

Student Outcomes Associated with Employment and Work Hours

In this report, we examine the association between CSUN students' employment and academic outcomes and help-seeking behaviors.



Data

The university does not systematically collect data on students' employment outside the university. For this reason, we rely on students' responses on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; <http://nsse.indiana.edu/>), which includes questions about students' employment status, work location, and work hours, as well as various academic behaviors. This survey is administered to students in the spring of their freshman and senior years; here we report on senior student responses only. CSUN participates in this survey biennially, and this report includes data from the 2013, 2015, and 2017 administrations, for a total of 3,539 responses. NSSE data were merged with data from the Office of Institutional Research on students' demographic characteristics and key academic indicators, including students' GPA for the term they took the NSSE.

Most CSUN students (71.7%) reported that they are employed. We report on who works, where, and how much in our other report: [CSUN Student Employment at a Glance](#)

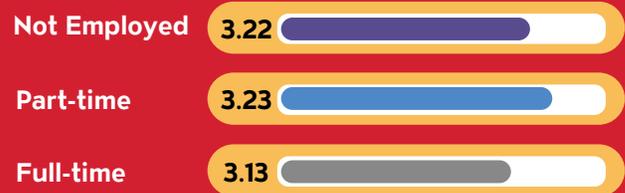
Analyses

In this report, we examine the extent to which employment status (not employed, part-time status, or full-time status) and employment location (off-campus only, on-campus only, or both on- and off-campus) is associated with various academic outcomes and behaviors. We defined full-time status as working more than 30 hours per week (note that analyses with full-time as working more than 20 hours per week resulted in largely the same results). The primary academic outcome assessed was semester GPA. With regard to academic help-seeking behaviors, we included questions from the NSSE survey about asking peers for help, talking with a professor about the class, discussing their performance with a professor, and coming to class unprepared. We also assessed the self-reported amount of time students spent preparing for classes each week. It is important to note that the survey questions only asked about the year in which the student took the survey (in this case, the students' senior year).

In all of the analyses, we accounted for race/ethnicity, gender, Pell eligibility, first-generation status, transfer status, part- vs. full-time enrollment status, and college of major.

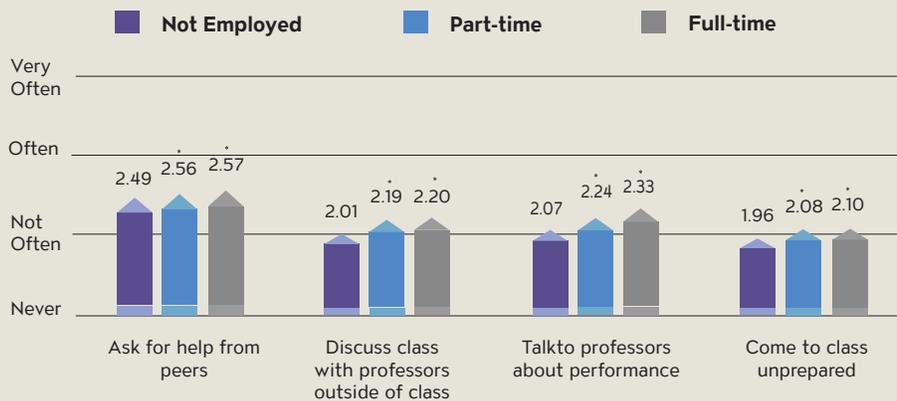
Semester GPA by Hours Employed

Semester GPA for students who worked part-time (72% of employed students) was not statistically significantly different from those who were not employed. Students who worked full-time (over 30 hours/week), on the other hand, did show negative effects on their semester GPA (statistically significant, $p < .05$).

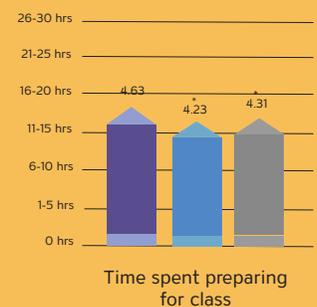


Academic Behaviors by Hours Employed

In terms of self-reported academic behaviors, both full-time and part-time employed students reported spending less time preparing for class than non-employed students and reported coming to class unprepared more often. Additionally, students who are employed full-time or part-time were also more likely to ask for help from peers, discuss class with professors outside of class, and talk to professors about their performance. It seems quite possible that employed students are more likely to engage in these latter behaviors done in order to make up for lack of preparation for class.



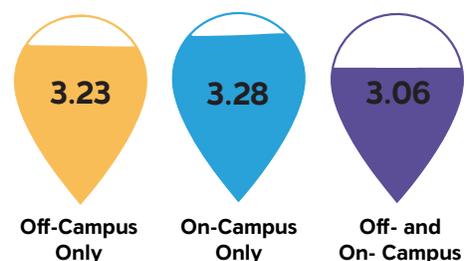
*Indicates that there is statistically reliable difference from the students



*Responses were categorical. A 1 indicated 0 hours, a 2 indicated 1-5 hours, a 3 indicated 6-10 hours, a 4 indicated 11-15 hours, a 5 indicated 16-20 hours, a 6 indicated 21-25 hours, a 7 indicated 26-30 hours, and an 8 indicated 30+ hours.

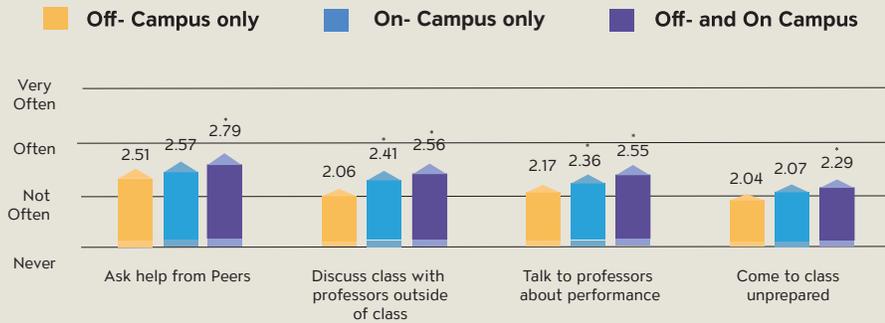
Semester GPA by Location of Employment

We also examined outcomes for students by employment location (off-campus only, on-campus only, and both on- and off-campus). Our results indicate that only the students who work both on- and off-campus are more likely to have a lower semester GPA. (statistically reliable difference from the off-campus only students, $p < .05$)



Academic Behaviors by Location of Employment

Moreover, students employed both on- and off- campus are more likely to come unprepared to class and to ask for help from their peers. Furthermore, it is the students that work only on-campus who spend more time preparing for class. Lastly, students employed on-campus only and students employed both on- and off- campus, compared to their peers who work off-campus only, are more likely to discuss class with professors outside of class and talk to professors about performance.



*Indicates that there is statistically reliable difference ($p < .05$) from the employed off-campus



*Responses were categorical. A 1 indicated 0 hours, a 2 indicated 1-5 hours, a 3 indicated 6-10 hours, a 4 indicated 11-15 hours, a 5 indicated 16-20 hours, a 6 indicated 21-25 hours, a 7 indicated 26-30 hours, and an 8 indicated 30+ hours.

Summary

Most students at CSUN are employed, and most of those students work part-time (fewer than 30 hours/week). Our data indicate that students who work part-time have similar academic outcomes to students who do not work, though they spend less time preparing for class and report coming to class unprepared more often. Students who work full time (more than 30 hours/week), on the other hand, do seem to experience negative academic consequences, as evidenced by their lower GPAs, as well as also spending less time preparing for class and coming to class unprepared. Both full-time and part-time employed students exhibit help-seeking behavior, likely in order to make up for lack of preparation for classes. Results also show that working both on- and off- campus has a negative effect on student academic outcomes and behavior. A possible explanation for this may be that the push and pull of working multiple jobs in different locations may demand more cognitive load and commute time.

Finally, these results come with the caveat that this sample only includes seniors who did not drop out of CSUN before achieving senior status. This could make the results less generalizable because the students who have made it to senior status are a subset of the general CSUN student population. This highlights the importance of better understanding and systematically tracking our students' employment while enrolled at CSUN. The Office of Institutional Research is exploring ways to do so and will continue to analyze and share our findings.

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