

WORKING AS A FIRST YEAR STUDENT

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When you come to college your life is different. You must get used to a new environment, schedule, culture, friends, classes, etc. It is a large change for many and for me it definitely was. Something that took away from the craziness of new things being thrown at me was creating structure for myself. Coming to college, we are allowed so much freedom, and many do not know what to do with their new found freedom. Our structured schedules of high school make way for options on class times and what we want to do with the extra time we have during the day. Becoming involved outside of the classroom will help you regain that structure. While being involved on campus while attending classes, you will determine how to structure your schedule. Don't wait; carry that new student energy into working right away.

How Will Working Now, Help Me Later?

I cannot stress enough how much working in college will help you for your future. With more students having degrees than ever, organizations are looking to hire students who have more than just a college degree. With competition for top entry positions heating up in today's economic environment, involvement outside the classroom is imperative to stand out.

Why is working important to employers? It's simple. When you have a diverse set of experiences, you gain valuable transferable skills that help make you work ready upon graduation. As the word sounds, **the skills you learn from campus employment transfer from one experience to the next.** As stated by Dana Wilkie, "Nearly 3 in 4 employers say they have a hard time finding graduates with the soft

(transferable) skills their companies need" (Wilkie, 2020). Employers are looking for more; provide that for them!

My first year at Iowa I worked at the Burge Dining Hall. How is working in the food industry going to prepare you for your future? Not only did this job teach me some great cooking tricks, but I learned how to communicate properly with my coworkers/supervisors, how to manage my time so I was able to get my homework done before work, how to organize my space so when it comes to rush time I was prepared, how to work in a fast-paced environment, and how to think critically. Not every day was the same and this allowed me to think outside the box.

Below are the top transferable skills that employers are looking for from students to have by the time they graduate college to be "work-ready":

- ✓ **Critical thinking/Problem-Solving**
- ✓ **Teamwork/Collaboration**
- ✓ **Professionalism/Work Ethic**
- ✓ **Oral/Written Communication**

See, not rocket science skills! **92% of employers believe that transferable skills matter as much or more than hard skills** (NACE Job Outlook 2023). Why? Employers can teach you job specific skills. What they can't teach you is how to be motivated, show up on time consistently, and how to work well with others. The people who do the basics well and practice these from a young age are provided further responsibilities and upward mobility throughout their career.

Does Working Hurt My GPA?

In simple terms, working while being a student improves your GPA.

At the University of Iowa over the last 19 years, students who work have a 0.13 higher average GPA compared to their non-working counterparts. How does that happen? Shouldn't it be the other way around? The reasons for this are many, including: transferable skill development, time management, improved campus engagement, increased awareness of campus resources, meeting new friends, and increased confidence with their college transition. As a student who works 20 hours per week with a full course load I promise if you manage your time well you can be successful with your schoolwork and create a good work-life balance.

What Jobs Are on Campus? How Do I Find Them?

There are over 8,000 student employees on campus working for over 200 departments. What type of jobs do you have available? Pretty much anything you can think of. The University of Iowa has all types of ranging from administrative assistants to research work to working at the hospital. The opportunities are endless and whatever you do, you will learn skills on the job that will translate over to the classroom and your future career.

You can find jobs that match with your major, but also a handful of students find jobs that are the exact opposite as they want to try something new. **To find campus jobs, you will utilize our Handshake job board:**

→ [UIOWA.JOINHANDSHAKE.COM](https://uiowa.joinhandshake.com)

This job posting website only for Iowa students is updated daily and has jobs ranging from on-campus employment to internships, to full-time jobs meaning you will use this resource your entire Iowa career. Many jobs on Handshake require a resume and as a freshman your resume does not need to be perfect. **If you are looking for more help creating your first resume or updating your high school version, check out the Pomerantz Career Center. Walk-in appointments are available, or you can schedule an appointment with an advisor. These services are free!** Take advantage of it early in your college career. Your future self will thank you!

What Else Does Working on Campus Provide Me?

From my campus jobs, I have created new lifelong friends and mentors and met some great study partners! It has been the best way for me to find others who are go getters like me. The network I have created through working has also helped me find a career after I graduate.

Before working on campus, I didn't realize how much support our campus departments provide. There are many events that I have taken advantage of because of my work in multiple departments.

For example, do you know all of the services the Pomerantz Career Center provides to students weekly? You are able to attend Workforce Development sessions, fun events such as Do's, Don'ts, and Donuts to prepare you for the career fair, and even a mock interview with a real employer! Working in college is about making some extra money, but the benefits go far beyond a paycheck.

Citations

Wilkie, Dana. "Employers Say Students Aren't Learning Soft Skills in College." *SHRM*, SHRM, 28 Feb. 2020, www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/employers-say-students-arent-learning-soft-skills-in-college.aspx

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Working has helped me for my future career after college because I now have had irreplaceable professional experience, in addition to the soft skills I learned in such personable roles. In both of my campus jobs, I have been forced to be very sociable and navigate being both professional and friendly as a receptionist and someone operating telephones. In addition to that, I have learned how to balance social life, work, and school all at once in order to put my best work forward in all I do. I have also found that campus jobs are the most understanding to what it is like to be a student, and provide a reasonable amount of hours and time off if need be. – **Senior Gianna Caruso, Industrial Engineering major**

Working this job has really helped me develop my time management skills which will be something that will really benefit me in the future. It can be hard at times to manage all my classes, homework, and exams while still trying to work 1-2 nights during the week. Having this job has taught me how to look in the future and anticipate days that it will work for me to work and what days I am going to need to study. – **Freshman Ben Hoefer, undeclared Civil Engineering major**

Because of this job, and waitressing, I was able to get my HR Internship at UIHC during my junior year, which I currently work at. The job stressed the importance of communication, and my other jobs at UI had trained me to do just that. – **Senior Lorelei Bahl, Business Management and Psychology major**

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