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'City of Roses'



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Dreams and Uncertain Futures

Students face job prospects with hope, fear

BY CARI HACHMANN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A variety of sentiments stirred among students of varying degree at the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College when asked to describe their expectations for the future.

Reared in an unstable economy during our country's worst recession, this generation knows too well the fallacy of the American Dream. It wants nothing more than to look forward to a fulfilling life of self-sufficiency, but sigh at their prospects with mixed feelings of hope and fear.

They hope for a better future, an improving job market and an education that brings something other than a minimum-wage job. Yet they also fear the unknown and the potential of debt, unemployment, unsteady work, and an increasingly large and competitive labor force.

"It is really scary seeing my roommate with a master's degree not have a job. It doesn't give me much hope," said 21-year-old Maggie Heath working on general education requirements before she plans to transfer and pursue Portland State



PHOTO BY CARI HACHMANN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Maggie Heath works on her general education requirements at Portland Community College in north Portland. Like other students, she faces a lot of unknowns and hopes as the nation comes out of its worst recession.

University's community development program in hopes of landing a nonprofit job.

Jaded to age-old promises of a better, richer life with opportunity abound for the hard working, able and achieved, some students chuckle at the idea of a living a life better than their parents.

"Our grandparents and parents didn't have to get an education as much as we do now, but now it's so necessary, that its putting people in debt," said Rachel Dibble, a second year PCC student of elementary education, who believes her generations has got it harder than previous ones.

Ben Stanisel, a nursing student living with parents to ease financial pressures, agreed, "Education was less costly back then and things were moving, now things are slowing down," he said, adding that healthcare and social security are not even a guarantee.

Many of the students interviewed simply wanted to see that when they finished school, it was worth the time and money invested, meaning they can get a job and pay back debt for college tuition and expenses.

But with 10 percent of Oregon still unemployed, the 8th highest in the nation, and two-thirds of students in the U.S. graduating with an average of almost \$20,000 in debt, the aspiring higher education graduates feared the worst.

"Debt is scary," said Dibble, "Right now it's easy because I'm living off loans, but when reality kicks in and I have to start paying them back..." She pauses,

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Portland Peace Prize for an Unsung Hero

Jefferson students shine light on community leaders

BY MINDY COOPER
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After studying the International Peace Prize, local students from Jefferson high school are bringing the significance of the award closer to home as they honor those within the Portland area who they believe deserve recognition for the unsung services they provide the local community.

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Jefferson High School seniors greet Debra Lippoldt after interviewing her about her non-profit public service work helping people with disabilities and those on low incomes grow gardens. Lippoldt is among a group of unsung heroes the class is considering for its second Portland Peace Prize.

PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER