

MESA L-SLIS RESEARCH BRIEF #6

# Time Use In Post-Secondary Education

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# Time Use In Post-Secondary Education

(Version 02-26-10)

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# Part I: Introduction

## Major Findings

The Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students (L-SLIS), created to measure the effects of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation's Access Bursary, offers a unique combination of information pertaining to students' backgrounds, funding sources, time use while in post-secondary education (PSE) and PSE outcomes. Of particular interest in this brief are the relationships between low income students' funding sources, their work and study habits and their PSE outcomes.

For the low income students represented in the L-SLIS data, the major findings are:

1. In first year, students who receive greater financial contributions from their families do less paid work while they are in school.
2. Students who did paid work when they were in high school are much more likely than others to work while they are in PSE. Students who live at home with their parents in first year of PSE are also more likely than others to work.
3. Among university students, those who do more paid work generally spend less time studying. Among college students, the relationship between working and studying is less clear.
4. Students who spend less than eight hours per week studying are considerably more likely to leave PSE compared to students who spend more time studying.
5. Students who work every week and work twenty hours or more per week are considerably more likely to leave PSE compared to students who work fewer hours or do not work at all.

It must be cautioned that funding, time use, grades and leaving PSE are determined by various related factors, and for this reason we cannot say whether the observed relationships are causal. Note that the findings of this brief apply specifically to the low income students represented by the L-SLIS and we cannot say if our findings hold for other low income students or for the student population in general.

## Survey Data and Sample Selection

The L-SLIS is constructed from administrative data and from surveys (carried out during the early months of 2007, 2008 and 2009) of students who entered PSE in fall 2006. The sample used for this report includes only students who entered PSE for their first time (the target group of the Millennium Scholarship Foundation's Access Bursary), and is further reduced to single dependant students, as defined by provincial student aid systems. Only

students with parental incomes below the National Child Benefit (NCB) line have been included in this analysis in order to allow for consistent samples across provinces. Due to provincial differences in bursary programs, only students from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba or British Columbia are included. Note that all respondents are recipients of government aid in their first year. For further sample details, see Appendix I.

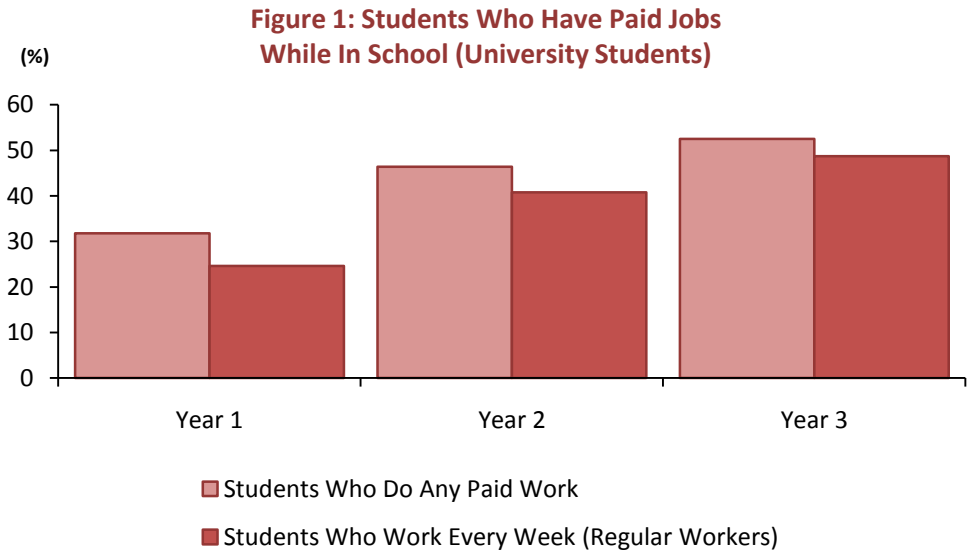
## Part II: The Analysis

### Longitudinal Analysis of Paid Work

One major decision students make upon entering PSE is whether or not to hold a part-time job while they are in school. Of those university students who report doing any paid work while they are in school, most report that they work every week. Students who work every week will be of particular interest throughout this research brief and are referred to as ‘regular workers’.

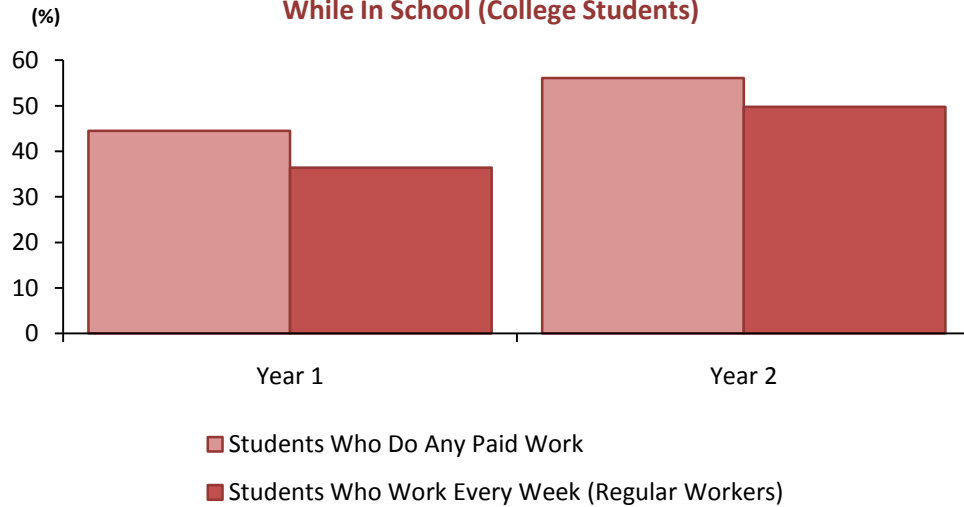
The percentage of university students with paid jobs increases with each year of PSE (Figure 1). The percentage of university students who are regular workers increases with each year of PSE as well.

The same patterns apply to college students over their first two years of PSE but college students are more likely than university students to work while they are in school, especially in first year (Figure 2). Longitudinal analysis regarding college students has been restricted to two years because this is the normal length of most college programs.



Source: Table A1. Only students who continue through three years of PSE are included.

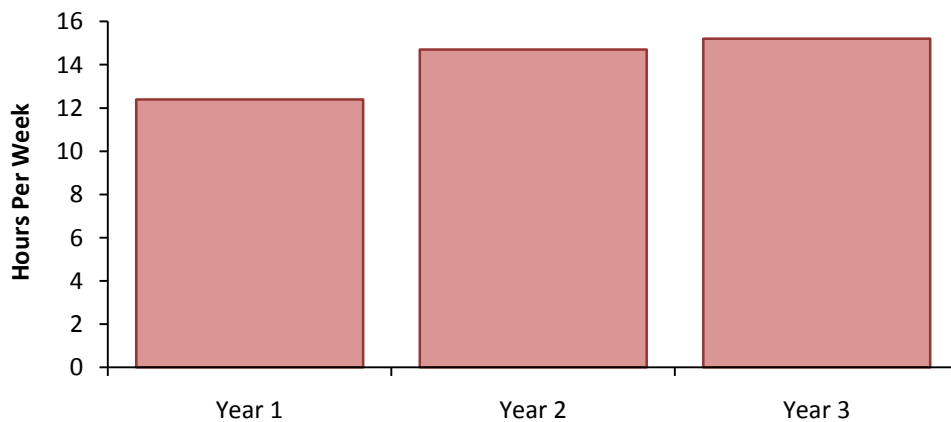
**Figure 2: Students Who Have Paid Jobs While In School (College Students)**



Source: Table A2. Only students who continue through two years of PSE are included.

Among university students who are regular workers, the mean number of hours worked per week increases substantially from first year to second year and a bit more from second year to third year (Figure 3). Regular workers in college also experience an increase, from year one to year two, in their mean number of hours worked per week (Table A1).

**Figure 3: Among Regular Workers, Mean Hours of Paid Work Per Week (University Students)**

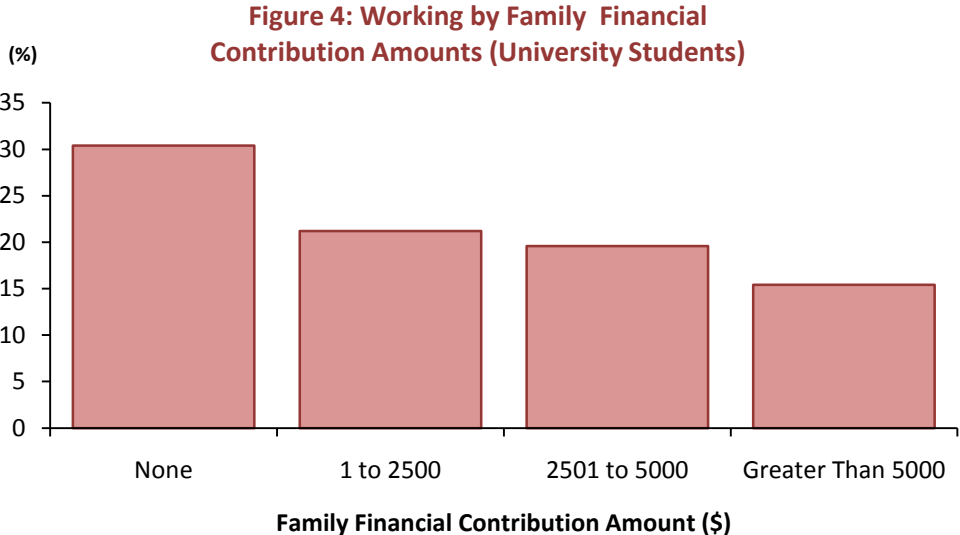


Source: Table A1. 'Regular Workers' refers to students who work every week. Only students who continue through three years of PSE are included.

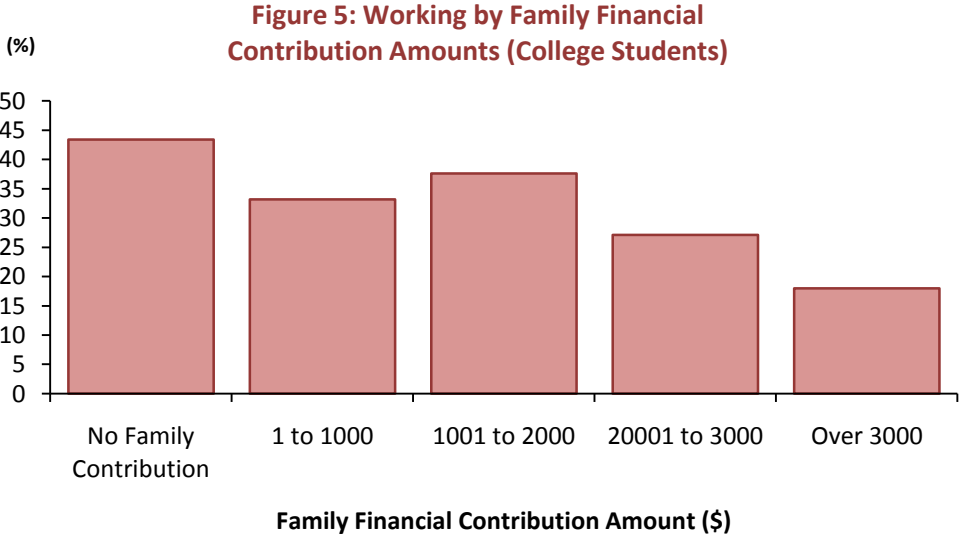
# Who Is More Likely To Work?

## Students With Smaller Family Financial Contributions

Among university and college students, those who receive more money from their parents are less likely to be regular workers (Figure 4 and Figure 5). For example, among university students who receive no money from their parents, about 30 percent work every week; among university students who receive over \$5,000 from their parents, only about 15 percent work every week.



Source: Table A3. Figure shows the percentage of students who work every week in first year of PSE.



Source: Table A4. Figure shows the percentage of students who work every week in first year of PSE.

Tables A9 and A10 show the differences in students' probabilities of being regular workers for students with different levels of parental contributions, with and without controlling for other factors (gender, province, community size, family structure, parental education, parental income and high school grades) that affect students' probabilities of being regular workers and that may also be correlated with students' parental contribution levels.

Even after controlling for the other factors, students who receive greater amounts of parental contribution are significantly less likely to be regular workers in their first year of PSE compared to students who receive lesser amounts (First panels in Tables A9 and A10).

### **Students With Lower Levels of Government Aid**

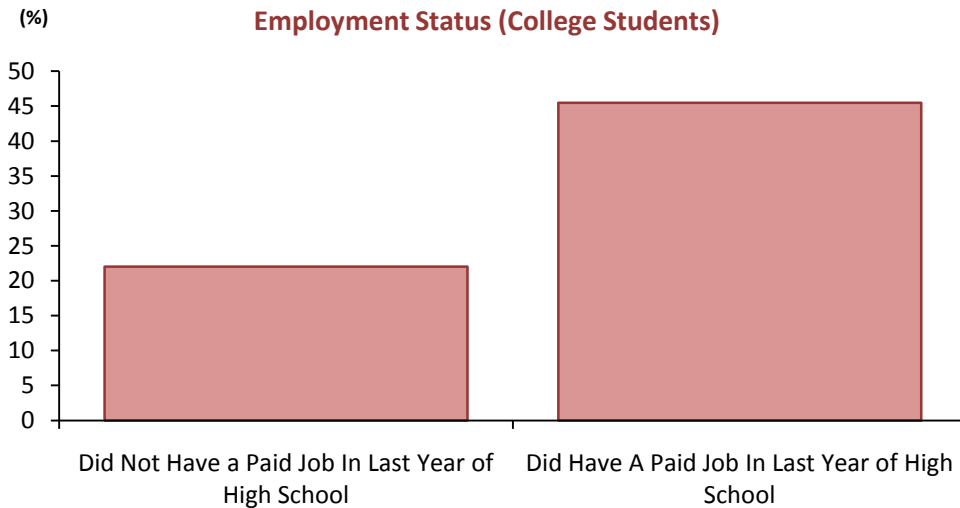
Students who receive lower levels of government aid are more likely to be regular workers (Table A3 and Table A4). We must, however, caution that this relationship is highly endogenous; the amount of aid that students receive is in part dependent upon students' anticipated employment income during the school year, meanwhile, students' employment statuses may depend on the amount of aid they receive.

Survey respondents were asked whether they would have borrowed more from the government student loan system if they had been able to. Affirmative responses to this survey question could be interpreted as an indication of need for greater funding. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any relation between students' responses and their likelihoods of working; students who say that they would have borrowed more are in fact slightly less likely to be regular workers compared to others (Table A3 and Table A4).

### **Students Who Worked in High School**

Students who worked in their last year of high school are much more likely than others to be regular workers in their first year of PSE (Figure 6 and Table A3). Using the same regression technique, mentioned above, it has been found that this relationship is significant even after controlling for other factors (Table A9 and Table A10, middle panels).

**Figure 6: Working by High School Employment Status (College Students)**

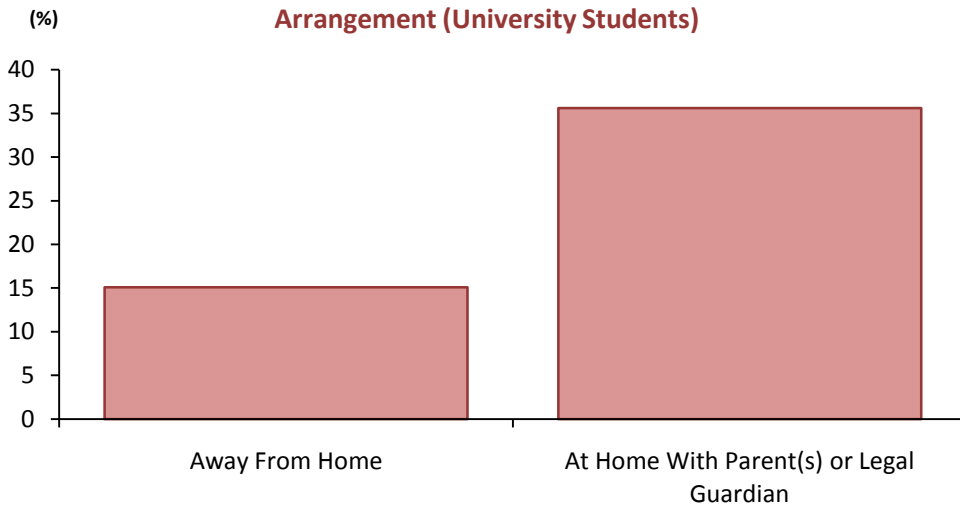


Source: Table A4. Figure shows the percentage of students who work every week in first year of PSE.

### **Students Who Live At Home**

In the first year of PSE, students who live at home with their parents are much more likely to be regular workers compared to students who live away from home (Figure 7 and Table A4). This relationship is also found to be significant, using regression analysis to control for other factors (Table A9 and Table A10, bottom panel).

**Figure 7: Working by First Year PSE Living Arrangement (University Students)**



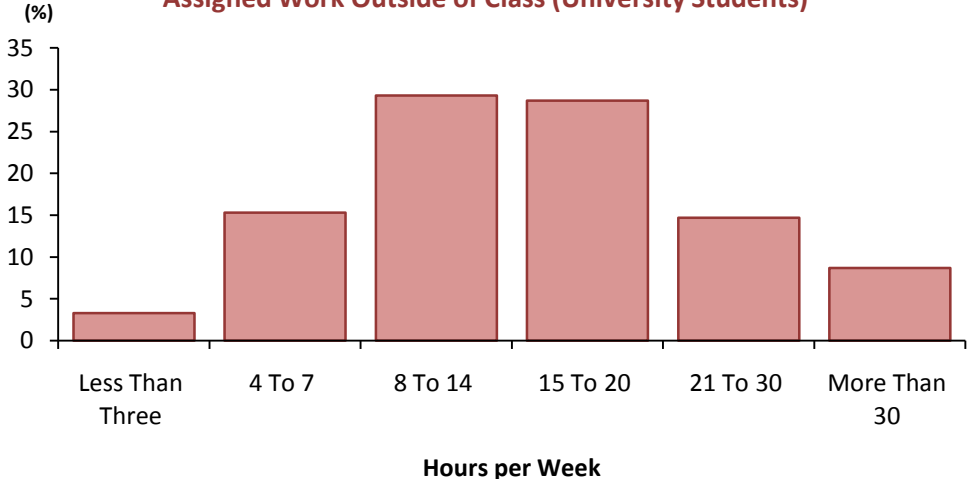
Source: Table A3. Figure shows the percentage of students who work every week in first year of PSE.

For a further breakdown of students' work habits according to gender, community size, immigrant and visible minority status and parental income see Table A3 and Table A4 of Appendix II.

# How Much Do Students Study?

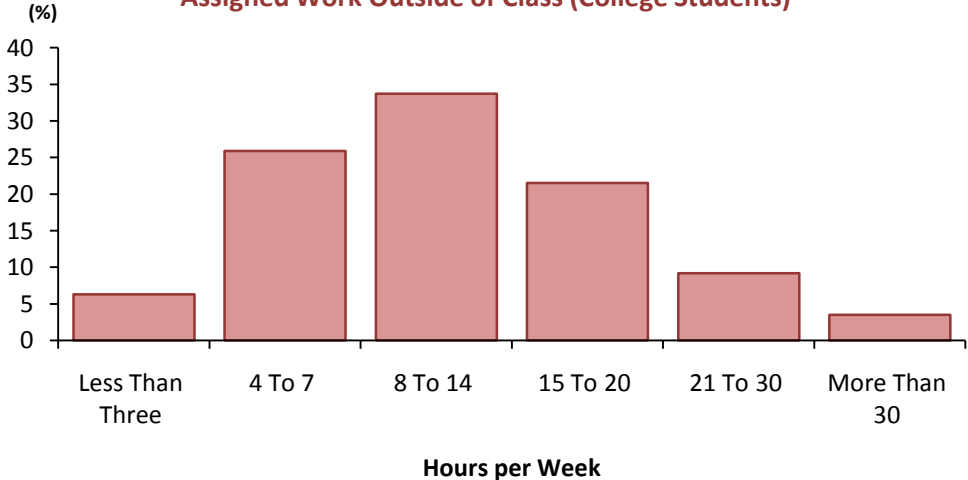
On average, first year university students of our sample spend about 16 hours per week studying or doing assigned work outside of class while first year college students spend 12.5 hours per week (Table A3 and Table A4). Figures 8 and 9 show the distributions of study hours reported by first year university and college students, respectively. Note that study hours vary only slightly over years and across groups of students of varying characteristics (Tables A1 through A4).

**Figure 8: Average Hours per Week Spent Studying or Doing Assigned Work Outside of Class (University Students)**



Source: Table A5. Study hours apply to students' first year of PSE.

**Figure 9: Average Hours per Week Spent Studying or Doing Assigned Work Outside of Class (College Students)**

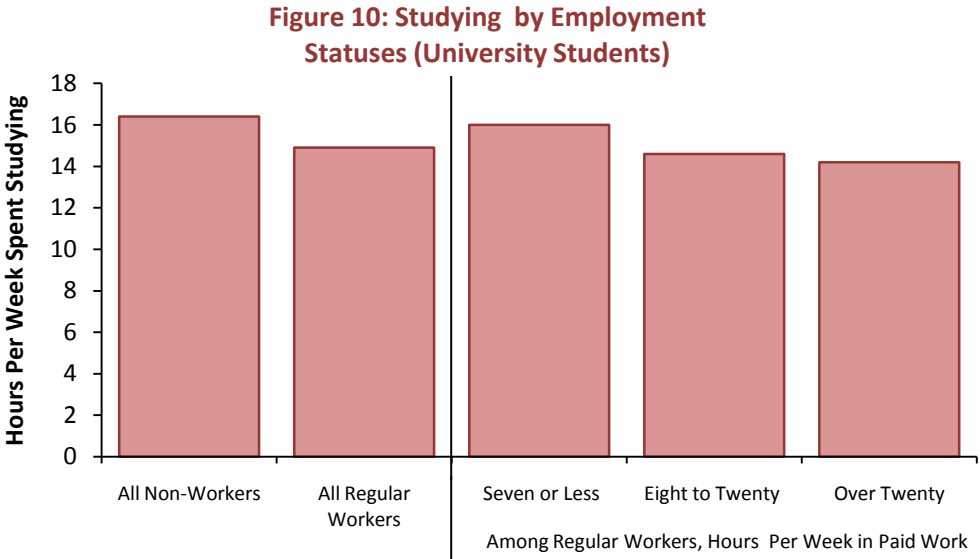


Source: Table A5. Study hours apply to students' first year of PSE.

# Studying and Working

Among first year university students, regular workers spend somewhat less time studying compared to students who don't work. Also, among regular workers, the number of hours spent per week in paid work is negatively

related to the number of hours spent per week studying (Figure 10). The same pattern is found for college students but the negative relationship between working and studying is not as strong (Table A6).



Source: Table A6. ‘Regular Workers’ refers to students who work every week. Study hours and employment statuses apply to students’ first year of PSE.

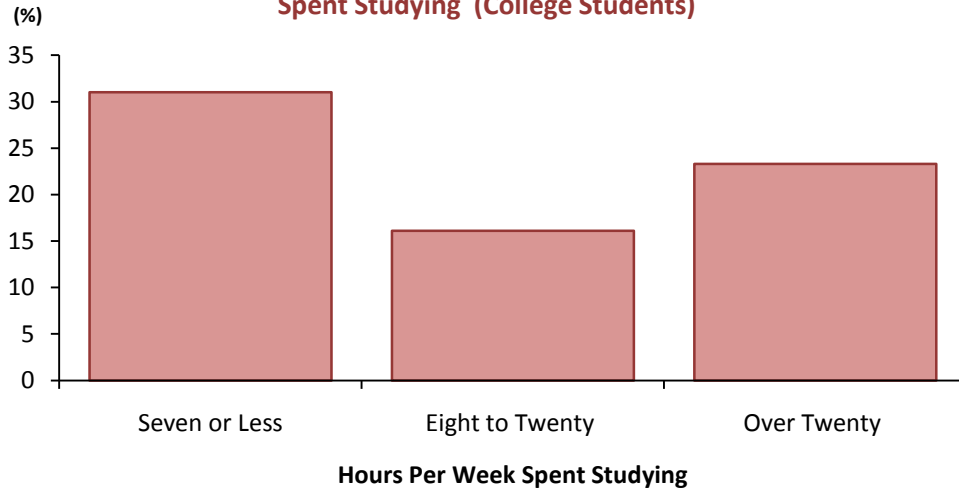
### Time Use and PSE Outcomes

It must be cautioned that there are issues of endogeneity when one relates time use to students’ grades or probabilities of leaving PSE. For instance, working more hours might adversely affect a student’s grades or increase the probability that a student will leave PSE. Meanwhile, students who are not doing well in school or who are more likely to leave PSE for other reasons, may take on relatively more work hours in response. Therefore, the relationships outlined in this section may or may not be causal, but we identify a number of relationships that are interesting and perhaps worthy of further analysis.

#### Leaving PSE

College students who study eight to twenty hours per week are less likely to leave PSE than those who study seven hours or less (Figure 11). However, college students who study over twenty hours per week are somewhat more likely to leave PSE than students who study eight to twenty hours. The same general pattern applies to university students as well, although university students leave PSE at lower rates and there is not much difference between university students who study eight to twenty hours and university students who study over twenty hours (Table A7).

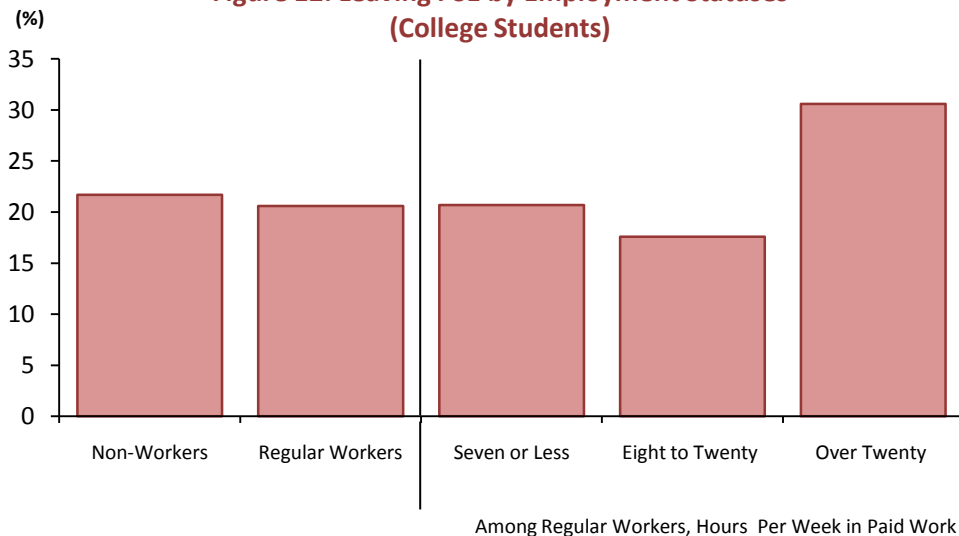
**Figure 11: Leaving PSE by Hours Per Week Spent Studying (College Students)**



Source: Table A7. Figure represents the percentage of students who leave PSE during first or second year without graduating. Study hours apply to students' first year of PSE.

Among university and college students, there is not much difference between non-workers and regular workers when it comes to leaving PSE in first or second year without graduating (Table A8). Among regular workers, students who work over twenty hours a week are more likely than others to leave PSE (Figure 12 and Table A8).

**Figure 12: Leaving PSE by Employment Statuses (College Students)**



Source: Table A8. Figure represents the percentage of students who leave PSE during first or second year without graduating. 'Regular Workers' refers to students who work every week. Employment statuses apply to students' first year of PSE.

### Grades

There appears to be a slight positive relationship between the number of hours university students spend studying and their overall grade average in first year (Table A7). Conversely, there appears to be a slight negative

relationship between the number of hours university students spend working per week and overall grade averages (Table A8). These relationships are not found to be consistent for college students (Table A7 and Table A8).

## **Extracurricular Activities**

We have not focused on students' extracurricular hours as it is not clear what qualifies as an extracurricular activity and, for the most part, there is little variation in extracurricular hours across years and groups. Students on average spend four or five hours per week in extracurricular activities (Table A3 and Table A4). There may be indications that students who spend more hours in extracurricular activities have slightly higher grade averages and are somewhat less likely to leave PSE (Table A7).

## **Part III: Conclusion**

It is interesting to consider whether receiving money has a relationship with whether or not students take up paid work while in school. We find that students who receive greater amounts of money from their parents are less likely to be regular workers. Furthermore, we find that students who work more spend somewhat less time studying and that students who work a lot are likely to leave PSE. The interdependencies of student funding, employment during PSE and success in PSE remain an interesting set of relationships. Our results provide some insight and certainly suggest some directions for more analytical work.

## Appendix I: Survey Data and Sample Selection

Conducted as part of the Measuring the Effectiveness of Student Aid (MESA) project, the L-SLIS represents a longitudinal survey of recipients of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) Access Bursaries<sup>1</sup>. The L-SLIS consists of a sample of students who entered PSE for the first time in the fall of 2006. Surveys were conducted, by telephone, in the early winter months of 2007, and then again in 2008 and 2009. Survey data have been linked to government aid administrative data. It is important to note that the eligibility requirements for the CMSF Access Bursaries were determined provincially and vary from province to province. The L-SLIS therefore represents somewhat different populations in different provinces.

Restrictions have therefore been made to the L-SLIS in order to create a consistent national sample. Due to the unique nature of the programs in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta, students from these provinces are not included in this analysis. Prince Edward Island is omitted due to the absence of any administrative data. The following restrictions have been made in order to provide a consistent sample across the remaining provinces, which include Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia:

1. The sample is restricted to only students who enter PSE for their first time and are single dependant students, as defined by student aid systems.
2. Only students with parental incomes below the National Child Benefit (NCB) line are included.

Only low income students who apply for and receive government aid are included in the L-SLIS, therefore this is not a sample of all low income students in Canada. The resulting sample has 4011 observations: 2409 female and 1602 male. Roughly 69 percent of the students in the sample are from Ontario and roughly 14 percent are from British Columbia. The remaining four provinces together make up 17 percent of the sample and each have shares of around three to five percent. Due to small sample size, college students from Nova Scotia are not well represented in the data. Samples are weighted to take account of non-response and to scale up to the underlying populations of lower income students they represent. Also, for all figures except those concerning students' backgrounds, high school grades or leaving rates, the few students who leave PSE early in first year have been dropped.

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<sup>1</sup> For some provinces, certain non-recipient low-income students are also included in the L-SLIS but they are not included in this analysis due to the income restriction placed on the sample (see below).

## Appendix II: Detailed Tables

**Table A1: Longitudinal Analysis of Time Use (University Students)**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Percentage of Students Who Did Any Paid Work While in School	31.8	46.4	52.5
Percentage of Students Who Worked Every Week, On Average, While in School (Regular Workers)	24.6	40.8	48.7
Among Regular Workers, Mean Hours of Paid Work per Week	12.4	14.7	15.2
Among All Students, Mean Hours Studying per Week	16.3	15.4	16.1
Among All Students, Mean Hours In Extra Curricular Activities per Week	4.5	5.8	5.9

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students. Only students who continue through three years of PSE are included.

**Table A2: Longitudinal Analysis of Time Use (College Students)**

	Year 1	Year 2
Percentage of Students Who Did Any Paid Work While in School	44.5	56.1
Percentage of Students Who Worked Every Week, On Average, While in School (Regular Workers)	36.4	49.8
Among Regular Workers, Mean Hours of Paid Work per Week	15.2	16.7
Among All Students, Mean Hours Studying per Week	12.8	12.8
Among All Students, Mean Hours In Extra Curricular Activities per Week	4.2	5.4

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students. Only students who continue through two years of PSE are included.

**Table A3: How Students Spend Their Time In First Year (University Students)**

	<b>Percentage Who Work Evert Week (Regular Workers)</b>	<b>Among Regular Workers, Mean Hours of Paid Work per Week</b>	<b>Among All Students, Mean Hours of Studying per Week</b>	<b>Among All Students, Mean Hours of Extracurricular Activities per Week</b>
<b>All</b>	24.8	13.1	16	4.6
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	27.9	13	15.8	4.3
Male	20.1	13.2	16.3	5
<b>Urban/Rural</b>				
Rural	17.3	14.1	14.8	4.7
Suburban	26.1	12.9	15.5	4.9
Urban	26.7	12.8	16.7	4.6
<b>Minority/Immigrant Status</b>				
Non-Visible Minority; Born in Canada	22.4	14.1	14.5	4.5
Visible Minority; Born in Canada	30.4	13.6	15.9	4.5
Non-Visible Minority; Immigrant	27.2	14.6	16.3	4.7
Visible Minority; Immigrant	24.8	11.5	17.4	4.7
<b>Parental Income</b>				
Extremely Low (\$0 To \$5 000)	29.3	12.5	16.6	5.4
\$5 000 To \$10 000	23.1	14.7	16.9	4.4
\$10 000 To \$20 000	23.5	12.5	15.7	4.2
\$20 000 To \$30 000	25.5	13.1	16.2	4.6
\$30 000 And Up	25.4	13.3	15.5	5
<b>PSE Living Arrangement</b>				
Away From Home	15.1	13.2	15.5	4.6
At Home With Your Parent(s) or Legal Guardian	35.6	13	16.5	4.6
<b>Would You Have Borrow More From The Government If You Had Been Able To?</b>				
Yes	24.5	12.7	16.4	4.5
No	25.4	13.4	15.6	4.6
<b>High School Employment</b>				
Zero, Did Not Work	13.5	11.7	16.5	4.5
Worked At Least One Hour Per Week	33.9	13.5	15.5	4.7
<b>Family Contribution</b>				
No Family Contribution	30.4	13.4	16.3	4.5
\$1 to \$2 500	21.2	12.6	16	4.6
\$2 501 to \$5 000	19.6	13.6	15.3	4.8
Greater Than \$5 000	15.4	10	15.3	4.5
<b>Government Aid</b>				
\$1 to \$5 000	36.9	14.4	16	4.4
\$5 001 to \$10 000	30.5	13.1	16.3	4.4
Greater Than \$10 000	18.1	12.5	15.8	4.7

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

**Table A4: How Students Spend Their Time In First Year (College Students)**

	Percentage Who Work Evert Week (Regular Workers)	Among Regular Workers, Mean Hours of Paid Work per Week	Among All Students, Mean Hours of Studying per Week	Among All Students, Mean Hours of Extracurricular Activities per Week
<b>All</b>	37.4	16.1	12.5	4.2
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	39.4	16.1	13.2	3.7
Male	34.6	16	11.6	4.8
<b>Urban/Rural</b>				
Rural	25.8	15.2	12.4	4
Suburban	36.4	15.2	12.4	4.6
Urban	46.6	17	12.6	4
<b>Minority/Immigrant Status</b>				
Non-Visible Minority, Born in Canada	34.6	16.2	12	4.2
Visible Minority, Born in Canada	43.2	16.2	12.1	4.4
Non-Visible Minority, Immigrant	31.9	19.4	14.1	3.8
Visible Minority, Immigrant	40	15.2	14.1	3.9
<b>Parental Income</b>				
Extremely Low (\$0 To \$5 000)	44.7	17.5	14.5	3.6
\$5 000 To \$10 000	39.7	13.7	12.2	3.9
\$10 000 To \$20 000	36.1	16.9	12.7	4.5
\$20 000 To \$30 000	39.5	15.9	12	4.1
\$30 000 And Up	34	15.6	12.8	3.9
<b>PSE Living Arrangement</b>				
Away From Home	23.2	15.8	12.6	4.1
At Home With Your Parent(s) or Legal Guardian	48	16.2	12.5	4.2
<b>Would You Have Borrow More From The Government If You Had Been Able To?</b>				
Yes	36.8	15.7	13	4.5
No	38.1	16.4	12	3.8
<b>High School Employment</b>				
Zero, Did Not Work	22	14.4	13.4	4.1
Worked At Least One Hour Per Week	45.5	16.5	12.1	4.2
<b>Family Contribution</b>				
No Family Contribution	43.4	16.5	12.7	3.9
\$1 to \$1 000	33.2	15.2	12.3	4.3
\$1 001 to \$ 2 000	37.6	16	12.1	4
\$2 001 to \$ 3 000	27.1	15.4	13.1	4.9
Over \$3 000	18	15.7	13.8	5.3
<b>Government Aid</b>				
\$1 to \$5 000	61.2	17.6	12.4	4.4
\$5 001 to \$10 000	39	15.5	12.6	4.2
Greater Than \$10 000	24.8	16.1	13	3.9

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

**Table A5: Study Hours Distributions (University Students and College)**

	University Students (%)	College Students (%)
<b>Average Hours per Week Spent Studying or Doing Assigned Work Outside of Class</b>		
Less Than Three Hours	3.3	6.3
4 To 7 Hours	15.3	25.9
8 To 14 Hours	29.3	33.7
15 To 20 Hours	28.7	21.5
21 To 30 Hours	14.7	9.2
More Than 30 Hours	8.7	3.5
Total	100	100

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

**Table A6: Studying and Extracurricular Activities by Employment Status (University and College Students)**

	Non-Workers	Percentage Who Work Evert Week (Regular Workers)	Among Regular Workers, Hours Per Week In Paid Work		
			Seven Hours Or Less	Eight To Twenty Hours	Over Twenty Hours
<b>University Students</b>					
Mean Hours Studying per Week	16.4	14.9	16	14.6	14.2
Mean Hours of Extracurricular Activities per Week	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.7	5.3
<b>College Students</b>					
Mean Hours Studying per Week	13	12	12.3	12.1	11.5
Mean Hours of Extracurricular Activities per Week	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.9	4.6

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

**Table A7: PSE Outcomes by Study and Extracurricular Activity Hours (University and College Students)**

	Hours Per Week Spent Studying			Hours Per Week of Extracurricular Activities	
	Seven Hours or Less	Eight to Twenty Hours	Over Twenty Hours	Seven Hours or Less	Eight or More Hours
<b>University Students</b>					
Percent Who Leave PSE in First or Second Year Without Graduating*	10.9	4.8	5.1	6.3	5
Overall Grade Average In First Year	74.4	75.6	77.1	75.5	76.7
<b>College Students</b>					
Percent Who Leave PSE in First or Second Year Without Graduating*	31	16.1	23.3	21.8	20.1
Overall Grade Average In First Year	76.4	77.8	77.4	77.4	77

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students. \*Students are counted as leavers if they left PSE prior to their second interview, which took place in the winter of 2008, during their second year.

**Table A8: PSE Outcomes by Employment Status (University and College Students)**

	Non-Workers	Regular Workers	Among Regular Workers, Hours Per Week Spent In Paid Work		
			Seven Hours or Less	Eight To Twenty Hours	Over Twenty Hours
<b>University Students</b>					
Percent Who Leave PSE in First or Second Year Without Graduating*	5.5	6.4	0	7.4	14.2
Overall Grade Average In First Year	75.8	75.6	76.5	75.4	74.6
<b>College Students</b>					
Percent Who Leave PSE in First or Second Year Without Graduating*	21.7	20.6	20.7	17.6	30.6
Overall Grade Average In First Year	77.6	76.9	76.5	76.9	76.9

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students. \*\*Students are counted as leavers if they left PSE prior to their second interview, which took place in the winter of 2008, during their second year.

**Table A9: Regression Results (University Students)**

	Probability of Being a Regular Worker	Difference	Percentage Difference	Regression Estimate of Difference (Without Controls)	Regression Estimate of Difference (With Controls)
<b>Family Contribution Amount</b>					
No Family Contribution	30.5	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)
\$1 to \$2 500	21.2	-9.3	69.5	-9.3***	-6.6***
\$2 501 to \$5 000	19.6	-10.9	64.3	-11.0***	-6.6**
Greater Than \$5 000	14.9	-15.6	48.9	-15.6***	-7.9**
<b>High School Employment Status</b>					
Did Not Work In High School	13.8	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)
Worked In High School	34.6	20.8	250.7	20.8***	20.0***
<b>Living Arrangement In First Year of PSE</b>					
Away From Home	15.1	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)	NA (Baseline)
At Home With Parents	35.9	20.8	237.7	20.7***	19.5***

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

\*/\*\*/\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level.

Control variables were used to account for gender, province, community size, family structure, parental education, parental income and high school grades.

Non-baseline categories were entered in a logistic regression as dummy variables. Marginal effects report the differences between the dummy variable groups and the base line group.

**Table A10: Regression Results (College Students)**

	Probability of Being a Regular Worker	Difference	Percentage Difference	Regression Estimate of Difference (Without Controls)	Regression Estimate of Difference (With Controls)
<b>Family Contribution Amount</b>					
No Family Contribution	43.2	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)
\$1 to \$1000	33.8	-9.4	78.2	-9.4***	-5.3**
\$1 001 to \$2 000	37	-6.2	85.6	-6.2	-2
\$2 001 to \$3 000	26.3	-16.9	60.9	-16.9**	-9.2**
Over \$3 000	18.6	-24.6	43.1	-24.7***	-17.1***
<b>High School Employment Status</b>					
Did Not Work In High School	22.8	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)
Worked In High School	46.1	23.3	202.2	23.2***	20.6***
<b>Living Arrangement In First Year of PSE</b>					
Away From Home	24.1	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)	NA (Base line)
At Home With Parents	48.7	24.6	22.1	24.6***	20.5***

Source: Longitudinal Survey of Low Income Students.

\*/\*\*/\*\*\* indicates statistical significance at the 10/5/1% level.

Control variables were used to account for gender, province, community size, family structure, parental education, parental income and high school grades.

Non-baseline categories were entered in a logistic regression as dummy variables. Marginal effects report the differences between the dummy variable groups and the base line group.