

Out of Work, Out of Time [1]

Jerimiah Oetting [2] | October 2nd, 2009



“I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive.” –Henry Miller

September is finished. The excitement of starting another year of school has been met with sick reality—the sobering outlook of nine months under the imperial shadows of Coffman and Northrop. After four years, it still hasn’t gotten easier. Simple living has again been besieged by stressful responsibility—homework, forms, finances—the ghosts of the summertime shadows that all at once materialize and attack.

I’m broke.

After a month of searching, I am still unemployed. Rent approaches. Stress swells. My financial system looms menacingly over all of my daily activities. Meanwhile, I have a resume dripping with experience and recommendations,

I'm young and responsible, I'm persistent, and, sadly, I'll do almost anything for money. How have I not been hired?

It seems the recession has finally trickled down to my level. Obviously, I'm not the only one having troubles. Minnesota is currently weathering the highest unemployment rate it has experienced in decades. According to the Bureau of Labour Statistics, Minnesota has an unemployment rate of 7.8 percent, down from a peak of 8.9 percent over the summer. With school harder to afford and work harder to find, being devoted to receiving an education has become extremely difficult.

When you consider the amount and qualifications of people in the job market, getting hired while being a full-time student becomes less realistic. The rigor of my current schedule would only allow me to work full shifts over the weekend. Competition from people able to work full schedules leaves few options.

A University job is one of those options. Laura Negrini is the Payroll Services and Job Center Manager for the University of Minnesota. While large fluctuations have occurred in job availability around the state, student employment has been consistent with previous years, according to Negrini.

"Hiring student employees is very flexible...if a student is struggling to find employment and they contact us, we work together with them in connecting him/her to departments that are hiring," Negrini says.

After applying to the standard array of restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, my voice mail is still devoid of any returned calls. A student job seems like the last option – while tip-based jobs generally pay more, the service industry seems hopelessly overrun with applicants.

At this point, getting hired won't even begin to solve all of my problems. With rent approaching, tuition due, a large collection of lingering debts, and nearly all of my summer savings gone, the only option remaining is to take out more money in student loans. People are shocked to hear I'm almost \$50,000 in debt, but without the cushion of borrowed money, my living situation is constantly on the brink of disaster.

I can only hope that finding a job will be easier once I graduate. Hah.

Jerimiah Oetting is a hardworking student at the University of Minnesota who is currently unemployed. He is the best employee you've never hired. For résumé and work history, please request at joetting@wakemag.org.

1. <http://www.wakemag.org/voices/out-of-work-out-of-time/>
2. <http://www.wakemag.org/author/joetting/>