



# THE STUDENT'S HOLY GRAIL: PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

**Finding a job with benefits is a challenge for students** *by Matthew Denis*

**M**y roommates are wondering what chemical concoction has me showering at quarter after four in the morning. Or maybe they think I am really dedicated to using up all of the hot water first.

I'm actually up for a 5 am introductory tour at UPS — United Parcel Service.

I am juggling the commitments of a full-time graduate student at the University of Oregon, but none of these

obligations pays the bills. Besides helping with student debt repayment down the road, a part-time job has a surprising number of advantages.

Colleen Lewis at the University of Oregon Career Center says the university really encourages students to have part-time jobs — especially college freshmen. "This helps them develop a connection to the wider community and build time management skills," she says.

Student jobs tend to cultivate leadership, critical thinking and communicative and cooperative work skills, she explains. Studies show that students working at jobs from one to 20 hours a week show stronger broad competencies on resumes, establish a wider social circle and generally earn a higher GPA.

Research also suggests that students who work part-time in college earn more money in their post-collegiate lives.

One thing most employers rarely offer part-time employees, however, is excellent benefits. I am up under

the stars because UPS is a rare employer that gives full-time benefits to its part-time workers.

Home Depot, Starbucks, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods also offer limited benefits to part timers, but these jobs can be few and far between. Trader Joe's, for example, doesn't currently list even one job in any of its 12 Oregon stores.

And there's no guarantee of work today at the UPS shipping center. It's a tour of the facility to show us what the job looks like and to weed out the weak-minded applicants who are unable to show up at this jagged hour.

Don't want to be up at dawn? Here are some alternatives. Campus career counselors can help with résumé building and direct you to job boards and career fairs. At UO's Duck Connect Online, alumni and current students can search an online database for work.

Oregon uses the Student Employment Enhancement (SEE) program to vet these potential employers. SEE also provides these employers with a student employee evaluation system to create a more meaningful experience for both parties.

Just north of the UO campus, Northwest Christian University adopted Handshake this year for job posting. Handshake, an online job-recruiting service, allows the school to post a variety of opportunities on their system, assessing employers through a "trust score."

At Lane Community College you can go to the Career Center's Lane Job Connection for on- and off-campus job postings.

In the predawn darkness we weave through the gangway, where handlers unpack semis, slide packages down lines, slap bar-code stickers on boxes and load up delivery trucks. We leave our names and contact information, anticipating the most excruciating next step: waiting for a phone call.

Thanks for coming guys, our tour guide says, shaking our hands. "We'll be in touch."

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