



# **Student Employment and its Impact on the Undergraduate Experience**

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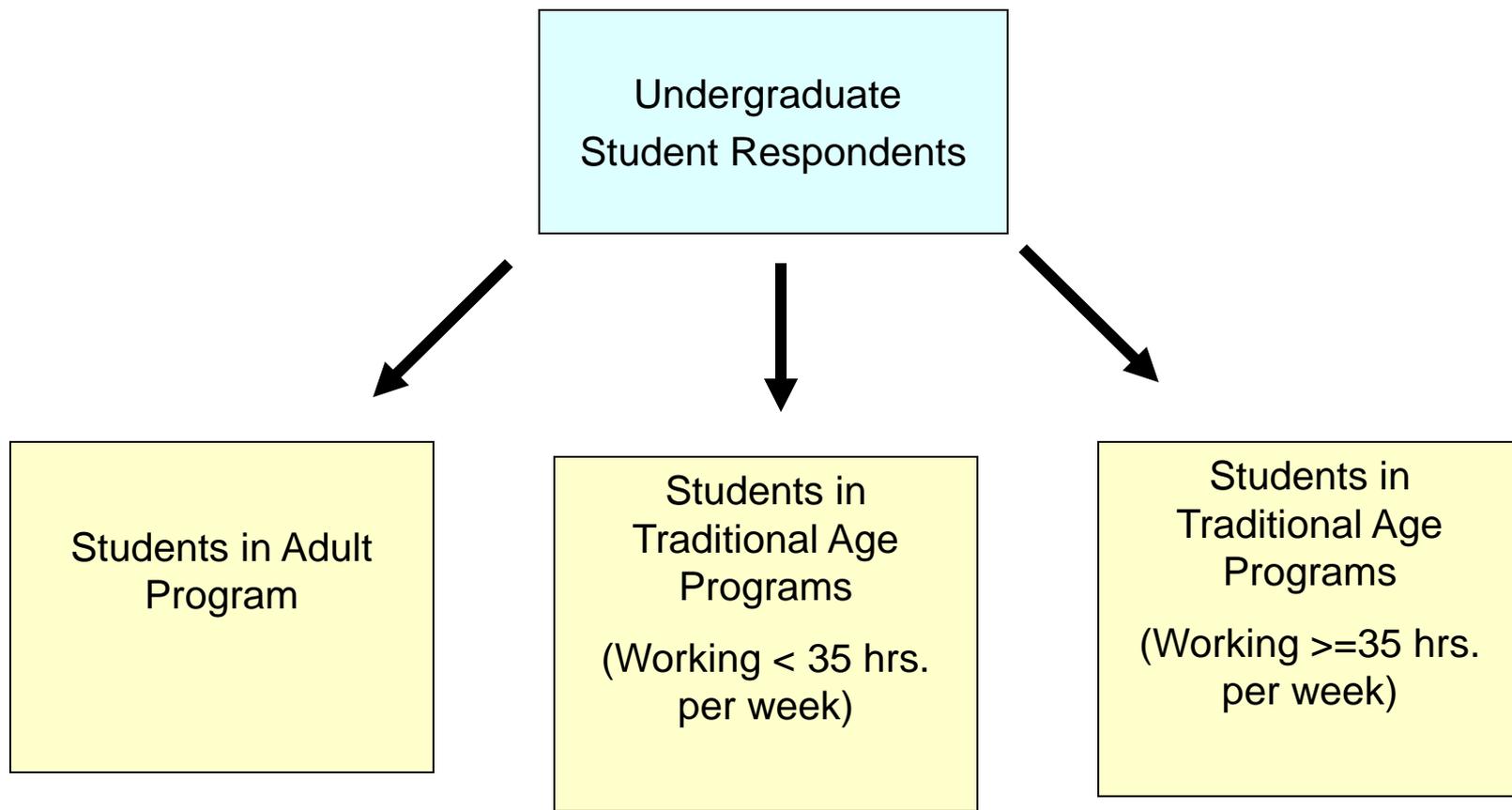
# Objectives of Study

- Profile why students work, the range of employment options in which undergraduates are engaged, and how students evaluate the impact of their work on school, social life, and personal life.
- How student employment affects undergraduate progress by comparing and contrasting working students to students who do not work on a variety of factors related to academic performance, persistence, social engagement, personal life, and perceptions of borrowing.
- Explore the balance of work and study in an effort to determine a level of work hours above which we would be more likely to see negative effects on academic performance, engagement with the university, etc.

# The Mixed Mode Methodology

- Random sample of 1001 enrolled undergraduates representative of colleges (including students in adult program) in the fall 2005 quarter.
- Mixed Mode
  - 225 online participants
  - 171 phone interviews
- Overall response rate of 40% approximately evenly distributed among the colleges.
- Responses weighted due to over sampling of freshman and under sampling of seniors.
- 90-question survey
- Limitation: Too few non-working respondents to compare working to not working

# Results were segmented into three groups of undergraduate students.

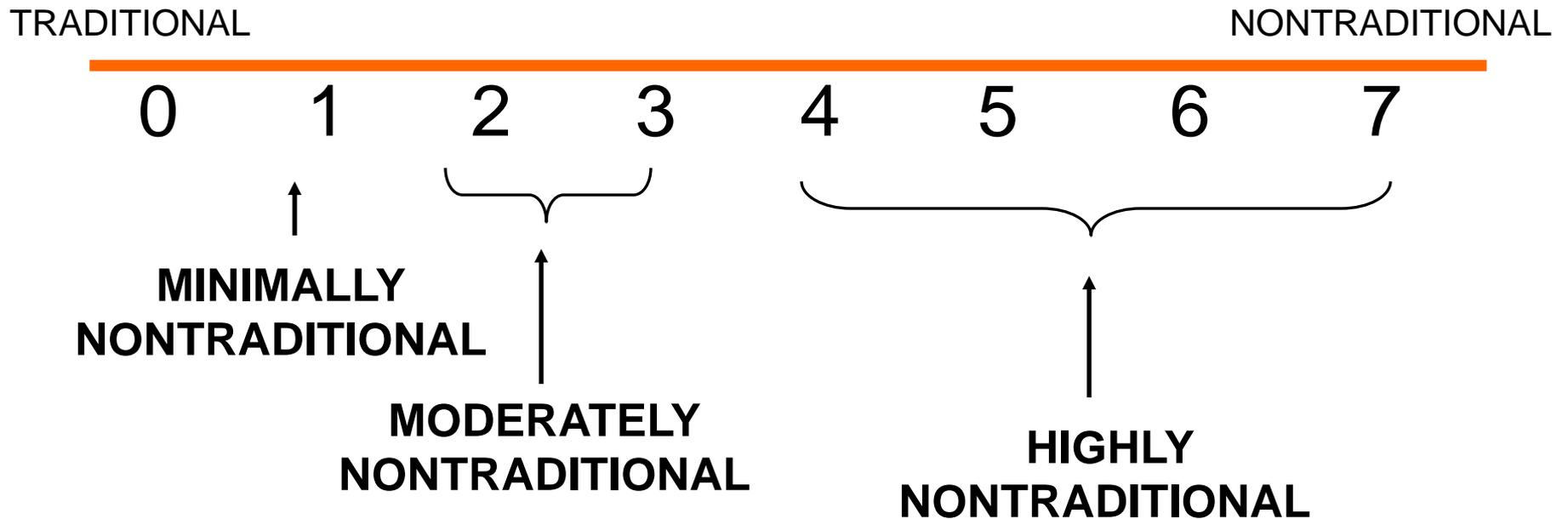


# Traditional age programs can have non-traditional students

1. **Delayed enrollment** (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school)
2. **Attends part time** for at least part of the academic year (not all four quarters)
3. **Works full-time** (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled
4. **Has dependents other than a spouse** (usually children, but sometimes others.)
5. **Is a single parent** (either not married or married but separated and has dependents.)
6. **Does not have a high school diploma** (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school.)
7. **Is considered financially independent** for purposes of determining eligibility for financial aid

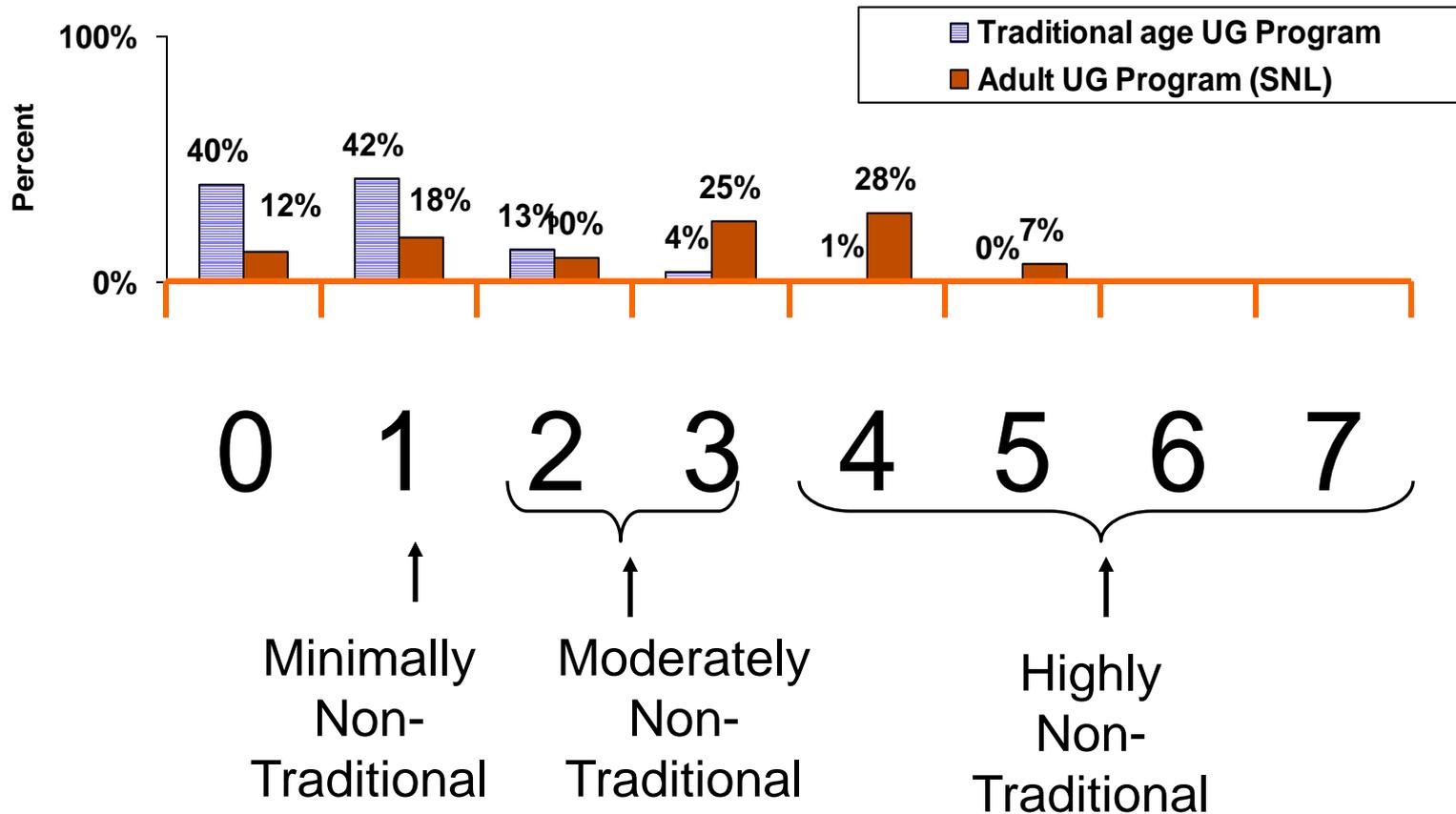
# Nontraditional UG Continuum

73% of UG in 1999 were in one of these 3 nontraditional categories



Source: Horn, L. (1996). Nontraditional undergraduates, Trends in Enrollment from 1986 to 1992 and Persistence and Attainment Among 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students (NCES 97-578). U.S. Department of Education, NCES. Washington, D.C: U.S. Government Printing Office

**Students in adult program are not the only non-traditional students.  
More than half of other undergraduate respondents are at least minimally non-traditional.**



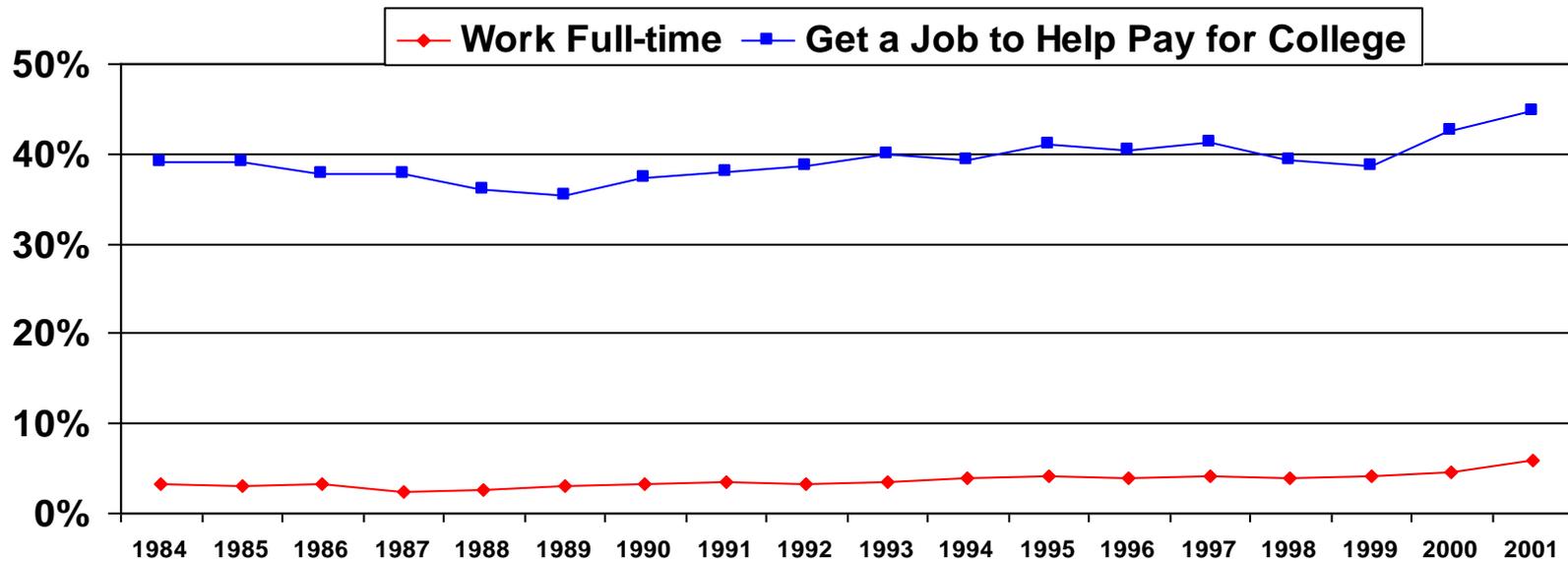
Represents online only. n = 210 Non-adult, n = 29 adult. Respondents were not asked if they were financially independent, so this is not exact comparison to NCES continuum.

# Five Key Findings

## Key Finding #1

***Nearly 1 in 7 respondents in traditional undergraduate programs work  $\geq$  35 hours weekly.***

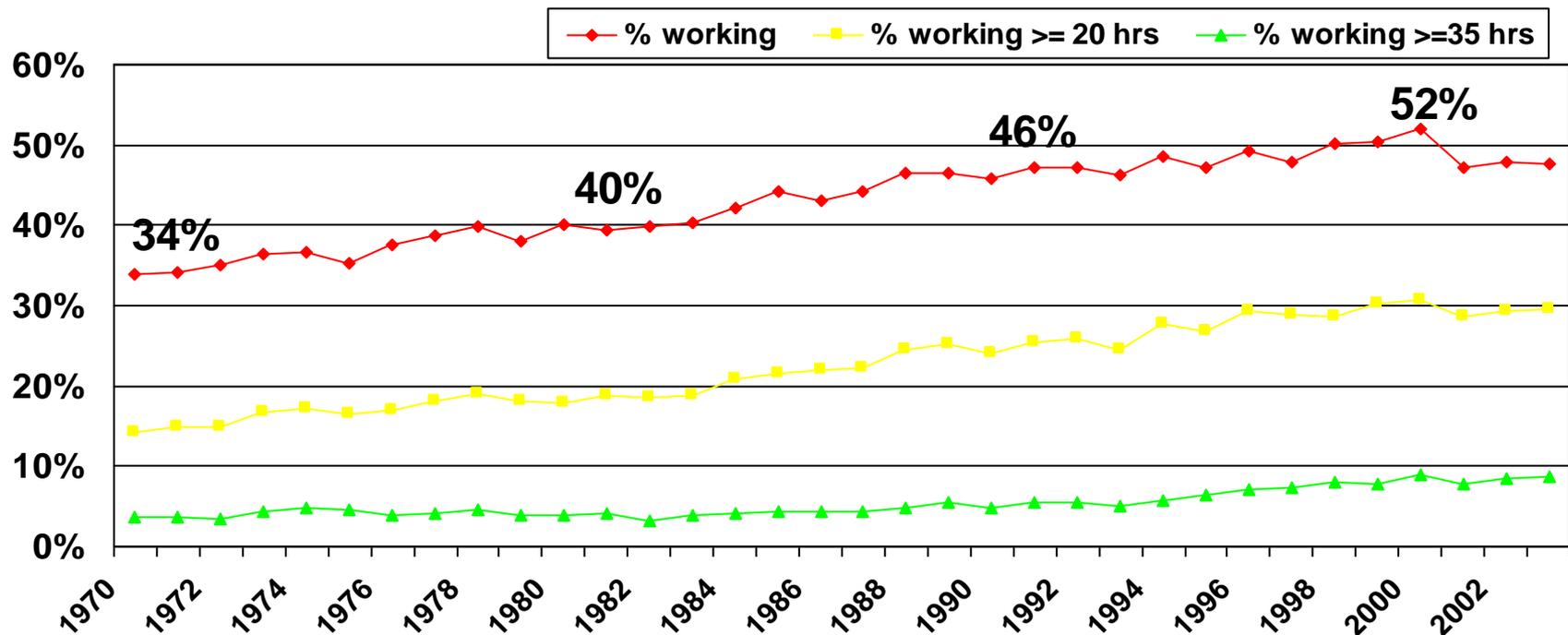
# National norms show growing percentages of students expect they will “get a job to help pay for college” and “work full-time while attending college.”



Source: The American Freshman: Thirty-Five Year Trends which presents national results from the CIRP Freshman Survey from 1966-2001. Responses from almost seven million students attending 1,086 baccalaureate-granting institutions are reported for all students over the last 35 years.

# Nationally, the percentages of students working and working more hours is increasing.

## Employment of College Students



NOTE: College includes both 2- and 4-year institutions. Percent of students employed includes those with a job but not at work during the survey week.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October, various years, unpublished data.

# The 1 in 7 respondents working full-time while in traditional undergraduate programs have a different profile than the “returning adult student.”

	Traditional program n= 371		Adult Program n= 44
	Working PT n = 321	Working FT n = 50	Working FT n= 29
Attend school full-time, full-year	52%	<b>56%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Have dependents (online respondents only)	10%	<b>20%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Are single parents (online respondents only)	4%	<b>08%</b>	<b>36%</b>
Gender (% women)	57%	<b>46%</b>	<b>75%</b>
Worked during senior year of h.s., sometimes > 15 hrs. per week.	57%	<b>85%</b>	<b>65%</b>
First generation	52%	<b>63%</b>	**
Age at time of survey < 25 years old	94%	<b>50%</b>	<b>0%</b>

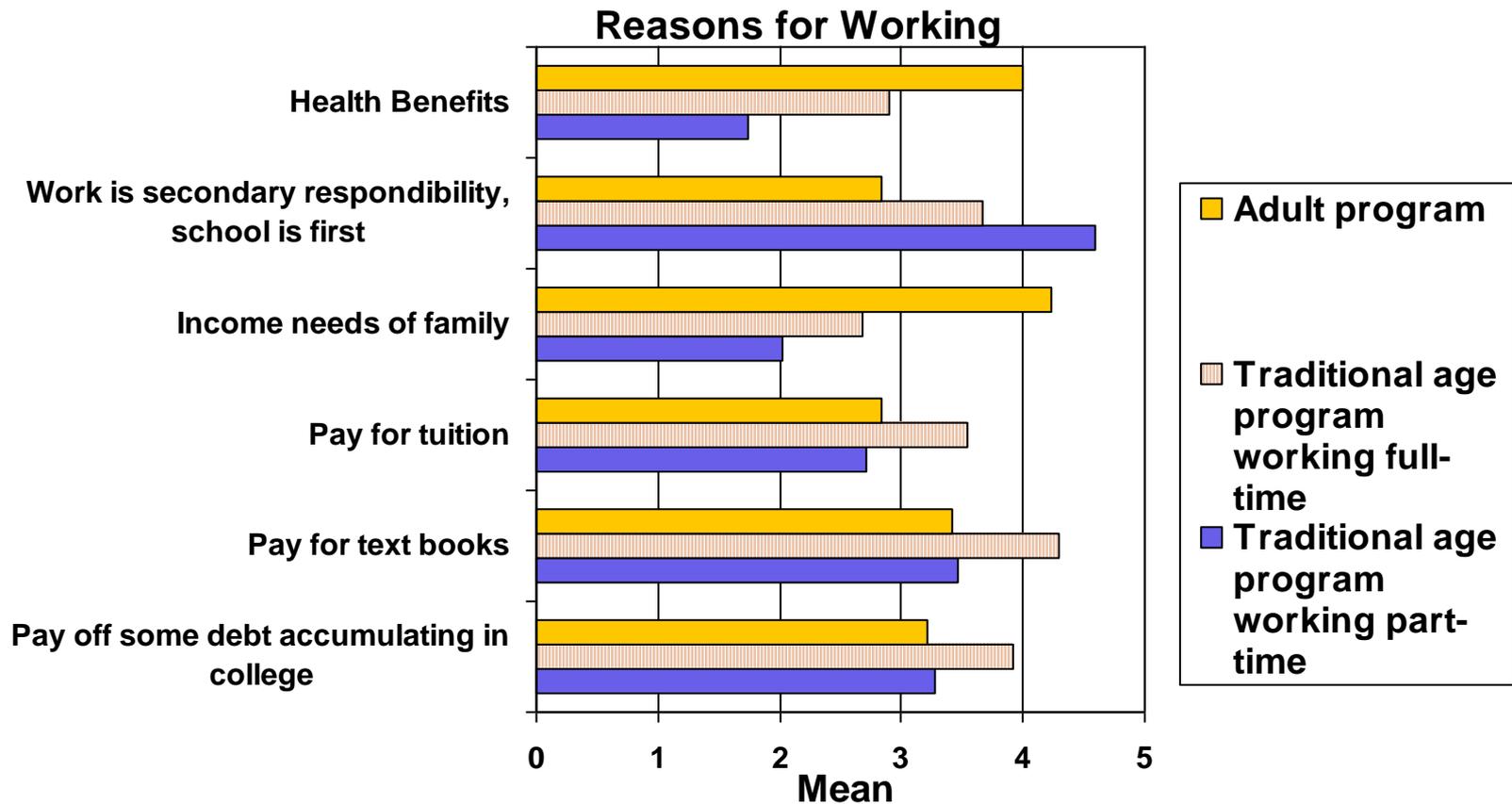
\*\*numbers too small to report %

# Traditional age Programs: Why Students Work

	Traditional age working FT, n=50		Traditional age working PT, n=321		Adult, N=44	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
I work to earn my health benefits (p<.001)	2.90	1.717	1.74	1.222	3.99	1.466
School is my primary responsibility, work is secondary (p<.001)	3.67	1.437	4.60	.7580	2.83	1.530
I work to support the income needs of my family (p<.01)	2.68	1.753	2.02	1.457	4.23	1.289
I work to pay for tuition (P<.01)	3.55	1.444	2.71	1.641	2.84	1.735
I work to pay for my text books (p<.01)	4.30	1.249	3.47	1.626	3.41	1.703
I work to be able to pay off some of the debt I am accumulating in college (p<.01)	3.92	1.309	3.27	1.550	3.21	1.535
I work primarily because I like my job	3.31	1.299	3.29	1.240	3.17	1.238
I work to earn money for what I want, not what I need	2.79	1.397	2.95	1.372	2.79	1.302
I work because I need money for living expenses	4.28	1.172	4.08	1.269	4.61	.891
I work to lessen the amount I will have to borrow	3.09	1.426	3.07	1.490	2.71	1.637
I work to avoid acquiring ANY debt while in college	2.82	1.556	2.77	1.514	2.77	1.637
I work because it helps me attain my career goals	3.05	1.652	3.04	1.507	3.93	1.436
I work because I could not stay at DePaul if I did not	2.80	1.607	2.76	1.651	3.29	1.883

Represents rating on scale of 1-5, 5 meaning strongly agree.

**Students working full-time while in traditional age programs are more likely to work to pay for tuition, text books, and debt reduction. In some ways, they are a blend between students in the adult program and the other students working part-time.**



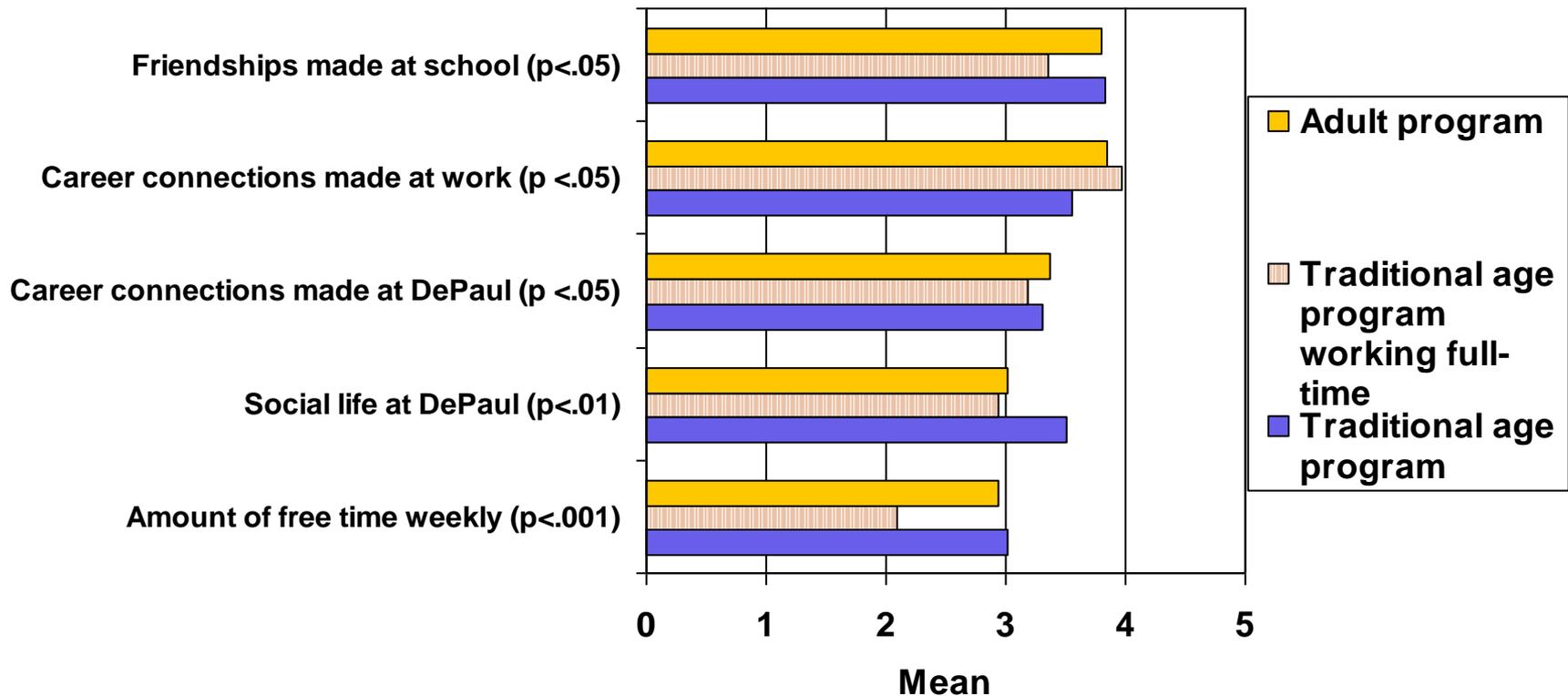
Represents significant differences between students working FT and PT while enrolled in traditional programs  $p < .01$ . Means represent scale of 1-5, 5 meaning strongly agree. FT workers  $n = 50$ , PT workers  $n = 321$ .

# Traditional age Programs: Satisfaction Levels

	Non-adult working FT, n=50		Non-adult working PT, n=321		Adult, n=44	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Amount of free time weekly (p<.001)	2.09	1.235	3.01	1.205	2.94	2.94
The social life at DePaul (p<.01)	2.94	1.401	3.50	1.189	3.02	3.02
Professional/career connections made at DePaul (p<.05)	3.19	1.381	3.30	1.266	3.37	3.37
Professional/career connections made at work (p<.05)	3.97	1.097	3.56	1.269	3.84	3.84
Friendships made at school (p<.05)	3.36	1.325	3.83	1.172	3.80	1.11
Academic challenge at DePaul	3.93	.891	3.95	.876	4.13	.930
Friendships made at work	4.05	1.1	3.86	1.145	4.14	.942
Personal attention received at DePaul	3.66	1.172	3.94	1.015	4.18	.930
Academic experiences at DePaul	3.79	1.136	3.91	1.013	4.17	.949
Ability to manage own time	4.03	1.046	3.91	.965	3.93	.838
Career preparations received at DePaul	3.11	1.273	3.43	1.160	3.72	3.72

There were no significant differences between first gen respondents and non-first gen respondents.

# Students working full-time while in traditional age programs have lower levels of satisfaction except in the career connections made at work.



Represents significant differences between students working FT and PT while enrolled in traditional programs p< .01. Means represent scale of 1-5, 5 meaning strongly agree. FT workers n = 50, PT workers n = 321.

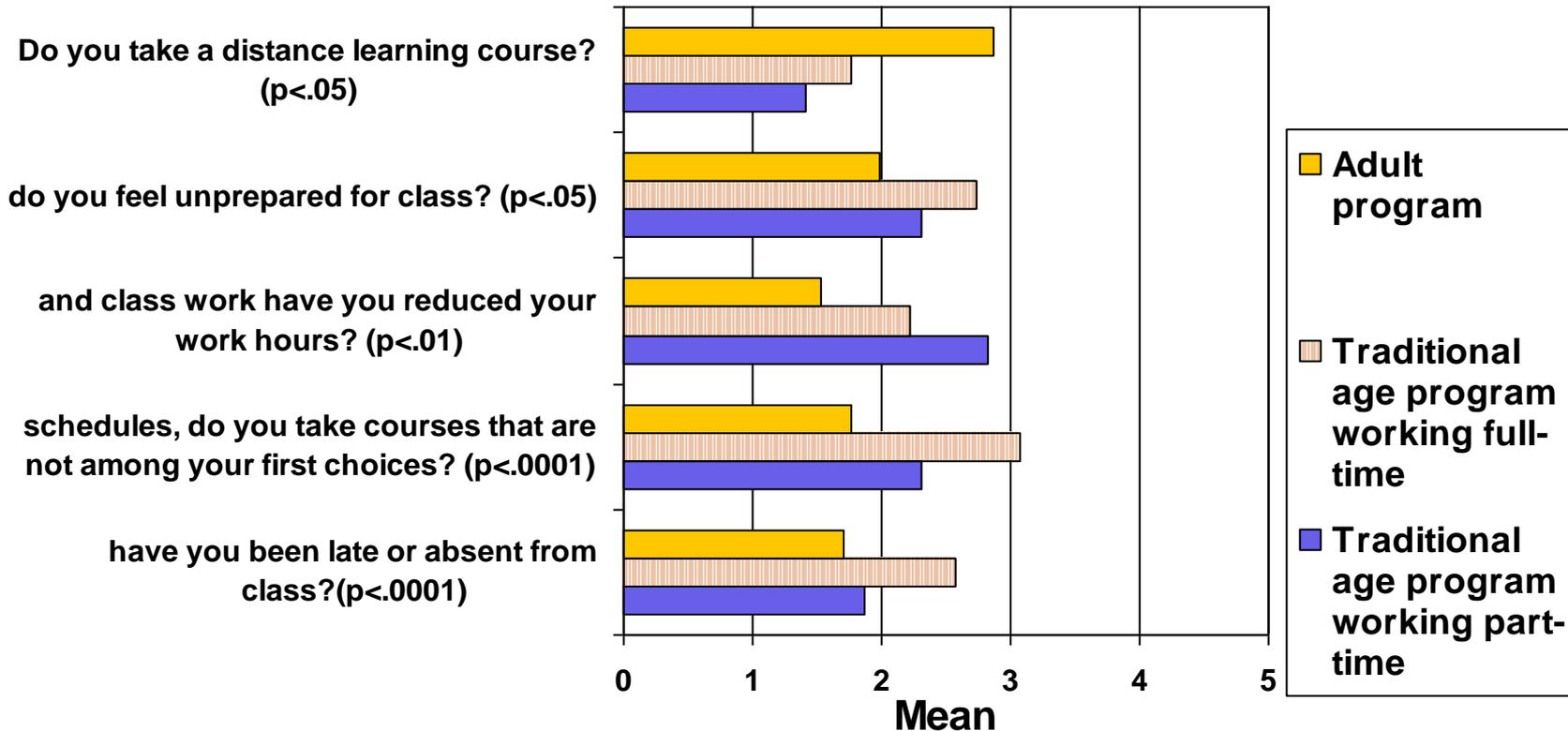
# Traditional age Students: How Work Affects Academics

How often, due to work ...	Non-adult working FT, n=50		Non-adult working PT, n=321		Adult program, n=44	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
have you been late or absent from class? (p< .0001)	2.58	1.276	1.87	1.001	1.70	0.916
schedules, do you take courses that are not among your first choice? (p<.0001)	3.07	1.509	2.31	1.213	1.76	1.050
and class work have you reduced your work hours? (p<.01)	2.22	1.069	2.83	1.257	1.53	0.846
do you feel unprepared for class? (p<.05)	2.73	1.106	2.31	1.038	1.98	0.835
do you take a distance learning course? (p< .05)	1.76	1.229	1.41	.820	2.87	1.670
Is there a positive impact on your academic performance?	3.01	1.389	3.05	1.145	3.27	1.093
are you able to homework at work?	1.96	1.272	2.10	1.227	2.63	1.128
do you miss a group meeting for a class project?	1.91	1.087	1.79	1.001	1.32	0.560
are your professors understanding of the issues involved in balancing work and school?	2.77	1.190	2.92	1.162	3.99	0.942
are you able to use what you've learned in class?	2.97	1.291	2.87	1.213	3.55	0.981
schedules, do you drop a class?	1.83	1.096	1.57	.915	1.26	0.488

N = 258-356 for traditional age programs, 27-40 for adult program

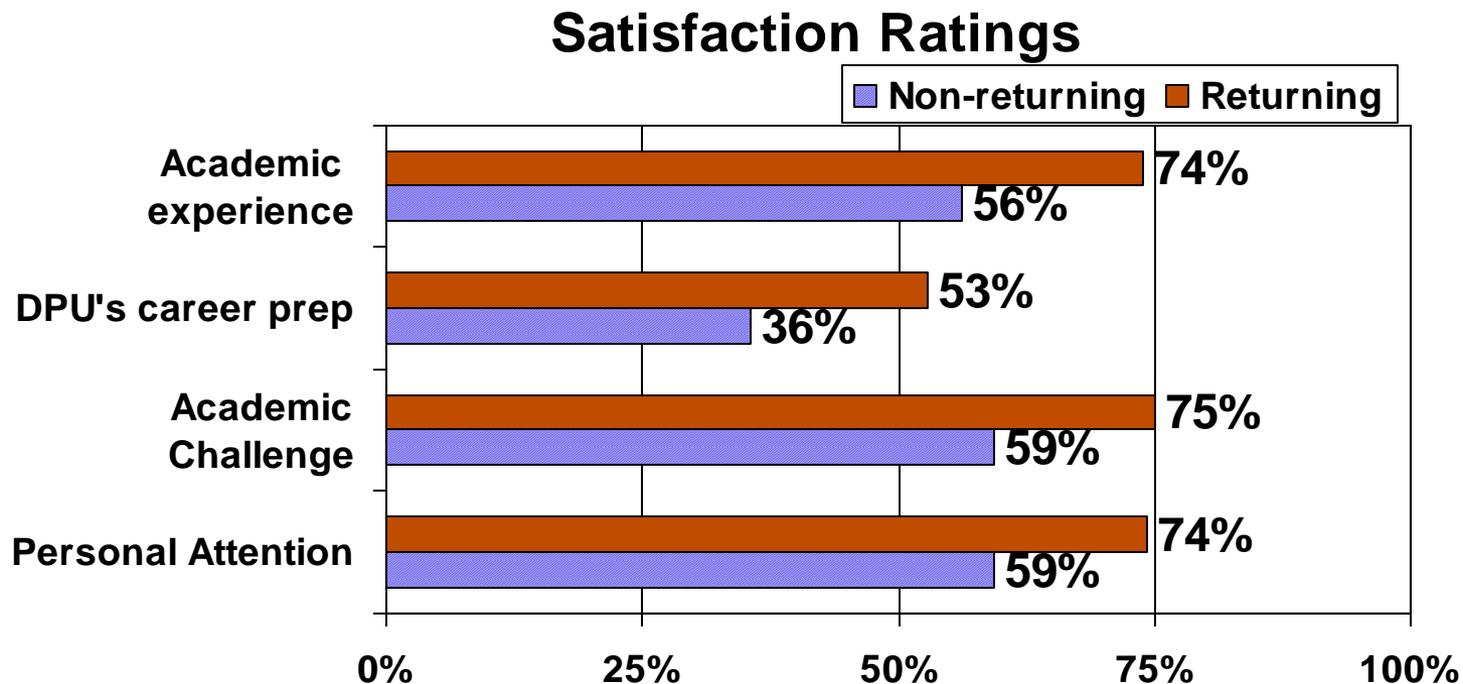
**Students working full-time while in traditional age programs are more likely than the other two groups, due to work, to be unprepared for class, take classes that are not their first choices, and to be late or absent from class.**

**Due to work hours...**



Represents significant differences between students working FT and PT while enrolled in traditional programs p< .01. Means represent scale of 1-5, 5 very often. FT workers n = 50, PT workers n = 321.

**88% of survey respondents in traditional age programs returned in Fall 2006. There was no relationship between the number of work hours and persistence.**

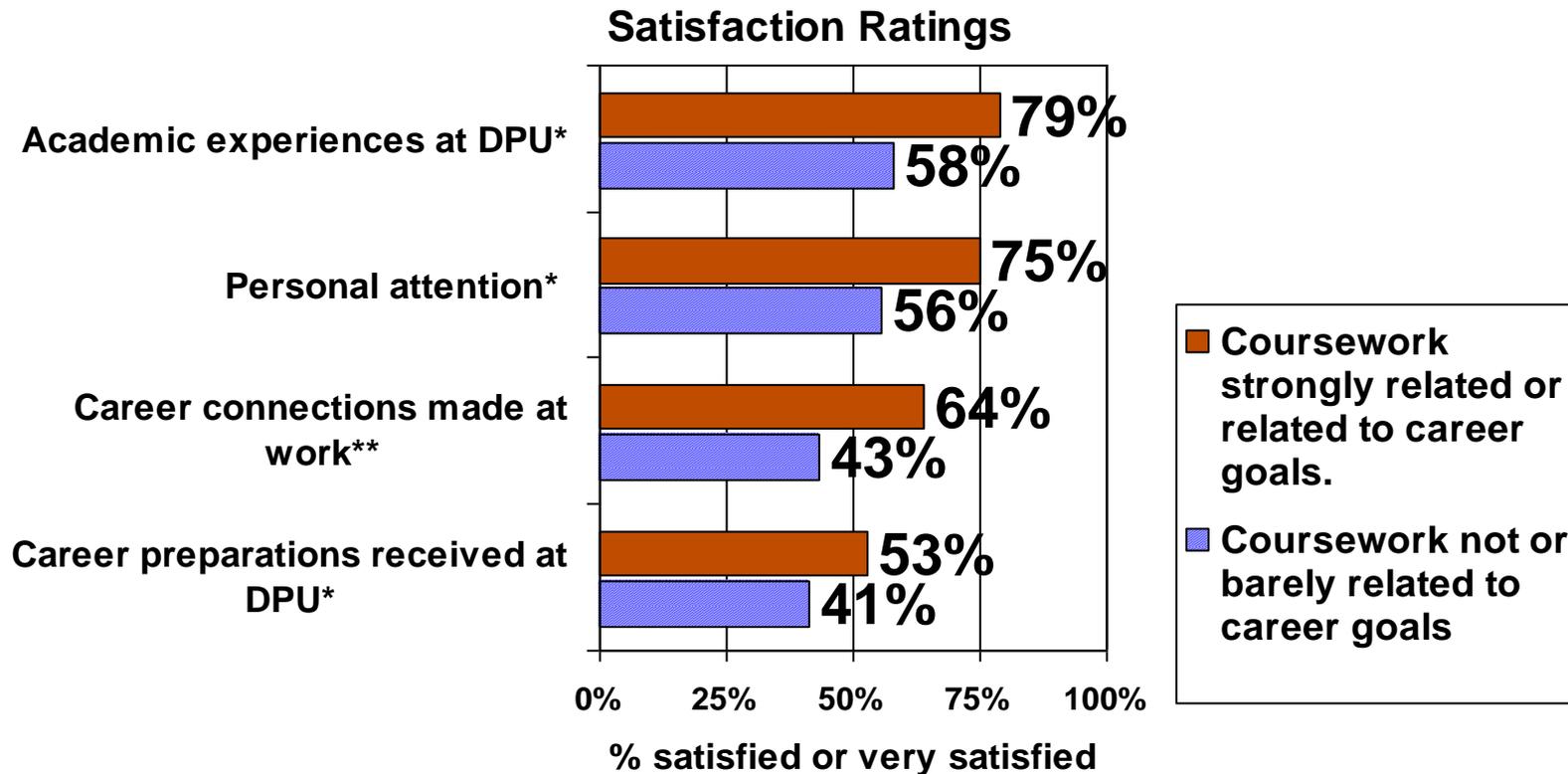


Represents rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, 5 meaning very satisfied. n= 238-245 for Satisfaction levels were lower for those who did not return one year later.

## Key Finding # 2

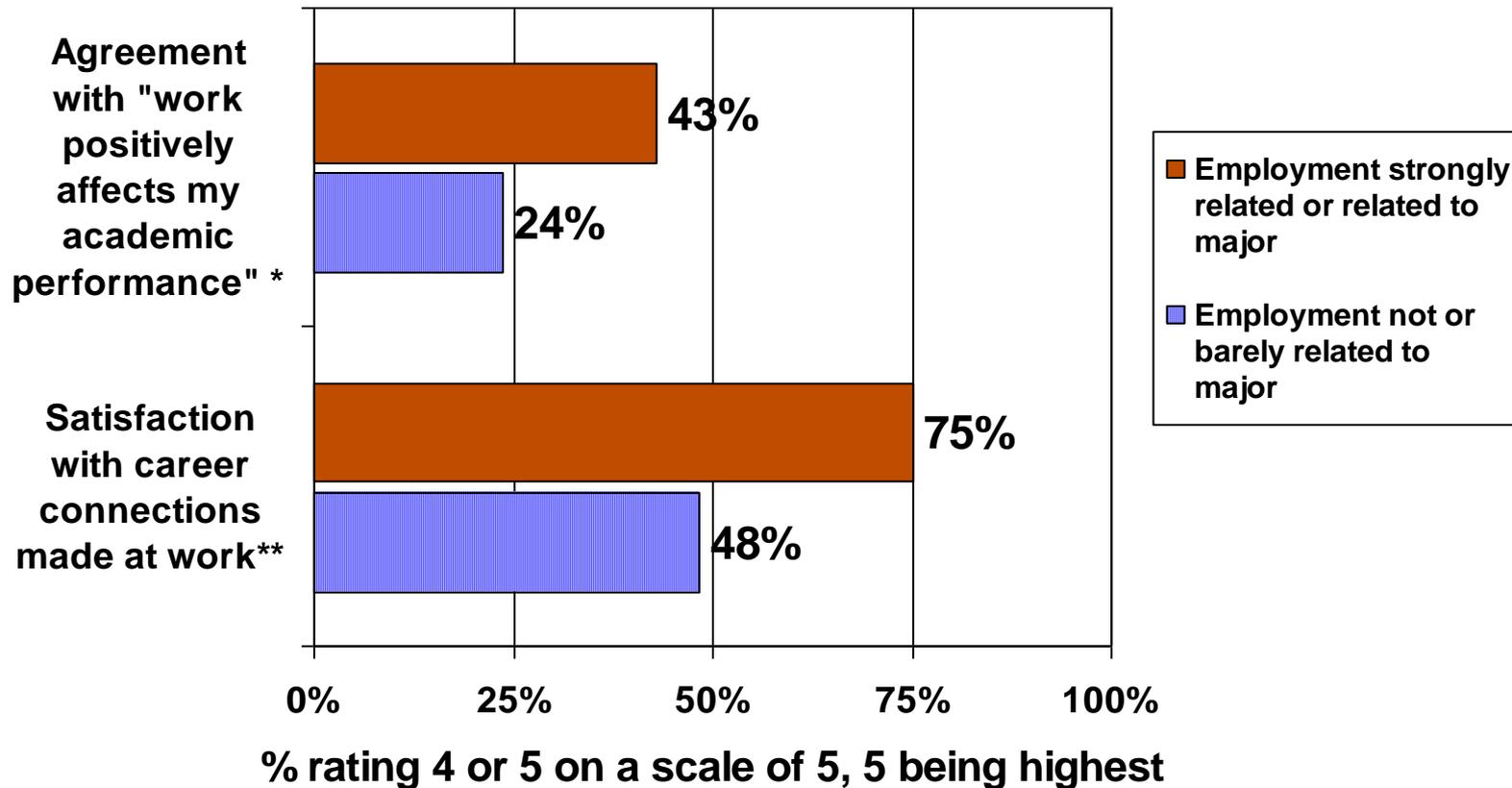
***In traditional programs, when coursework and major relate to employment and career goals, students are more likely to be satisfied with several key areas of their collegiate experience.***

# Within traditional programs, when coursework relates to career goals, students reported significantly greater satisfaction in key areas.



Represents a rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 5, 5 meaning very satisfied with service when coursework is strongly related or related to career goals (rating 4 or 5 vs. 1 or 2). \*\*p <.001, \*p <.01, \* p < .05.

# Students within traditional age programs, who reported their coursework is related to their major, are more likely to report positive effects on work and school.

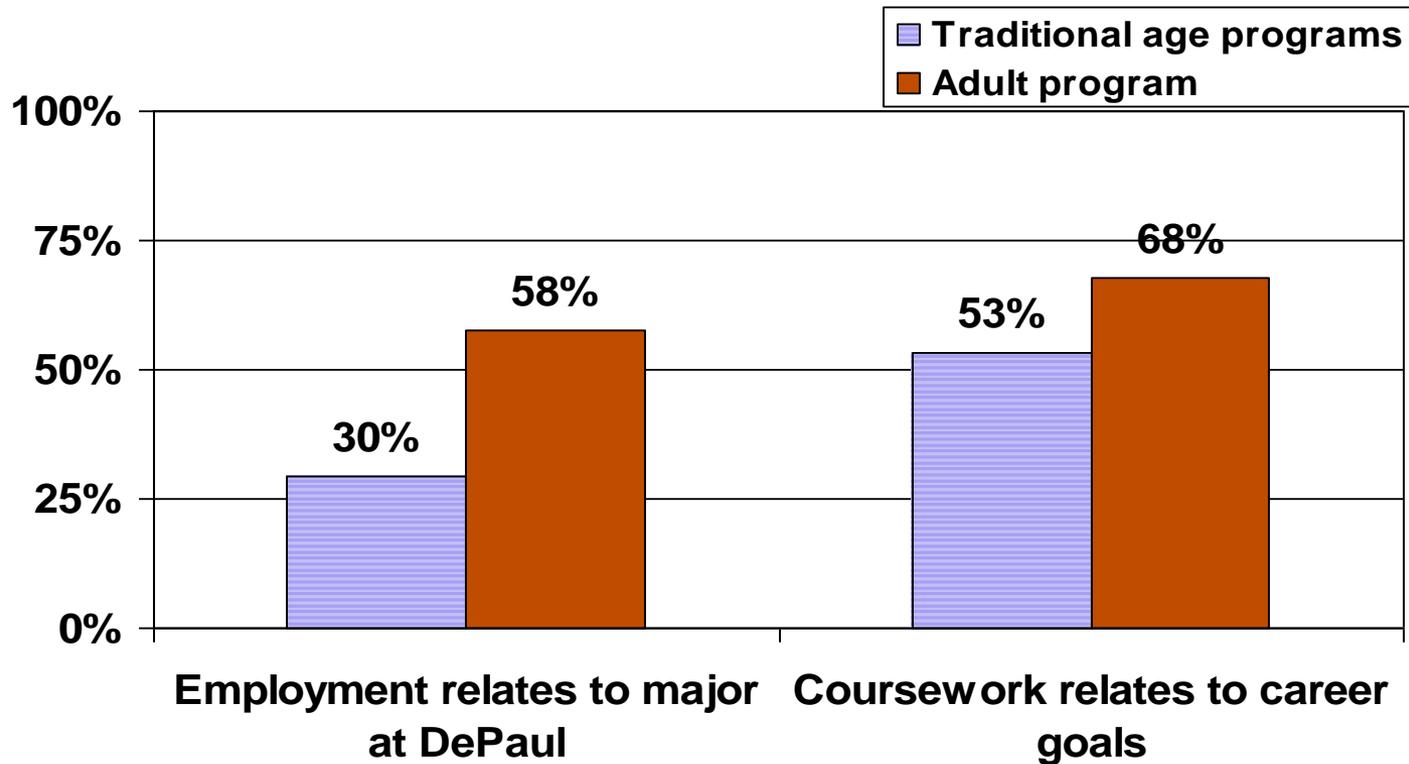


Represents a rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 5, 5 meaning very satisfied with service when coursework is strongly related or related to major. \*p <.001, \*\*p <.01, Represents traditional age programs.

### ***Key Finding #3***

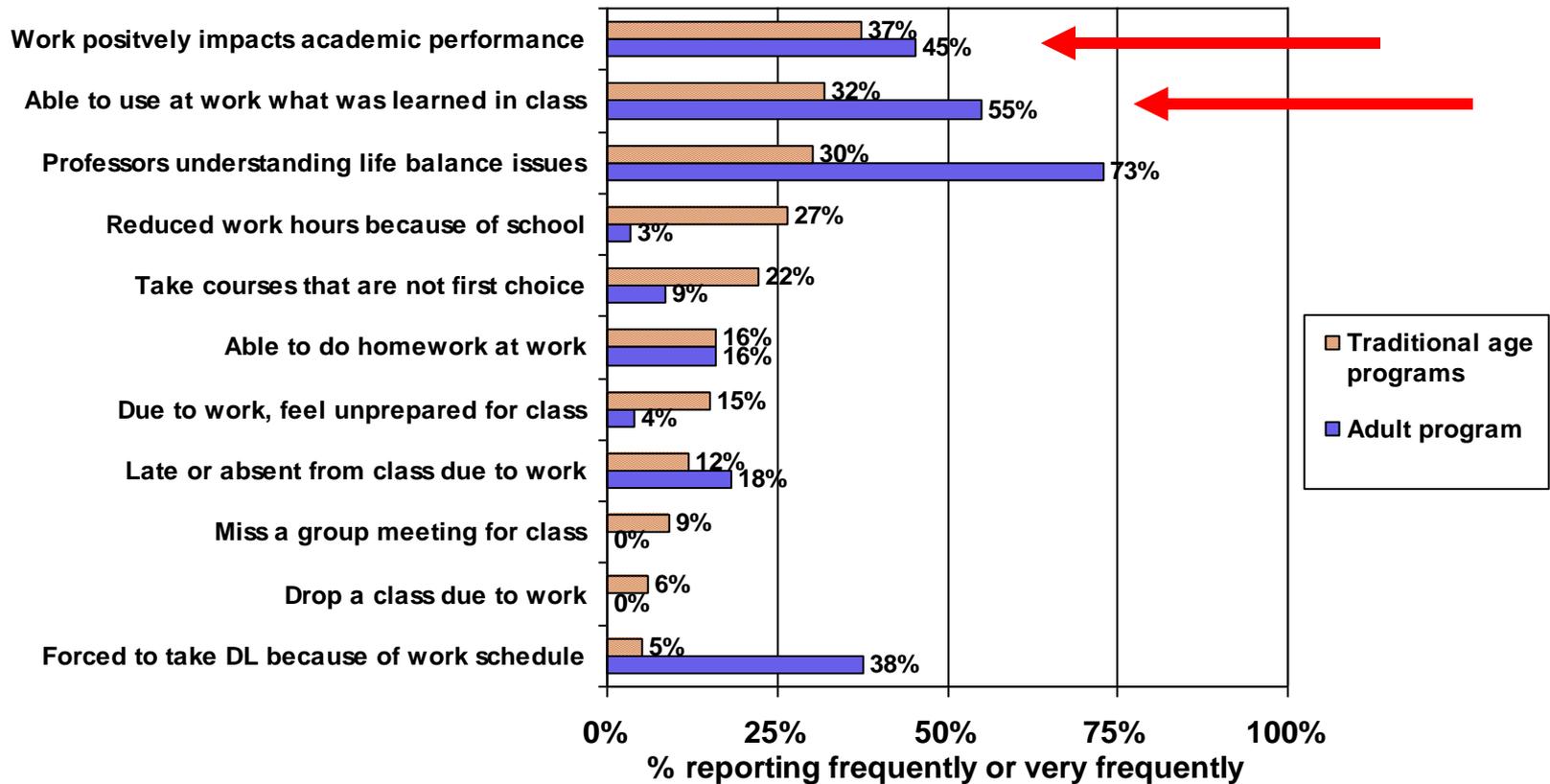
***Most students do not take advantage of the synergy created when integrating employment, major, coursework, and career goals.***

**Fewer than 1/3 of students in traditional age programs reported their employment is related to their major and only half reported their coursework relates to their career goals**



N = 35 adult, 270 traditional age program. Represents ratings of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, 5 meaning strongly relates.

# About 1/3 of students in traditional age programs reported work positively impacts their academic performance or gives them an opportunity to use what they have learned in class.



Ordered by Non-adult from greatest to least. Adult program n = 35, Traditional age programs n = 267-270. Represents rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, 5 meaning very often.

## Only 4 in 10 students in traditional age programs reported they work to help attain career goals.

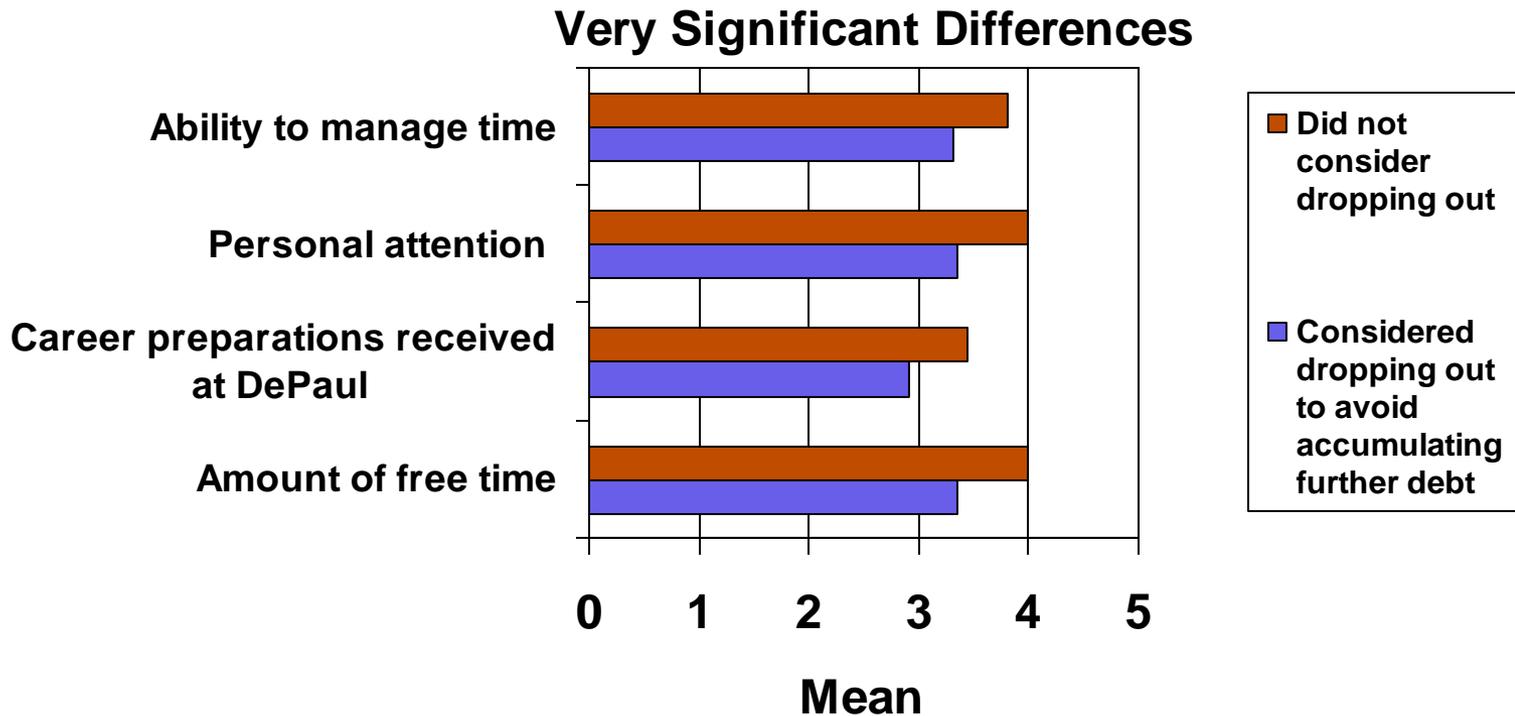
- School is primary (85%)
- Living expenses (76%)
- Text books (63%)
- Pay off some debt (54%)
- Primarily because they like job (48%)
- Lessen the amount of borrowing (44%)
- Help attain career goals (42%)

## Key Finding #4

**There is no relationship between hours worked and the consideration to drop out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt.\***

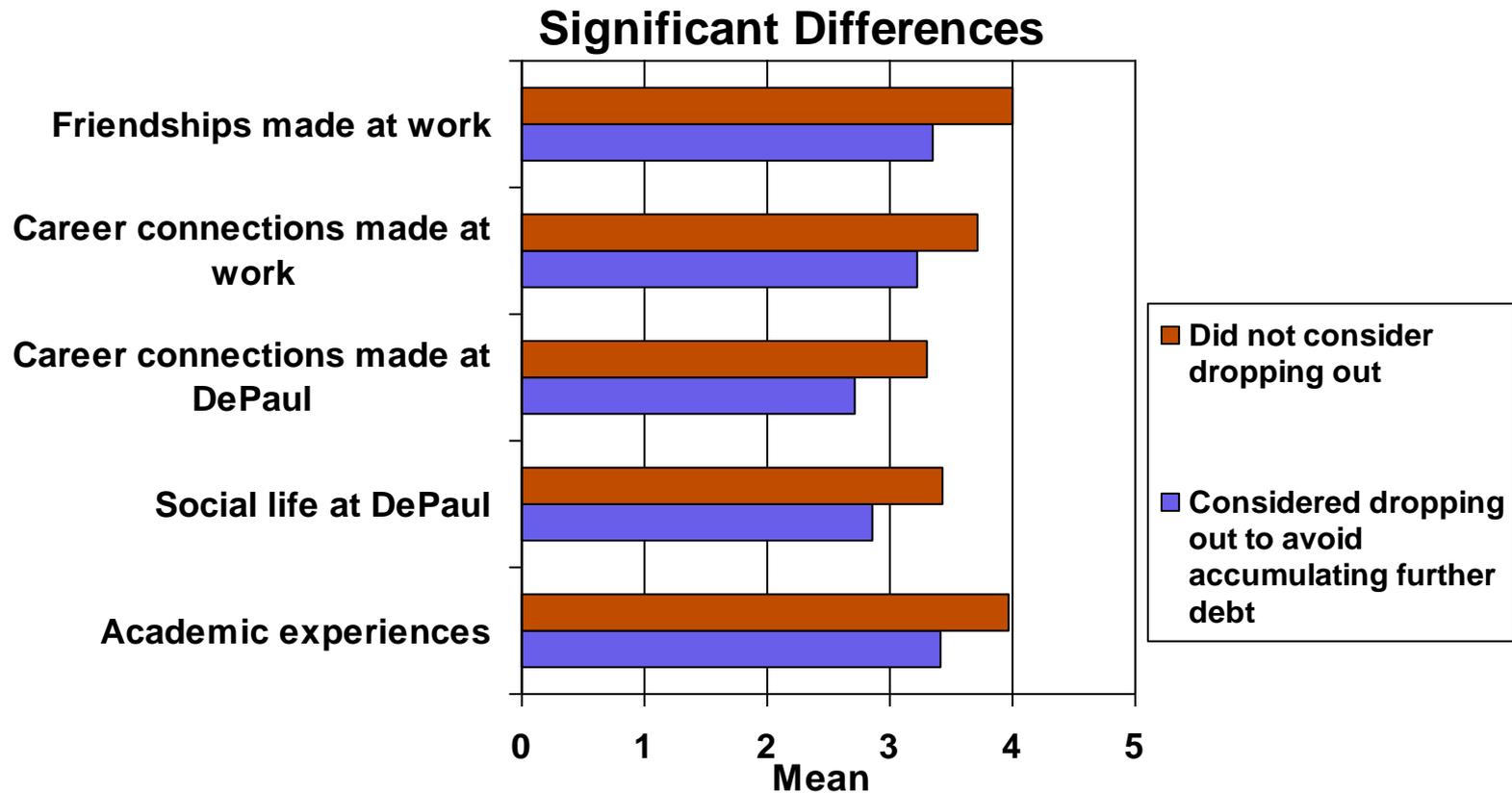
\*Represents 11% of all respondents.

**Overall, students who considered dropping out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt reported lower levels of satisfaction in key areas. Their consideration to drop out of school is not correlated with work hours.**



\*p < .01. Includes adult program and traditional age programs. N = 33-43 for those who considered dropping out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt. 93% are in traditional age programs.

**Overall, students who considered dropping out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt also reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction in these key areas:**



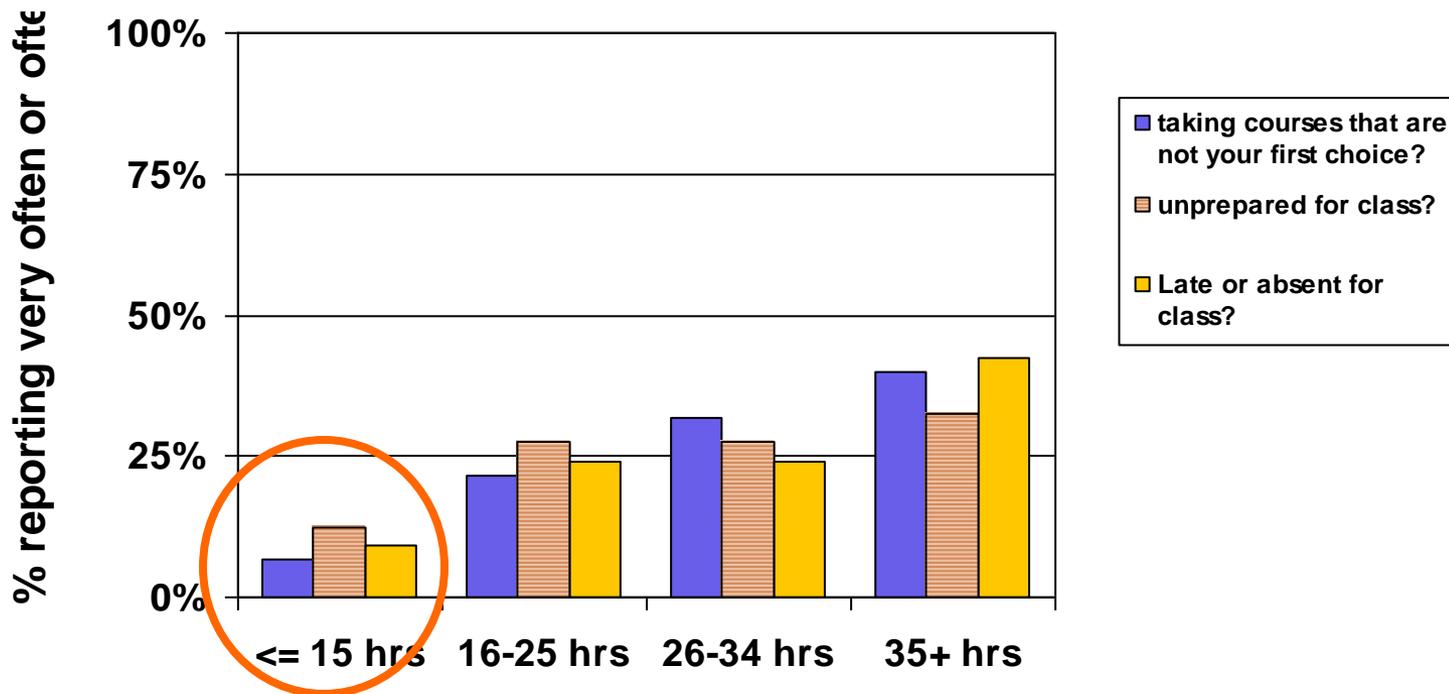
\*p < .05. Includes adult program and traditional age programs. N = 33-43 for those who considered dropping out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt. 93% are in traditional age programs.

## **Key Finding # 5**

**Students in traditional age programs who work  $\leq$  15 hours per week are less likely to be negatively impacted by work.**

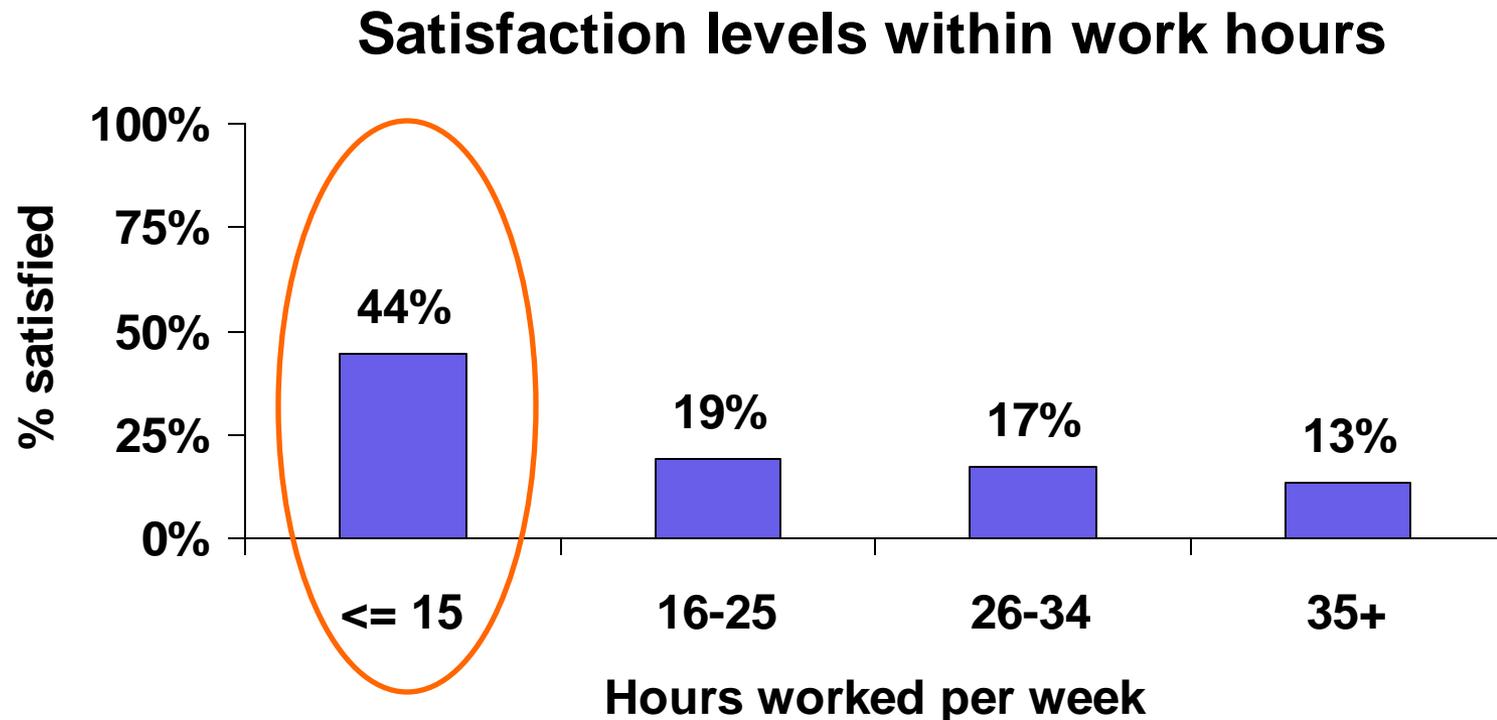
# Within traditional age programs, students who reported fewer negative effects of work on academics, were working $\leq 15$ hours weekly.

## How Often, Due to Work, Are You...



N = 268-269. \*p < .05. Represents selecting those who report a rating of 4 or 5, and then categorizing them according to hours worked.

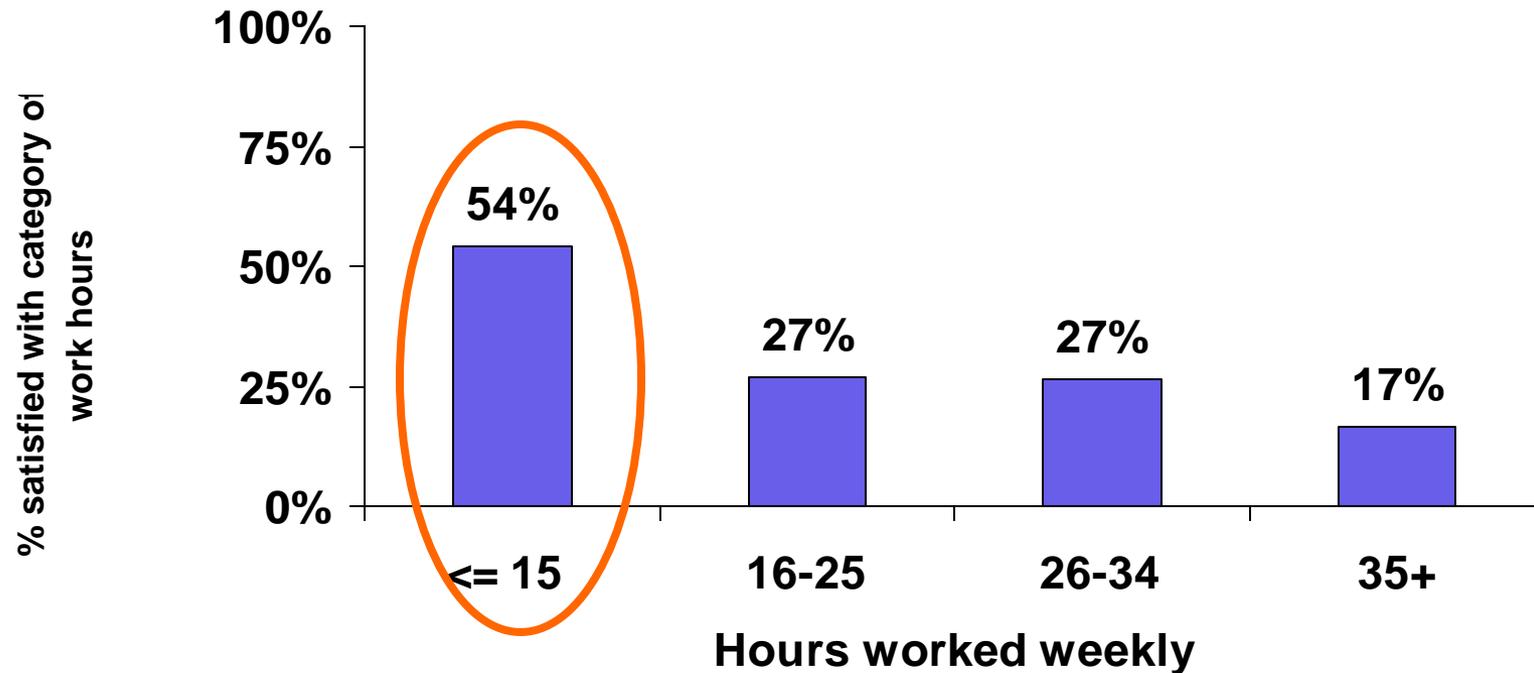
**Students in traditional age programs who work  $\leq 15$  hours per week reported higher levels of satisfaction with the amount of time they have to spend on their own health.**



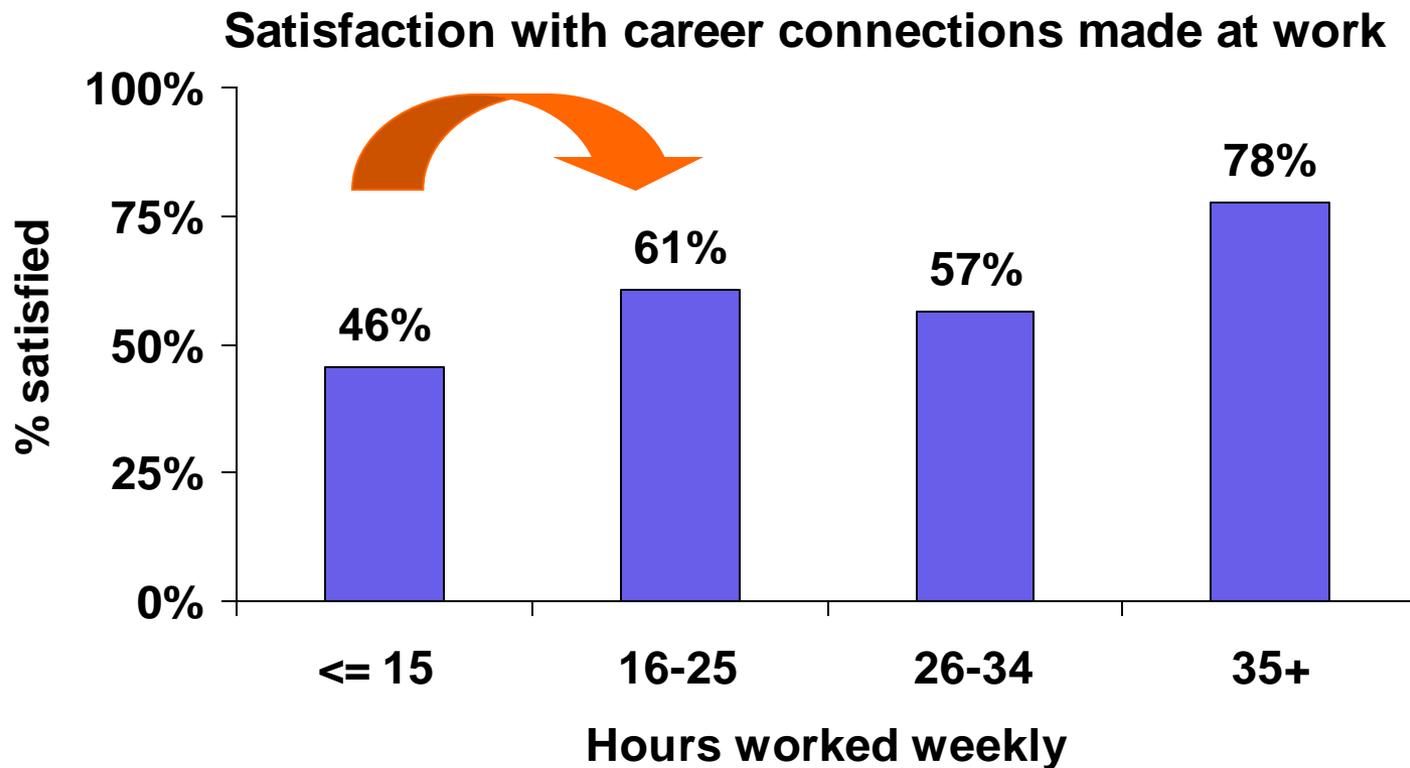
Represents students in traditional age programs  $n = 271$ . Represents rating of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1-5, 5 meaning very satisfied.  $P < .05$ .

**Students in non-adult programs who work  $\leq 15$  hours per week reported higher levels of satisfaction with free time.**

### Satisfaction with Free Time by Hours Worked



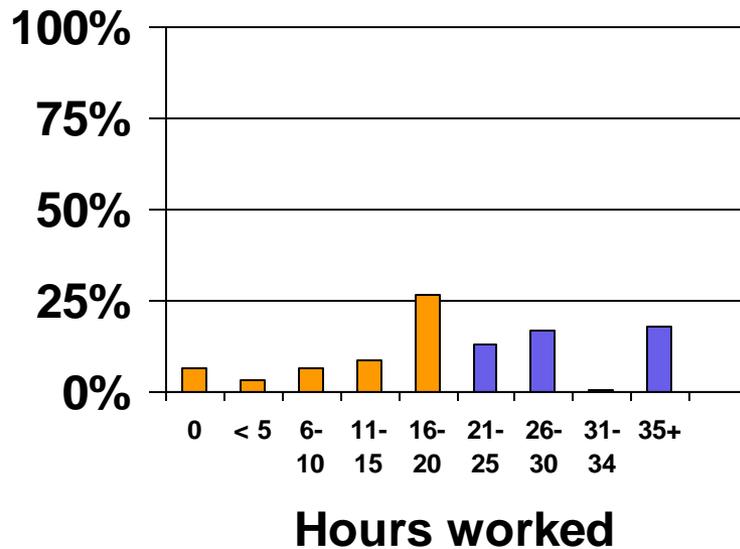
**Students in traditional age programs who work  $\leq 15$  hours per week reported lower levels of satisfaction with career connections made at work.**



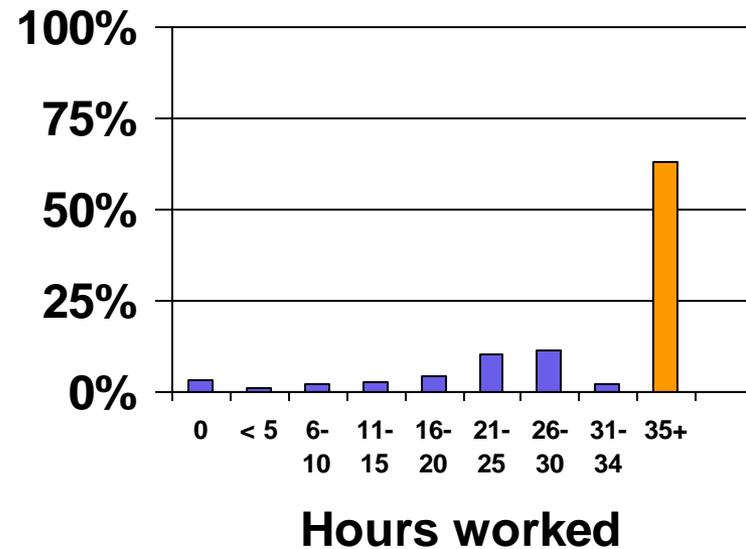
n = 294. Represents students in traditional age programs who reported ratings of 4 or 5 on a scale 5, 5 meaning very satisfied.  $P < .01$ .

**During the school year, most students in traditional age programs reported working  $\leq 20$  hours per week, and 35+ hours during the summer.**

**Hours of School Year Employment**



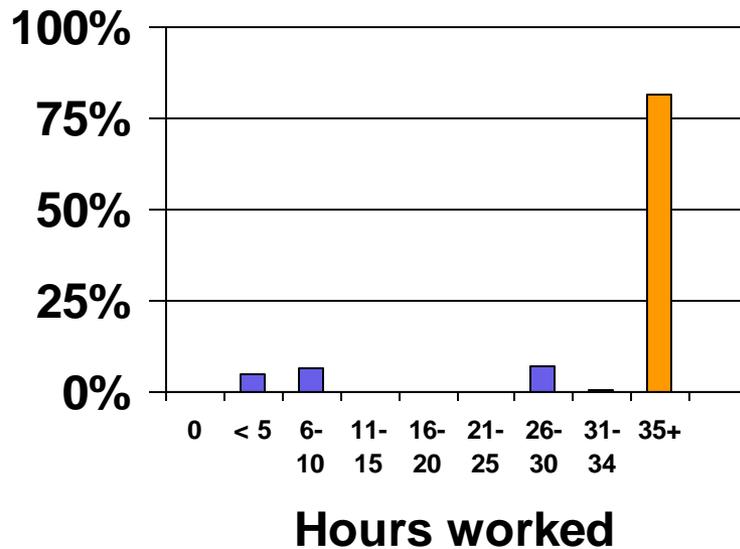
**Hours of Summer Employment**



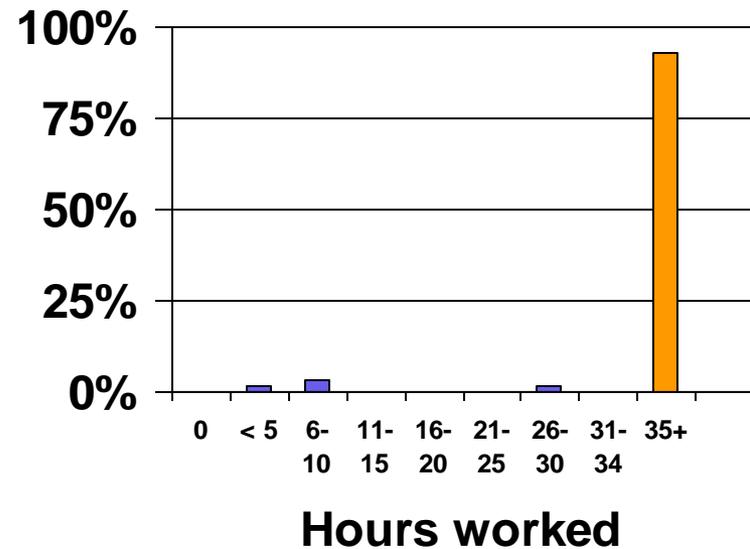
n = 275-276. All but one student who reported not working during school year, reported working during the summer.

**During the school year and summer, most students in the undergraduate adult program work full-time.**

**Hours of School Year Employment**



**Hours of Summer Employment**



Represents percent of . n = 35.

# SUMMARY

- **Nearly 1 in 7 students in traditional undergraduate programs work  $\geq 35$  hours per week during the academic year and it is a trend that is expected to continue.**
- **When coursework and major relate to employment and career goals, students in traditional age programs are more likely to be satisfied with several key areas of their collegiate experience.**
- **Overall, most students do not take advantage of the synergy created when integrating employment, major, coursework, and career goals.**
- **Overall, students who reported they have considered dropping out of school as a way to avoid increasing debt reported lower levels of satisfaction in several key areas, but their consideration to drop out of school was not related to hours worked.**
- **Students in traditional age programs who work  $\leq 15$  hours per week are less likely to be negatively impacted by employment.**

# **How have the 5 Key Findings Impacted Career Services?**

## Career Services is...

- Working to implement more frequent scheduling options.
- Recruiting more students to attend workshops designed to teach students how to get jobs on campus.
- Growing Financial Fitness initiative to help students develop a financial path toward degree completion.
- Looking at students as individuals when discussing the “tipping point” of work hours
- Expanding first-year programs to create more consistent and seamless contact with students by providing information, support, and tools that enable students to make decisions that are more informed.

## More Suggestions...

- Consider quick “employment” survey for students who visit career center or advisor to gauge their level of academic risk as it relates to employment. Identify students in traditional age programs who are working full-time.
- Discuss:
  - The importance of working to attain career goals
  - The importance of working a reasonable number of hours
  - The negative effects of working too many hours
  - How on-campus employment can offer work that is related to career goals
- Encourage on-campus employment as first choice to enable students to have more free time to take care of themselves
- Encourage all on-campus managers to enable students to use at work what they learn in class.
- Continue to track respondents for 2 year persistence

# Thank you!

For more information contact:

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# Appendix

# Methodology

	Respondents*	DPU Total
Gender (women)	57%	57%
College:		
SNL	11%	10%
LA&S	45%	41%
Commerce	24%	28%
CTI	9%	8%
Education	8%	6%
Music	2%	2%
Theater	2%	2%
Residence in IL	88%	83%
Level		
Freshmen	19%	20%
Sophomore	26%	27%
Junior	22%	23%
Senior	33%	32%
First Generation	45% (Online)	
Attendance full year or 3 quarters minus summer	85%	