

# Student Employment: The Work Study Issue

## The Misconception of Work Study at UNT

I have been at UNT for just over 3 months as the Assistant Director of Student Employment. During my short time here I have heard multiple negative references to work-study program and work-study eligible students on this campus. Comments such as **“the reason work-study students are not hired is due to the fact they are unpolished and less trainable”** or **“the reason work-study students are not hired is because they can’t earn as much money or work as many hours”**.

I am writing this article to hopefully clear up those misconceptions through changing the campus wide idea of what work study is, who our work study students are, and to refocus the program back on the path to providing our students a career and academic focused work environment.

There are two sides to work study that we need to consider: The student side and the University side.

### The Work Study Student

For students, work-study is provided to alleviate the cost of coming to college. It is a program based on need therefore, historically, it is awarded to students in lower income brackets who need the extra help in paying for tuition, books, fees, etc.

Nationwide, students who are awarded work-study parental income is \$24000 less than those students who are working as student assistants and \$31000 less than students who are not working at all (Scott-Clayton and Minaya, 2016).

We have to ask ourselves then if by not hiring work study students and by classifying them as “less trainable” are we discriminating against lower income students without realizing it? Nationwide, more females are offered work-study than males, so again, are we saying that women are “unpolished”? We have to start asking ourselves these type of questions.

**(Continued on page 2-3)**



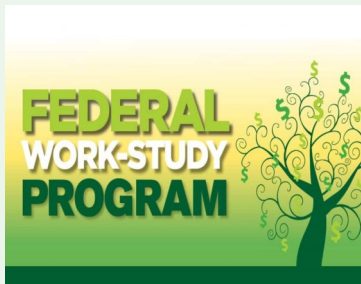
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## The Misconception of Work Study at UNT cont.

96%

Percentage of  
work study  
students retained



In case you are a person who likes data, here are some nationwide numbers of the “Less-Trainable” student:

	Work Study	Student Assistant	Non-Working
% of High School GPA >3.0	85.1	78.9	83.8
Derived SAT	1033	1002	1051
GPA Year 1	2.9	2.8	2.9
% Retention	96.2	90.7	94.9
% 4 year BA	46	29.8	41
% 6 year BA	72.1	58.2	70.1
Graduate School	19.7	14.3	18.1

If you look at the numbers above, I honestly can’t understand where the misconception of work study students came from. It just doesn’t make sense.

But, in case you are thinking that UNT is different than the numbers gathered nationwide, here are a few numbers from this year. I was unable to get the same statistics from the data set above, however, I think you might be surprised at the information I was able to get:

- 64% of Work Study awarded students are Female of which 37% are Hispanic, 30% African American and 25% White.
- 93 % of Work Study awarded students are Full Time 30% Juniors, 25% Freshman, and 25% Sophomores
- Of the Freshman, 21% are in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences followed by 20% in the College of Science and 15% in the College of Business
- Current GPA: Work Study 2.89 vs Non-Work Study 2.79

Though I am still working on the data, I would also venture to say that majority of our work study students have had a job previous to coming to campus because statistically, students from lower income brackets, have had to work during high school to help support family and general cost of living. So in fact they are not “less trainable” and as proven by the GPA stat definitely not “less polished”. So what does this mean to us as a university?

### For the University of North Texas

For a university we all have a good idea how federal work study program helps the bottom line by allowing for up to 70% of departmental budgets to be paid by the work study allocation. But did you also know that 7% of our funding has to be used to help non-profit agencies off campus that specialize in community based programs such reading and STEM activities? Also, work-study can be used to fund internships, research and administrative activities?

I understand that an overwhelming number of people believe that the reason work study students are not hired is because they can’t work as many hours as student assistants. So policy wise (which I hope to change) that is true, but let’s talk facts and not policies:

- Average hours work per week: Work Study 18.8 vs Non Work Study 17.6

So even though non work study students can work more hours, they are not so the argument has no leg to stand on. Ok, so what about money, work study students can’t earn as much as non-work study so “we are hurting them in the long run”. Partially this is true, but again, fact and policy are not the same

- Average Salary: Work Study 8.96 vs Non Work Study 10.18

So our work study students work longer and get paid less, does this sound familiar?



\$400,000

What could your department use with that kind of money?

## The Misconception of Work Study at UNT

Cost to Department and University:

### Work Study

\$	Hours/Week	Weekly Salary	16 Week Semester	Department Cost *30%	Average Award	Overage	Total Dept. Pay per Semester
8.96	18.8	168.45	2695.17	808.6	2500	195.17	1003.72

### Non Work Study (100% department cost)

\$	Hours/Week	Weekly Salary	16 Week Semester	Total Dept. Pay per Semester
10.18	17.6	179.17	2866.7	2866.7

As you can see from the numbers above, department budgets are almost TRIPLE for a student assistant compared to work study student.

### Increase Work Study Average Salary

\$	Hours/Week	Weekly Salary	16 Week Semester	Department Cost *30%	Average Award	Overage	Total Dept. Pay per Semester
10.18	18.8	191.4	3062.15	918.64	2500	562.14	1480.79

Even if we increased the average pay of our work study students to equal that of the non-work study, departments would still be saving an average of 1400 per student per semester

### Changing the Mindset

I truly believe that we have a campus wide issue regarding our misconception of work study on this campus, specifically who our work study students are. Our student employees outnumber full time staff and faculty on this campus and represent the University of North Texas very well. We can change the negative perception very easily by just looking at data, focusing our energy on the quality of student and not the "label" associated with their budget line.

**But in case you are driven by the "bottom line". Did you know that this university sent back, carried forward, or moved over 400,000 dollars of Federal Work Study Money.**

Trust me I know that not all of the 5200 student employees on this campus can be awarded work study, but 148 more students could have. That also means that 400,000 would have been back in the departmental budgets. What could you have done with that money?

I will be more than happy to sit with each supervisor on this campus to discuss budget issues and hiring needs with each department if needed. All I am asking, is we change our mindset.



# COLLEGE WORK STUDY

& WHY YOUR DEPARTMENT SHOULD HAVE IT!



## WHAT TO KNOW

- **70%** of students' earnings are paid by work study program; the remaining **30%** paid by department
- Other Federal Work Study programs paid at **100%** include:
  - America Reads to elementary aged children
  - Math Tutoring 1st to 9th grade
- Student work study offers are fluid & can change anytime\*
- Students may work **up to 20 hours per week** during regular semesters & 29 hours during winter break

For additional information, please visit [financialaid.unt.edu/work-study](https://financialaid.unt.edu/work-study) or contact [collegeworkstudy@unt.edu](mailto:collegeworkstudy@unt.edu)

## HOW TO GET STARTED

- Complete both Federal and Texas work study participant agreements
- Submit job posting on **Handshake at Eagle Careers**
- Hire students
- Submit **ePAR**

## WORK STUDY

IS A FINANCIAL AID AWARD THAT PROVIDES PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT TO STUDENTS TO HELP MEET THE COSTS OF THEIR EDUCATION



\* All earnings over student's offer will be charged back to the department at 100%

# Reminders and Policy Snapshot

## Policy Snapshot

*“Hiring Managers must attach a justification in the form of a comment, email, or letter to applicant’s electronic Personnel Action Request (ePAR) for pay over \$15.00 per hour for college Work Study and for pay over \$20.00 per hour for all other hourly positions” (05.025 Employment of Students for Hourly Positions).*

## Summer Hour Limitations

- Student Assistants – regular (1710): may work up to 40 hours per week during the summer
- International Students can work up to 40 hours per week as long as they are not taking any classes
- Work Study (1713/1723/1753): Summer work study is available for students taking 6+ credit hours. Financial Aid may offer more assistance with questions pertaining to Work-Study.
- Summer work-study students are still limited to no more than 20 hours per week.
- Spring Work Study students that are not taking classes in the summer may be converted to student assistant- regular (1710) for the summer and work up to 40 hours.
- ✦ Please note, in this case your department would be 100% responsible for the funding for the duration of the summer. International students: may work up to 40 hours if they are not taking classes in the summer. Otherwise, they are still limited to no more than 20 hours.

## Job Posting Reminders

- Please provide a detailed job description when posting to Handshake. At a minimum, please provide multiple job duties/ responsibilities. This helps the Student Employment team when comparing job descriptions to criminal background checks, and it also helps communicate expectations. Key areas of a job description include but are not limited to: Department description (what does your department do?), Responsibilities (what specific projects or tasks will the student be performing), Qualifications (certain major, certain class level, certain skills), and any special application instructions.

If your job has been closed longer than 30 days in Handshake, please do not re-open the job to pended status. Instead, use the copy/duplicate job feature in Handshake and receive a new job ID.

## Job Closing Reminders

Have you filled your posted position? Please go in and “Expire” the position in Handshake so that the viewable postings for students stay current. For how to Expire a job posting, please click [here](#).

- Did you know that you can change the applicant status and also set-up automatic messages for each status (Reviewed, Hired, Declined)?

For how to change an applicant status, please click [here](#).

✦ When an applicant’s status is changed to “Declined”, it does not send the applicant a message. However, the applicant will see that their status has changed if they log back into Handshake and view their application status.

For how to set-up automatic message preferences, please click [here](#).

## Background Check Reminders

- All Hourly student employee positions require a background check. This includes both graduate and undergraduate students that are in hourly student employee positions.

### The Career Center

#### Vision Statement

Empowering students and alumni to identify and achieve individual goals for career success.

#### Mission Statement

Design and deliver high quality career services to UNT students and alumni through collaboration with campus, local and global partnerships.

## Supervisor Trainings offered

If you have not yet attended *Student Employment and Work Study Policy Overview for Supervisors*, you can sign up on the new learning portal ([mylearning.unt.edu](http://mylearning.unt.edu)). This training must be completed every two years by all staff and faculty who supervise hourly student employees. It covers policy changes and student employee management best practices.

Upcoming dates: **6/19/19 & 7/17/19**

We also offer a training for those that are new to supervising student employees: *New Student Employee Supervisor Training*. Registration is available on the new learning portal ([mylearning.unt.edu](http://mylearning.unt.edu)).

Upcoming training dates: **6/19/19 & 7/15/19**

### Supervisor Resources

Where can you find helpful policies, templates, FAQ's, and Eagle Internship information? Check out the Supervisor's Guide portion of the Career Center website.

### Career Center

1155 Union Circle #310859  
Chestnut Hall #103  
Denton, TX 76203

Phone: 940-565-2105  
Fax: 940-565-4376

## Student Trainings offered

**Hourly Student Employee Orientation** is available online (Click [Here](#)). UNT policy 05.025 Employment of Students for Hourly Positions states that “*hourly student employees must attend the orientation within the first 30 days of employment*”

### Request a Training for Your Student Employees

Could your student workers use a reminder about appropriate customer service and soft skills? LeAndra DiNicola, Student Employment Coordinator, offers multiple trainings geared towards students including: “**CASA (Creating a Service Attitude)**” and “**Soft Skills Training**”. Students may register through Handshake. Other trainings are offered by request. **\*\* CASA and Soft Skills presentations are being revamped Summer 2019\*\***

*Do you want to brag about your fabulous student employees? Or maybe you have a story or idea you'd like to share? Please contact LeAndra DiNicola at the Career Center to submit your request.*

