



Undergraduate Employment

A Research Report from the
2022 Student Life Survey

Center for the Study of Student Life

April 2022



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines data related to employment among undergraduates enrolled at The Ohio State University's Columbus campus. Data for this report are from the 2022 Student Life Survey. In January 2022, a sample of 6,741 undergraduate students were invited to take the survey, and 14.4% responded ($n = 970$). Data were weighted to be representative of the Ohio State Columbus campus population.

KEY FINDINGS

- **82.2%** of respondents reported being employed during the academic year, academic breaks or both
- The most common reason for unemployment, indicated by **84.0%** of unemployed students, was so that they could focus on their academics
- The three most common reasons for employment were to have extra spending money for activities or purchases outside of basic needs (selected by **69.5%** of employed undergraduates); to pay for food, rent or other basic needs (**66.9%**); and to pay for tuition or university fees (**45.2%**)
- During winter break in December 2021 to January 2022, **10.3%** were working in on-campus jobs; during the spring 2022 semester, the percentage of employed students in on-campus jobs was **54.0%**
- **20.5%** of employed students put between 11%-50% of their net monthly pay toward paying tuition and fees; **17.7%** of employed undergraduates put between 51%-100% toward tuition and fees
- The median hourly wage among employed undergraduates was **\$12**, and the median number of hours worked was **16**
- **70.5%** of employed students agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their job(s)
- **9.3%** of all undergraduate students reported volunteering in an on-campus volunteer position in spring 2022, and **15.9%** reported volunteering in an off-campus volunteer position

INTRODUCTION

This report explores the involvement, engagement and sense of belonging of students at The Ohio State University. Involvement in on-campus activities during college plays a critical role in student success, from bolstering a student's sense of belonging to increasing retention and academic achievement (Tinto, 2006-2007; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012). Involvement fosters experiential learning during college, which is linked to getting a good job after graduation, workplace engagement, overall well-being and alumni attachment (Gallup, 2014).

METHODS

The Student Life Survey is administered annually by the Center for the Study of Student Life to examine trends in student engagement, sense of belonging and satisfaction with the college experience. The 2022 Student Life Survey was administered to a stratified, random sample of 11,701 Ohio State students at the beginning of spring semester (January 2022). This sample comprised 6,741 undergraduate students, 3,795 graduate and 1,100 professional students, all on the Columbus campus. A total of 1,639 students responded to the survey. Three respondents were removed for mischievous or careless response patterns, resulting in a final sample of 1,636 respondents and an overall response rate of 14.0%. The response rate was 14.4% among undergraduate students, 14.5% among graduate students and 10.4% among professional students.



This report pertains specifically to undergraduate students. See Appendix A for a summary of undergraduate respondents' demographic and academic characteristics.

Students who did not respond to the items used for this report were removed from analyses, resulting in an unweighted sample size of 786 students for this report. Demographics of the students included in this report did not substantially vary from the overall Student Life Survey undergraduate sample.

WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

Responses were weighted to address differences between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents compared to the general student population at Ohio State in the spring semester of 2022. Weights were adjusted so the survey data are representative of the student population at Ohio State. For example, 63.1% of the survey respondents in the Student Life Survey were female, but 52.3% of the total population at Ohio State was female. The rake weight procedure adjusts for the over-representation of female students in the data to make responses more reflective of the student population, thus making the data more generalizable to Ohio State students. The procedure adjusted the base weight to the demographic data available on the sampling frame using sex, race/ethnicity and student status (i.e., undergraduate, graduate student or professional student). Weighted and unweighted demographic data for survey respondents is available in the Appendix.

FINDINGS

UNDERGRADUATE EMPLOYMENT AND REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

The figures and table below summarize undergraduate employment. The majority of respondents (82.2%) reported being employed during the academic year, academic breaks or both (see Figure 1). The 17.9% of respondents who reported that they do not work were asked why they were not employed. Among the 137 students who reported not working, respondents most commonly stated that they wished to focus more on their academics (84.0% of non-working students), that they did not need to work in order to stay financially stable (27.6%) and concerns related to COVID-19 (26.7%) as reasons for not working.

Figure 1: What is your employment status?

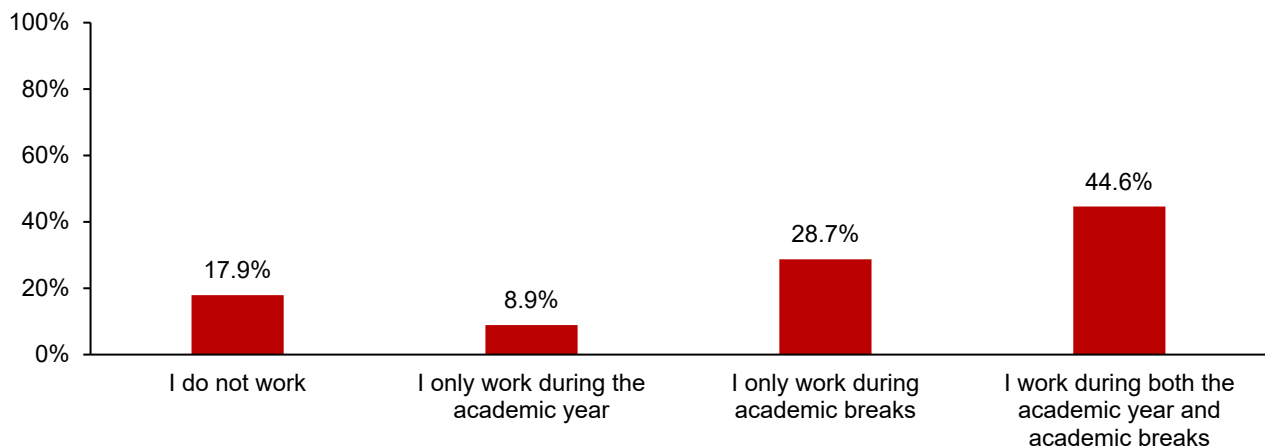
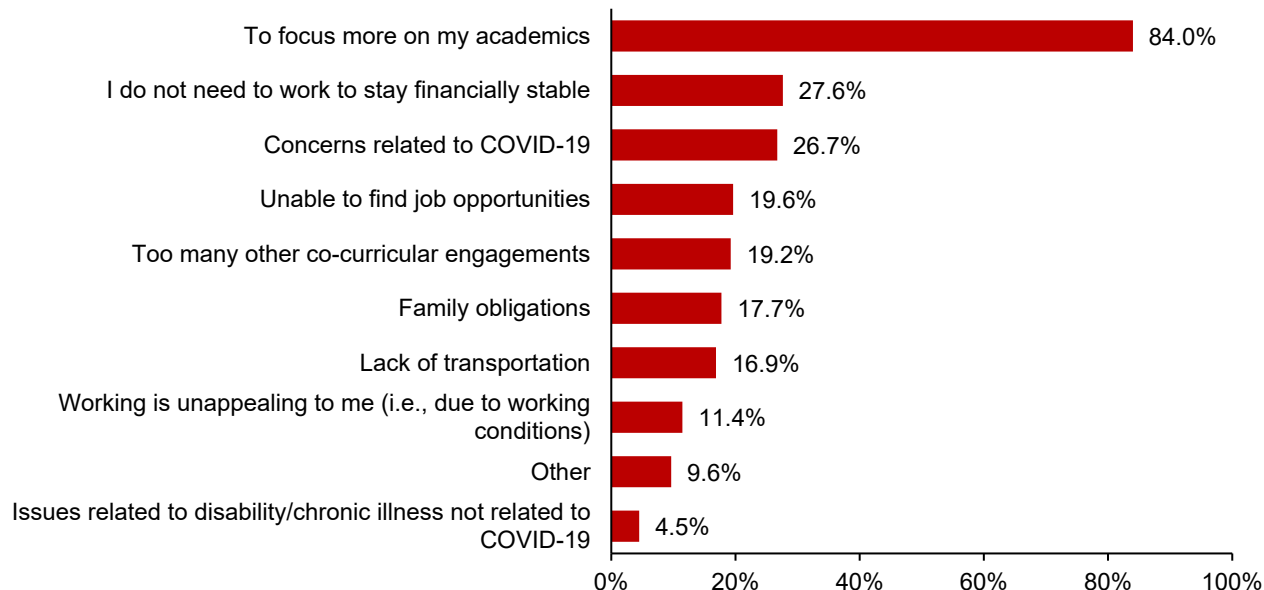


Figure 2: What is your reason(s) for not working? Select all that apply.



Note: The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because students were allowed to select more than one option.

Respondents who selected “Other” were provided with a write-in box. See Appendix B for a list of write-in responses.

The remainder of this report pertains to the 649 undergraduate students who reported working.

RECENT EMPLOYMENT

Students who reported working during the school year were asked whether they were currently working in an on- or off-campus job or were unemployed. Students who reported working during academic breaks were asked whether they worked on- or off-campus or were unemployed during the most recent academic break (December 20, 2021 through January 2022). In both cases, a majority of students reported working in off-campus jobs (54.9% of employed students during the spring semester and 59.1% during winter break).

Table 2: Where do you currently work? / Where did you work during this past winter break (December 20, 2021 through January 9, 2022)? Select all that apply.

	Spring semester 2022	Winter break 2021-22
On-campus job	54.0%	10.3%
Off-campus job	54.9%	59.1%
Do/Did not work	1.1%	32.4%

Students who reported working during the spring 2022 semester or winter break 2021-22 were asked how many jobs they held. The majority of students in both cases reported holding one job; 29.8% of working students reported holding more than one job during the spring semester and 18.0% reported working more than one job during winter break.

Table 3: How many jobs do you currently work? / How many jobs did you work during this past Winter break (December 20, 2021 through January 9, 2022)?

	Spring semester 2022	Winter break 2021-22
1 job	70.2%	82.0%
2 jobs	25.6%	16.6%
3 or more jobs	4.2%	1.4%

Students who reported working in an on-campus role during the spring 2022 semester or winter break 2021-22 were asked where in the university they were employed. Among the options provided in the survey, the most common places of on-campus employment for the spring 2022 semester were the Office of Student Life (38.2% of working students), the College of Arts and Sciences (17.5%) and the College of Engineering (9.5%); 17.3% of students reported working in a unit or department not listed on the survey. During winter break 2021-22, the most common places of on-campus employment were the Office of Student Life (24.6%), the College of Engineering (13.5%) and the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (11.2%); 27.8% of students reported working at a unit or department not listed on the survey.

Table 4: Under which units at Ohio State are you currently employed? / Under which units at Ohio State were you employed during this past winter break (December 20, 2021 through January 9, 2022)? Select all that apply.

	Spring semester 2022	Winter break 2021-22
Office of Student Life	38.2%	24.6%
College of Arts and Sciences	17.5%	8.1%
College of Engineering	9.5%	13.5%
College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	6.0%	11.2%
College of Medicine	3.0%	8.9%
University Libraries	2.9%	4.0%
Max M. Fisher College of Business	2.7%	0.0%
Office of Student Academic Success – Office of Academic Enrichment	2.7%	1.3%
Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI)	2.0%	0.0%
John Glenn College of Public Affairs	1.7%	0.0%
College of Education and Human Ecology	1.4%	1.5%
Facilities, Operations, and Development (FOD)	1.3%	1.3%
College of Veterinary Medicine	0.7%	1.3%
College of Public Health	0.4%	1.4%
College of Optometry	0.4%	0.0%
Moritz College of Law	0.4%	1.3%
College of Dentistry	0.0%	0.0%



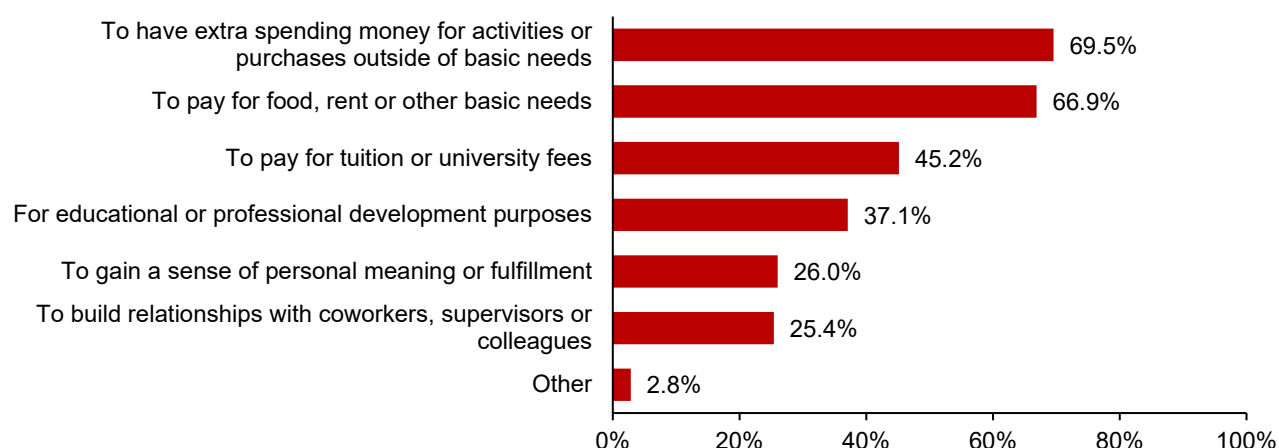
	Spring semester 2022	Winter break 2021-22
College of Nursing	0.0%	0.0%
College of Pharmacy	0.0%	2.3%
College of Social Work	0.0%	0.0%
OSU Alumni Association	0.0%	0.0%
A unit or department that is not listed here	17.3%	27.8%
Unsure	3.2%	0.0%

Students who selected “A unit or department that is not listed here” were provided with a write-in box. See Appendix B for a full list of write-in responses.

REASONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

Employed students were asked why they work. The most commonly selected reason was to have extra spending money for activities or purchases outside of basic needs (69.5% of working students). Paying for food, rent or other basic needs was the second most commonly selected answer (66.9%), followed by paying for tuition, university fees or student loans (45.2%).

Figure 3: Why did you seek employment? Select all that apply.



Note: The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because students were allowed to select more than one option.

Students who selected “Other” were provided with a write-in box. The most common write-in response, submitted by 27.0% of those who selected “Other,” was to save money for the future. For a full list of write-in responses, see Appendix B.

PAY, HOURS WORKED AND AMOUNT PAID TOWARD TUITION AND FEES

Employed students were asked for the hourly wage associated with their job, the number of hours they worked per week and the percentage of their monthly net pay that they spent on tuition and fees. Those who reported working multiple jobs were asked for the hourly wage and number of working hours for each of their jobs. An average wage for undergraduate students working multiple jobs was computed by dividing the sum of the amount of money they earned across all jobs per week by the sum of the hours they worked per week for each job.

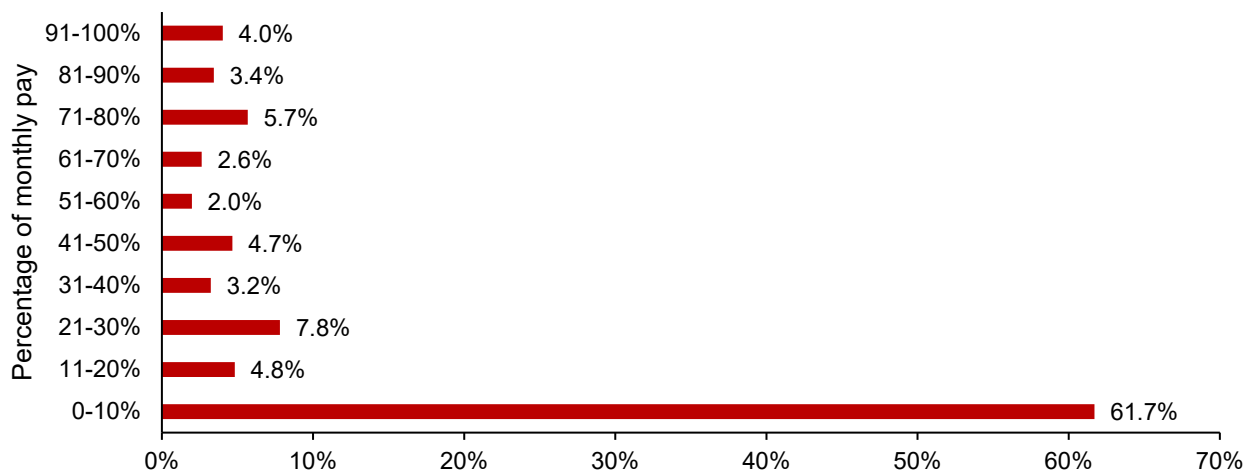


The mean hourly wage for students was \$13.19 with a standard deviation of \$4.90. In other words, almost 70% of working students reported earning between \$8.29 and \$18.09 per hour. Students worked an average of 19.2 hours per week, with a standard deviation of 11.5, meaning that almost 70% of students reported working between 7.7 and 30.7 hours per week.

Table 5: Pay and hours worked per week

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Hourly wage	\$13.19	\$4.90	\$12.00
Hours worked per week	19.2	11.5	16.0

Figure 4: Approximately what percentage of your monthly pay, after taxes, do you put toward paying off tuition/fees?



JOB BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Employed students were presented with a series of statements related to their attitudes and beliefs about their jobs. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to each statement on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). For reporting purposes, the five response options were collapsed into three: Strongly disagree/Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree and Strongly agree/Agree.

Table 6: Please answer the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

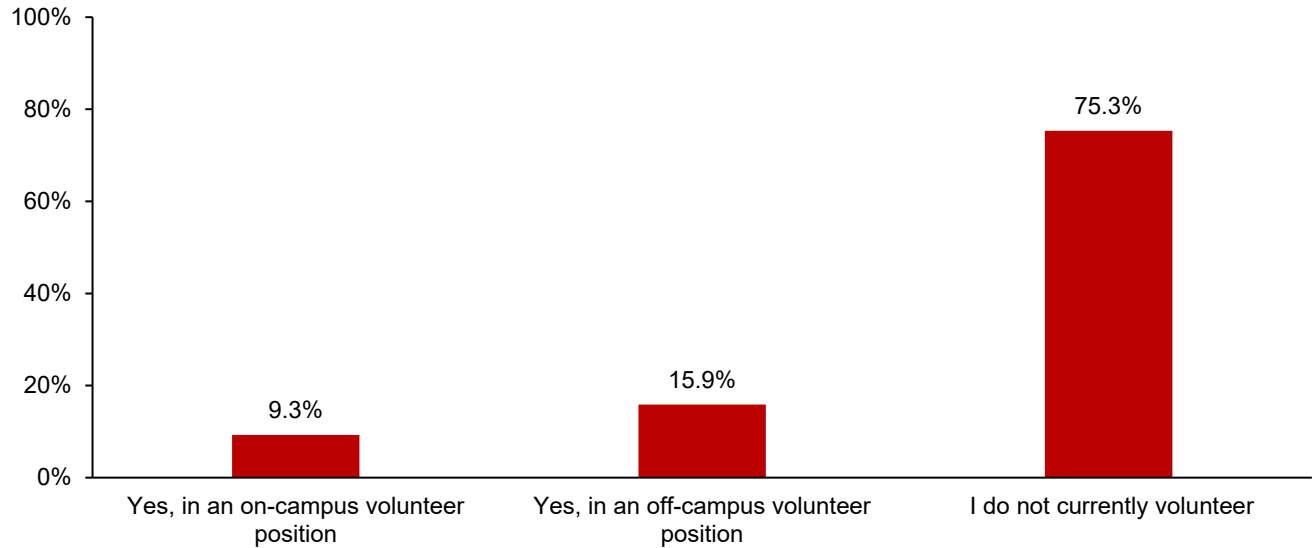
	Strongly disagree/Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly agree/Agree
Overall, I am satisfied with my job(s)	12.2%	17.4%	70.5%
My job(s) provide me with personal meaning	20.4%	20.3%	59.3%
I have been thinking about quitting one or more of my job(s)	50.0%	16.4%	33.7%
My supervisor/mentor does a good job of supporting me as a student employee	10.3%	18.0%	71.8%
My job(s) teach me useful skills that will transfer to my future career	12.5%	18.7%	68.8%



VOLUNTEER WORK AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Respondents were asked whether they engaged in volunteer work or community service. Among those who reported volunteering, the mean number of hours spent volunteering per week was 3.9, and the median number of hours was 3.0.

Figure 5: Do you currently volunteer or engage in community service? Select all that apply.



Note: The sum of percentages exceeds 100% because students were allowed to select more than one option.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Total	786		
Academic Level	786		
First-year undergraduate	162	20.6%	20.1%
Second-year undergraduate	235	29.9%	30.3%
Third-year undergraduate	189	24.0%	24.2%
Fourth-year undergraduate	157	20.0%	19.6%
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	43	5.5%	5.8%
Gender Identity	786		
Man	252	32.1%	42.2%
Woman	498	63.4%	52.8%
Another identity not listed	29	3.7%	4.2%
Prefer not to say	7	0.9%	0.9%
Gender Congruence	780		
Transgender	15	1.9%	2.2%
Cisgender	751	96.3%	95.9%
Not sure	9	1.2%	1.1%
Prefer not to say	5	0.6%	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity	786		
African American or Black	36	4.6%	7.1%
Asian or Asian American	90	11.5%	11.3%
Latinx or Hispanic	22	2.8%	2.7%
Middle Eastern or Arab American	10	1.3%	1.4%
White or European American	601	76.5%	74.0%
Prefer not to answer	17	2.2%	2.1%
Another identity not listed	10	1.3%	1.3%
Biracial or Multiracial	0	0.0%	0.0%
Sexual Orientation	783		
LGBQ+	218	27.8%	27.0%
Heterosexual/straight	543	69.3%	69.9%
Prefer not to say	22	2.8%	3.1%
Generational Status	786		
First-generation student	611	77.7%	77.5%
Continuing-generation student	175	22.3%	22.5%
Disability Status	783		



	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Has a disability	81	10.3%	10.1%
Does not have a disability	668	85.3%	85.3%
Prefer not to say	34	4.3%	4.6%
Education Route	785		
Campus change	51	6.5%	7.4%
Transfer student	128	16.3%	16.8%
Continuing Ohio State student	606	77.2%	75.8%
Residence	785		
University residence hall	320	40.8%	40.5%
University-owned apartment or house (on- or off-campus)	6	0.8%	0.8%
Sorority or fraternity housing	12	1.5%	1.4%
Off-campus, non-university-owned housing	447	56.9%	57.2%



APPENDIX B: WRITE-IN RESPONSES

What is your reason(s) for not working? Select all that apply.

Other comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Always it's just "help" not works
<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety prevents me from feeling comfortable doing something new
<input type="checkbox"/> Being an athlete is already quite time consuming unfortunately
<input type="checkbox"/> Due to Covid-19 I was forced to stop my work and decided to go back to school. I am now looking for employment or research at OSU in a field I am studying.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am currently student teaching from 8:00am-4:00pm 5 days a week
<input type="checkbox"/> I dont work at osu or near I work back home
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm getting my websites set up right now.
<input type="checkbox"/> In between jobs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Looking for a job
<input type="checkbox"/> mental illness
<input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in jobs that require employees to wear masks. Will work when that's over
<input type="checkbox"/> Unpaid research position
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa status makes it so I can't work

Under which units at Ohio State are you currently employed? / Under which units at Ohio State were you employed during this past Winter break (December 20, 2021 through January 9, 2022)? Select all that apply.

A unit or department that is not listed here
Spring semester 2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Administrator & Planning (JON covid testing)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bookstore
<input type="checkbox"/> Buckeye Wellness
<input type="checkbox"/> CABS driver (2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Department of Athletics (3)
<input type="checkbox"/> Driving Simulation Lab
<input type="checkbox"/> Heirloom Cafe
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> McCorkle
<input type="checkbox"/> ODEE
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of International Affairs
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of the President
<input type="checkbox"/> OSU James
<input type="checkbox"/> OTDI (OCIO)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other but unwilling to specify for anonymity's sake



-
- Post-Grad Research Assistance
 - The James Cancer Hospital
 - The Lantern
 - Schottenstein Center (5)
 - Undergraduate Admissions
 - University Admissions
 - Video Production
 - Wexner Center for the Arts
 - Wexner Medical Center (4)
-

Winter break (December 2021 – January 2022)

-
- Department of Athletics (2)
 - Bookstore
 - James Cancer Hospital (2)
 - ODEE
 - Ohio Institution of Manufacturing
 - Schottenstein Center (2)
 - Wexner Medical Center (3)
-

Note: Each response corresponds to one respondent, unless otherwise specified.

Why did you seek employment? Select all that apply.

Other comments

-
- Car troubles, I have a dog as well
 - Continued internship, moving to full-time this summer
 - federal work study
 - I could save up money
 - I only worked in the Summer of '21
 - I was invited to be a TA for a class I did well in.
 - I work at my mother's business because she needs the help
 - I'm national guard - this is a form of service and character building. It also pays tuition. I don't have an hourly rate or how much I work a week to list below for it.
 - Internship
 - Saving up for my future
 - To save money for when I have more bills and responsibility
-

