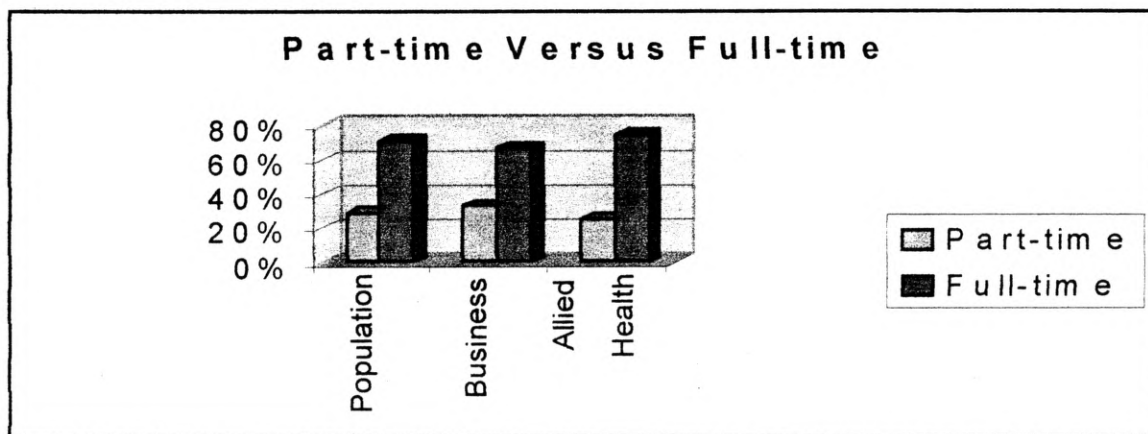
**Figure 5**

Table Six indicates that there are 8% more part-time business students than part-time Allied Health students perhaps this is due to scheduling of more evening classes and offering more sections in the Business department.

Table 7

Current Grade Point Average (Base 4)						
	0-2.0	2.1-2.5	2.6-3.0	3.1-3.5	3.6-4.	Unknown
Population	5%	13%	26%	24%	22%	10%
Working Students	7%	11%	27%	24%	20%	11%
Non Working Students	5%	13%	22%	23%	29%	8%

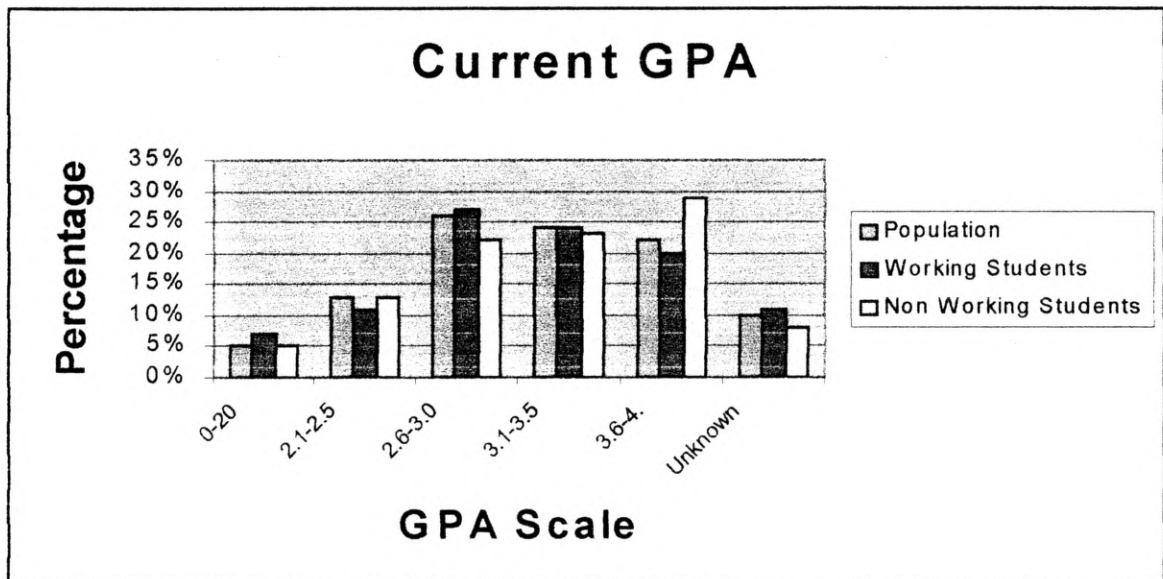


Figure 6

Table 7 clearly indicates that 18% of the student population at MSU College of Technology are at risk of failing. There is no distinct different between the GPA of working students and non-working student in the first four GPA categories but the table does indicate there is a significant reduced percentage (9%) of working students achieving a GPA of 3.6-4.0 and that non-working have the highest GPA's in this category.

Table 8

Hours Worked and GPA						
	GPA					
Hours Worked	0-2.0	2.1-2.5	2.6-3.0	3.1-3.5	3.6-4.0	Unknown
1-10	8%	17%	17%	42%	8%	8%
11-15	14%	0%	43%	29%	14%	0%
16-20	9%	28%	36%	27%	0%	0%
21-25	13%	13%	47%	13%	13%	0%
26-30	8%	8%	18%	25%	33%	8%
Over 30	0%	26%	19%	18%	31%	25%

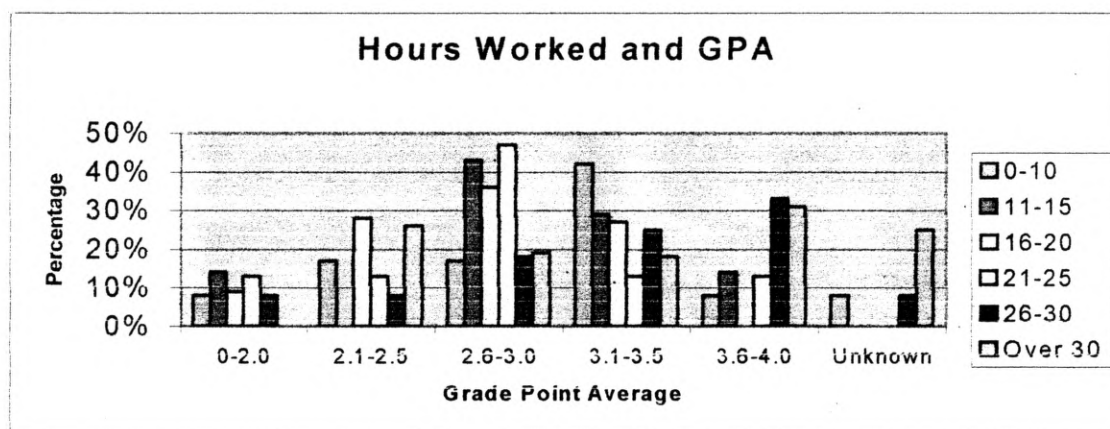


Figure 7

There does not seem to be a consistent relationship between the number of hours worked and student GPA. The data shows as the hours worked increased, GPA increased also.

Student Employment Trends and Issues

Table 9

Students Currently Employed		
	Yes	No
Population	59%	41%
Business	60%	40%
Allied Health	58%	42%

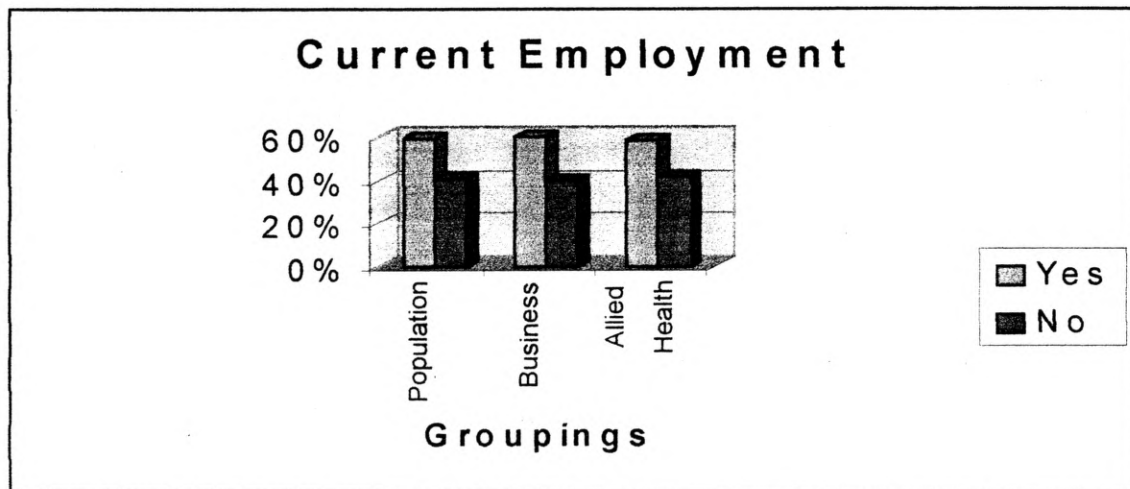


Figure 8

Table 8 indicates that 60% of the population are employed and yet only 19% of the students selected employment as the principle source of college funding. This seems to indicate that students are working to supplement student loans and provide the basic essentials. Business and Allied Health students are equally employed.

Table 10

Average hours worked Per Week						
	1-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Over 30
Population	15%	8%	13%	19%	11%	34%
Business	9%	4%	12%	21%	11%	43%
Allied Health	20%	11%	15%	17%	11%	26%
Full time Student	21%	10%	20%	24%	12%	13%
Part time Student	3%	5%	5%	15%	11%	61%

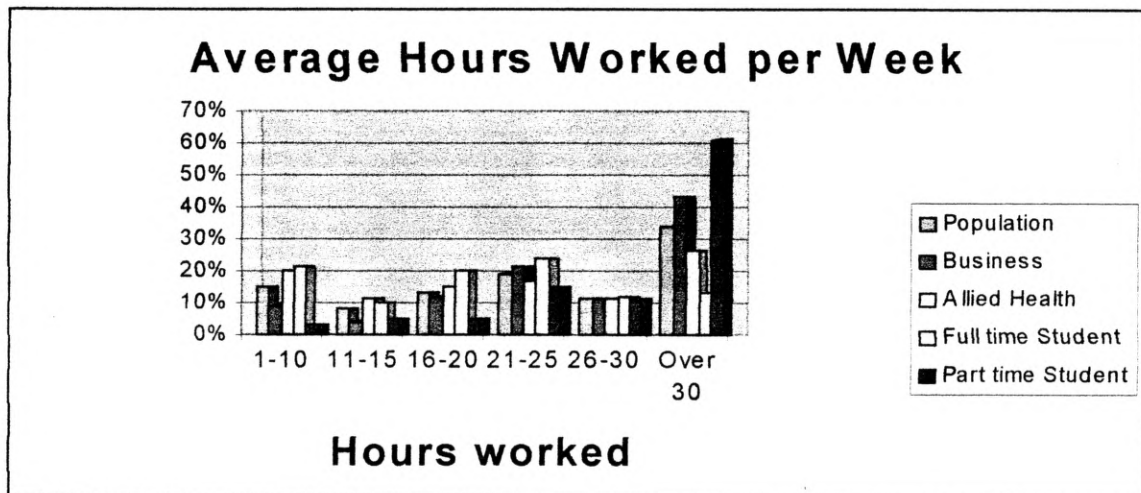


Figure 9

Table 9 and Figure 9 indicate that full-time students work less hours than part-time students. Of the working students (59% of the student population), 34% work over 30 hours a week. Forty-three percent of the business students work over 30 hours a week compared to 26% of the Allied Health students.

Table 11

Main Financial Reason for Employment					
Fund Education	Supplement student loans	Purchase extra consumer goods	Provide Basic necessities	Get work Experience	Other
19%	4%	5%	52%	9%	11%

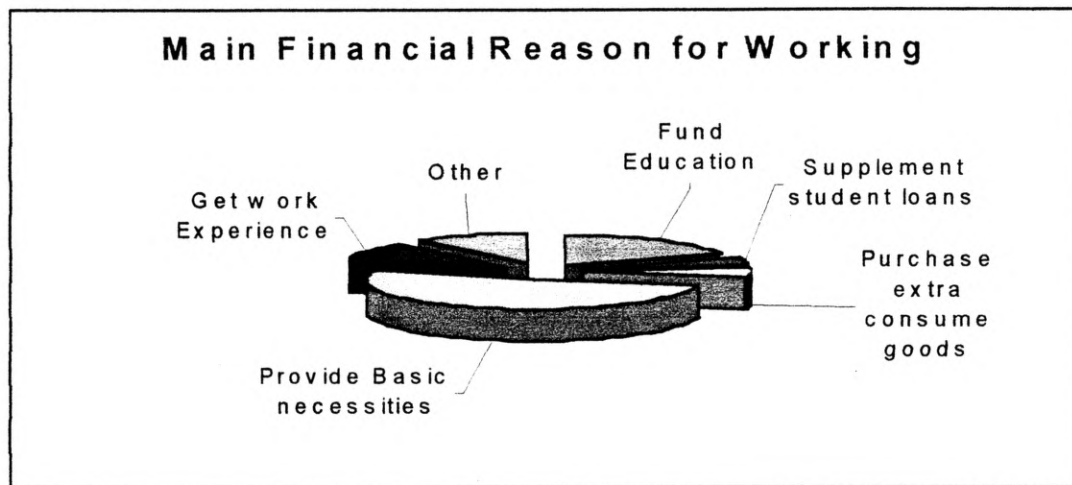


Figure 10

The data clearly indicates the majority of students are employed to provide the basic necessities. The second reason cited for employment is to fund their education. College students are not working to purchase extra consumer goods as was the case with high school students in the literature review.

The Work Study Mix

Table 12

Work and School Pressures		
	Yes	No
Dropped a class because of employment	11%	89%
Considering quitting college because of work pressure	16%	84%
Considered quitting work because of college pressure	44%	56%

Of the students surveyed 11% responded that in the past they had dropped a class because of work pressures. Table 12 indicates that 16% of students had considered quitting college because of work pressures. Close to half of the students had considered quitting work because of college pressures. This statistic has serious implications for the retention specialist at MSU College of Technology.

Table 13

Working Students' Confident in their Success at College			
Very Confident	Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not Confident
64%	27%	9%	0%

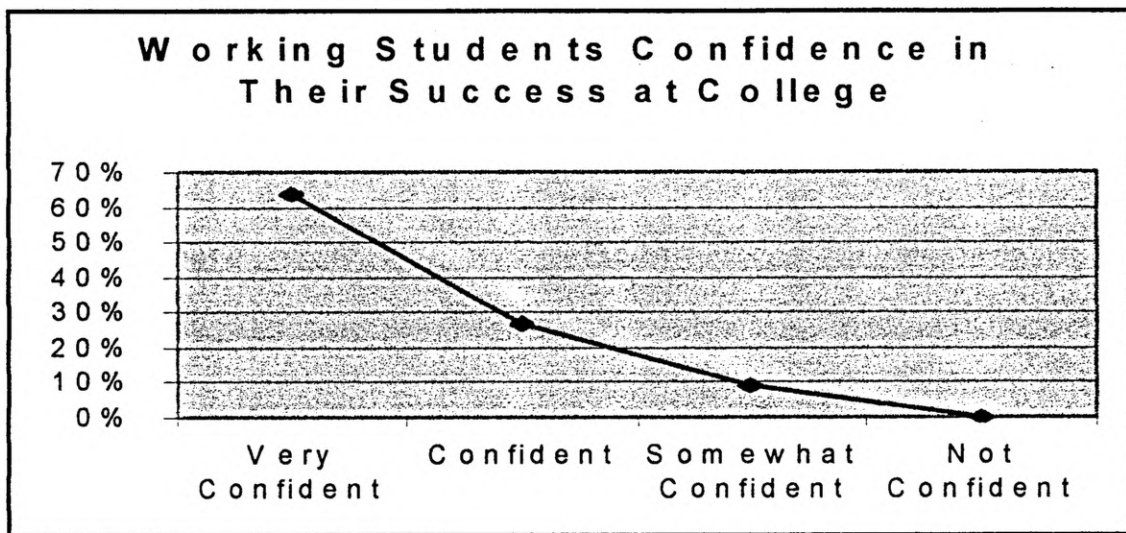


Figure 11

A large majority of working students (91%) are very confident or confident in their success in college. Nine percent of working students feel insecure in their success at college. The stress of combining school, family obligations and work is overwhelming for these students.

Table 14

Importance of Education and Employment					
	Very Important ▶ Not Important				
	5	4	3	2	1
Education	88%	9%	3%	0%	0%
Current Employment	65%	27%	5%	3%	0%

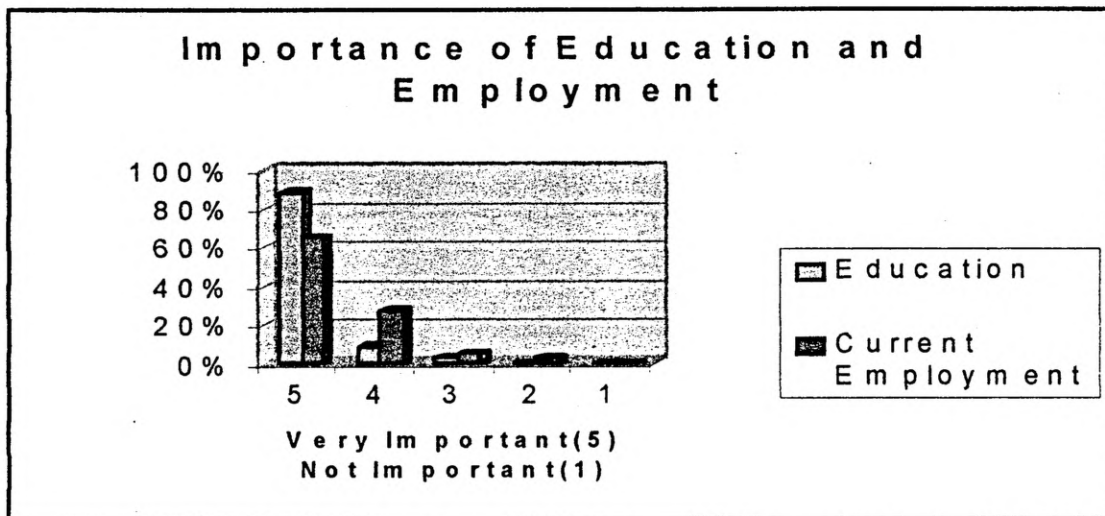


Figure 12

The respondents rated the importance of their education considerably higher than their current employment.

Table 15

Employment allows you to use skills and knowledge acquired in College					
	Great Extent  Not at all				
	5	4	3	2	1
Population	26%	24%	21%	18%	11%
Business Students	28%	28%	19%	21%	4%
Allied Health Students	24%	20%	24%	15%	17%

Table 16

Does your employment relate to your studies					
	Great Extent  Not at all				
	5	4	3	2	1
Population	27%	11%	13%	15%	33%
Business Students	30%	12%	19%	16%	23%
Allied Health	24%	11%	9%	13%	43%

Table 15 indicates that 26% of the population believes that their employment allows them to a great extent to utilize the skills and knowledge acquired in college. It appears that Business students are better able to apply their skills and knowledge than Allied Health students

Table 16 indicates that in the population that there are equal numbers of students at both ends of the scale. It appears that Allied Health students are less likely to be in related employment than business students.

Table 17

I have a good Balance between my Work and School					
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
	5	4	3	2	1
Population	28%	22%	33%	13%	4%
Business Students	42%	28%	16%	14%	0%
Allied Health Students	15%	17%	48%	13%	7%

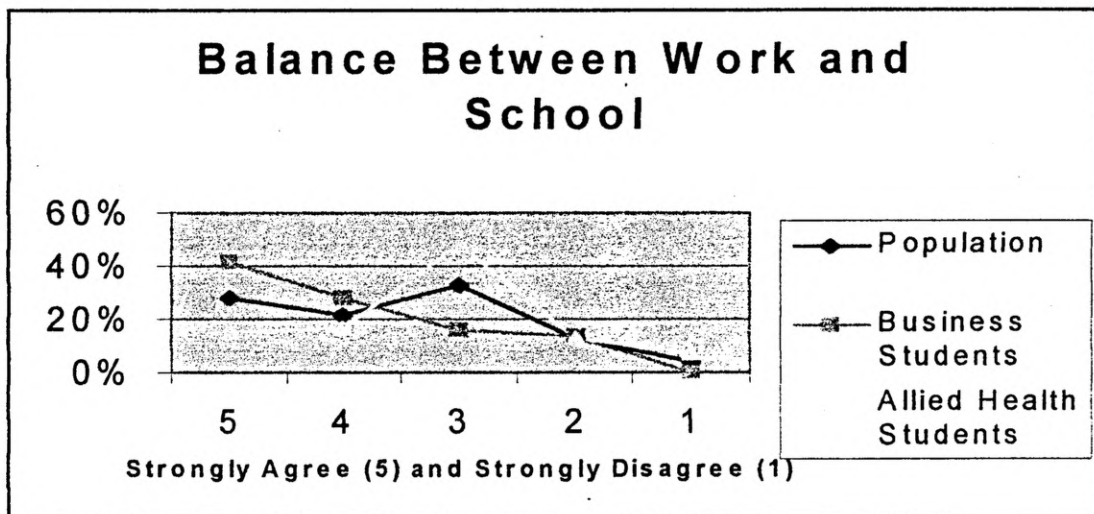


Figure 13

Table 17 indicates that the majority of business students believe that they have a good balance between work and school. Allied health students have a lower perception of their balance between work and school. Overall students seem to have some problems balancing work and school.

Table 18

Students settle for learning less and earning more					
	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	
	5	4	3	2	1
Students settle for earning more and learning less	11%	16%	39%	20%	14%
I passed but I could have done better	30%	37%	13%	9%	11%

The majority of working respondents agreed that they could have done better.

And a high percentage of students agreed that students settle for earning more and learning less.

Faculty Perceptions on Working Students

Question 1, 2 and 3

What are your perceptions on student employment while enrolled? Are there positive consequences to student employment? Are there negative consequences to student employment?

The majority of participants agreed that the trend of working and going to school is a reality in our culture and not likely to change in the future. Three of the seven participants agreed that often their top students are working students and attribute this fact to increased determination and time management. Some of the faculty subscribed to the idea that the number of hours that students worked affected their GPA. The research does not show this to be true. They also confirmed the results of the student survey that shows that Allied Health students work less than business students and the reason is class scheduling. The group was split when considering whether employers were accommodating to students. Some employers could see the value of their employees going to school, through increased productivity, and innovation. Other employers viewed it as a threat that staff would be quitting and asking for more money.

The faculty members conceded that there are both negative and positive results of working while going to school. The results of working are compiled in the following table

Table 19

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Builds work ethics	Takes longer to finish college
Students learn to organize, prioritize	Poor students often use it as an excuse
Working students often excel	Conflicts between work, family and school
Work experience	Lethargic and tired during class
	High degree of stress, burn out, drop out

Question 4

Do you make special accommodations for working students? If so, what?

All seven members of the focus group were unanimous in that they do not change their expectations for working students. They agreed that if you don't lower the expectations students will rise to meet the challenge. The majority of the participants assigned grades or bonus points for attendance and have some flexibility built into missed work. MSU Faculty are confident in their standards.

Question 5

Have you modified your teaching methodologies to accommodate working students?

The majority of participants expressed that assigning group projects was difficult and that students found it hard to schedule time to work on these projects. Many felt that they were giving less group work or making the group assignments shorter and gave more

class time to work on projects. Even with these changes students often would divide the work, do it individually, then compile the pieces. One instructor in the Allied Health department requires students to do some volunteer work as an out of class assignment but dropped it because of the problems. A faculty member in the business department shared that letting the groups self select helped alleviate some problems. Another barrier to group work is the night classes where students do not know each other and have limited access to the instructor from week to week.

All the faculty members used examples from the students employment in class. One faculty member said that you could see it in students' faces when there was something they wanted to share.

Question 6

Do you experience conflict between your academic standards and the students' employment priorities?

The group was in agreement that faculty are doing more counseling than before. Most felt it was important to listen, encourage, and validate the students. Often students would solve their own problems as they talked them out with faculty. Four faculty members stated that they were careful not to impose their values or inject their personal choices on students. They felt it was dangerous to make students decisions between work and school. The other three faculty members stressed that it was a choice. Students could either quit or cut down on work or quit or cut down on the number of classes.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The percentage of students who work while enrolled is on the rise. The purpose of this research was to study the impact of student employment on achievement of MSU College of Technology post secondary students in Great Falls.

Conclusions

The research findings have led to the following conclusions concerning MSU College of Technology Students and employment.

Demographics of MSU College of Technology Students

1. Over half the business students are over 30 years old.
2. Allied Health students tend to be younger than business students.
3. Fifty –five percent of the students are single.
4. Of the married student population, 71% have 2 or more dependent children in the home.
5. Twenty-eight percent of single students have 2 or more dependent children in the home.
6. Female students outnumber male students two to one.
7. Near half of students fund their education with student loans (42%). Twenty percent rely on employment to fund education.
8. There are 8% more part-time business students than Allied Health students.

9. Eighteen percent of the student population are at risk.

Student Employment Trends and Issues

1. Students who are employed are 9% less likely to achieve a GPA of 3.6-4.
2. There is no clear relationship between hours worked and GPA. In fact GPA increased in the 26-30 hours worked and the Over 30 hours worked.
3. Sixty percent of the population are employed and yet only 19% selected employment as a primary source of funding.
4. Business and Allied Health students are equally employed.
5. One third of the working students work over 30 hours a week.
6. Business students are working more than Allied Health students
7. Main financial reason for working is to provide the basics

The Work Study Mix

1. Eleven percent of the students dropped a class because of work pressures.
2. Sixteen percent considered quitting college because of work pressures.
3. Working students are confident in their college success.
4. The students rated their education higher in importance than their employment.
5. Over 50% of students feel that their employment allows them to use the skills and knowledge acquired in college.
6. Allied Health students are less likely to be employed than business students in related employment.
7. The majority of students feel they have a good balance between work and school.
8. Allied Health students have a lower perception about the balance between work and

9. Students on average agreed that they could have done better. A clear majority agreed that students often settle for earning more and learning less.

Faculty Perceptions on Working Students

1. Faculty do not lower expectations for working students
2. Faculty acknowledge the advantages and disadvantages of working
3. Faculty are using less group work in their classrooms
4. Faculty stress the importance of being empathetic and supportive when students struggle to balance work and school

Researcher's Overall Conclusions

The students at MSU College of Technology are changing. The typical student is over 30, female, single and working. The majority of students have responsibilities of work, family and school. The college needs to be proactive in determining and meeting the needs of this new student population. Of the students who are at risk, 16% have considered quitting, 11% have dropped a class, and 10% are not confident in their success at college.

The review of the literature indicates that employment is a determining factor in student retention and academic success. The results of the survey indicate that more than work, motivation and organization are the determining factor in student success. Students who work tend to be more efficient in managing their time and setting priorities. A majority of students are working in related employment that allows them to use the skills acquired at college. Overall, contrary to the opinions of many, students can be successful balancing school, work and family

Recommendations

Based on the previous conclusions and the review of the literature, the writer makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1

It is very important that every person at every level at the MSU College of Technology are aware of the demographics of the student population and how it impacts decision making. MSU must be proactive in meeting the needs of it's student population. Demographics must be considered for scheduling, orientation, access time to the facility and student services. It is recommended that a summary of this research be placed in each new employee's packet of information.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Allied Health department, which has seen a drop in numbers, schedule classes so that more working students could attend.

Recommendation 3

The present hours of operation at the MSU College of Technology campus are not conducive to accommodating working students. Hours should be increased to include more hours in the evening and weekends.

Recommendation 4

Sixty percent of MSU students work. The student support staff which includes orientation, recruitment, retention and counseling must tailor their efforts to meet the needs of the working students. MSU recruitment typically involves recruiting high school

seniors. Orientation sessions and registration need to be offered in the evenings and on weekends. Orientation and social functions should include some activities for families. Retention staff should focus on the at risk population. Eleven percent dropped a class because of work and 16% considered quitting college because of work pressures. A time management course, should be offered as well as a support group for single parents at the college.

Recommendation 5

In the College Mission it says that the college is committed to offering student centered learning. A reduction in the use of group work has occurred and this appears to be a step backwards. There is a great deal of research that validates the idea that group process and team building is needed. One of the ways would be to use technology to help students collaborate (eg. email)

Recommendation 6

Students have conflicts between the expectations at work and the expectations at school. The school should work more closely with the community. The college could implement a program that acknowledges those employers who encourage their employees to take classes. A letter of appreciation could be sent to bosses who are flexible in their expectations.

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APPENDIX**STUDENT EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE****Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this focus group is to access the perceptions of MSU College of Technology instructors in regard to student employment.

Directions:

The focus group setting will be participants seated at a round table. The facilitator will direct the group using the following broad questions. The duration will be 1-1 ¼ hr. The session will be taped for the purpose of clarification but will be destroyed when the study is completed.

Questions:

What are your perceptions on student employment while enrolled?

Are there positive consequences to student employment, if so what?

Are there negative consequences to student employment? If so, what?

Do you make special accommodations for working students. If so, what?

Have you modified your teaching methodologies to accommodate working students E.G. Individual/versus group assignments?

Do you experience conflict between your academic standards and the students' employment priorities?

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this questionnaire is to study the impact of student employment on achievement of students at MSU College of Technology.

Directions: Please place a check mark (✓) in the box with the appropriate response.

Demographic Questions

Your age

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ☐ Under 20 | ☐ 21-25 | ☐ 26-30 |
| ☐ 31-35 | ☐ 36-40 | ☐ Over 40 |

Marital status

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ☐ married | ☐ single (includes single, separated, divorced, and widowed) |
|----------------------------------|---|

Number of dependent children in your home

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| ☐ none | ☐ one | ☐ two | ☐ three or more |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|

Your gender

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ☐ male | ☐ female |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|

What is your major source of funding for college?

- ☐ parent support
- ☐ spouse support
- ☐ student loans
- ☐ scholarship(s)
- ☐ self supporting through employment
- ☐ other _____

Do you consider yourself independent of parental resources?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ☐ yes | ☐ no |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Are you a full-time student or a part-time student?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ full-time (enrolled for 12 credits or more) | ☐ part-time (less than 12 credits) |
|--|---|

Current grade point average (GPA)

☐ 0-2.0 ☐ 2.1-2.5 ☐ 2.6-3.0 ☐ 3.1-3.5 ☐ 3.6-4.0

Employment questions

Are you currently employed?

- ☐ Yes (If you answered Yes to this question, complete the rest of the questions)
☐ No (If you answered No to this question do not continue the survey)

On average, how many hours a week are you employed?

- ☐ 1-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20
☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ Over 30

What is the main financial reason you are employed?

- ☐ to fund your education
☐ supplement student loans
☐ to purchase extra consumer goods
☐ to provide the basic necessities
☐ to get work experience
☐ other _____

Have you dropped a class in the past because of employment pressure?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

How confident are you that you will succeed in college?

- ☐ Very confident
☐ Confident
☐ Somewhat confident
☐ Not confident

Have you considered quitting college because of work pressures.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you considered quitting work because of college pressures.

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Directions: Please circle the appropriate response.

How would you rate the importance of your education?

Very Important 5 4 3 2 1 *Not Important*

How would you rate the importance of your current employment?

Very Important 5 4 3 2 1 *Not Important*

Do you feel your employment allows you to use the skills and knowledge you are acquiring in college.

Great extent 5 4 3 2 1 *Not at all*

Do you feel your employment relates to the field you are studying?

Great extent 5 4 3 2 1 *Not at all*

I have a good balance between my work and school obligations.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 *Strongly disagree*

Please Comment: _____

How do you feel about the following statement?

Students settle for learning less and earning more.

Strongly Agree 5 4 3 2 1 *Strongly disagree*

Please Comment: _____

How do you feel about the following statement?

"I passed but I could have done better"

Strongly Agree

5

4

3

2

1

Strongly disagree

Please Comment: _____

Jacqueline I Dumont
620 25th Ave NE
Great Falls MT 59404

October 28, 1997

Will Weaver, Dean
MSU College of Technology
Great Falls, MT 59405

Dear Mr. Weaver

Further to our conversation in September, I am writing to formally ask permission to conduct my Masters Research at the MSU College of Technology Campus.

The major purpose of the research is to study the impact of student employment on achievement of MSU College of Technology students. The secondary purpose is to assess the perceptions of MSU College of Technology faculty in regard to employed students.

The research methods I will be using are a short survey (10-12 minutes) administered to students from the different departments and a series of focus groups for small groups of faculty members. The research will be conducted by the end of this semester, 1997. The survey will be conducted in a professional, efficient and non-intrusive manner and all participants' responses will be kept in total confidence.

We discussed presenting the topic to the MSU planning committee. When would this be convenient for you and your staff? Your participation in this research endeavor is sincerely appreciated. If you have questions please contact me via E-mail jdumont@msucotgf.montana.edu or by phone at (406) 453-5618.

Respectfully

Jackie Dumont