

## EMU Students Feeling Optimistic About Job Prospects

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Destiny Wiley, a freshman at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), has no confidence she'll be able to get a job after graduation. Since coming to EMU in Sept., she's heard stories of how difficult the job market is for new college graduates.

Wiley, 18, of Detroit, has "always liked dentistry" and teeth, she says. "I want to make money, to be successful and support my family." In spite of her fears, she plans to attend dentistry school when she completes her bachelor's degree in chemistry.

The majority of the students I spoke with in the student lounge on the second floor of Pray-Harrold tend to feel confident in their prospects upon graduation, despite the doom and gloom such as Wiley has heard on campus this fall.

Abigail Lanni, 19, of New Baltimore, is a communications/general business sophomore who feels hopeful because she "comes with a lot of experience." Freshman Erica Frye, 18, a nursing major, believes that the "big demand" for nurses will make it easy to find work, although she is unsure about having success finding work in her interest area, pediatrics.

Regardless of the job market, almost all of the students I spoke with chose their academic majors based upon their personal interests. Bretton Blodget, 22, a Senior from Jackson, Mich., said, "Just going through my internal and external hardships in life—that motivated me, because I could identify." And Tim Parker, 21, a senior TESOL/Spanish Lang. major, knew he wanted to teach and plans to teach English in a Spanish-speaking country upon graduation. He is so confident in the demand for people with his skills that he hasn't checked into ways to find employment upon graduation.

According to Doug Rothwell, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM), higher education has a major role in Michigan's economic growth strategy. According to the group's Feb. 2015 report "Business Leaders' Insights: How Higher Education Can Help Michigan Become a Top



Ten State," by 2020, Michigan is going to need to almost double the number of college graduates living here in order to have a “competitive, knowledge-based economy.”

Is there a correlation between all this news and the fact that EMU’s fall freshman class is the second largest in its 166-year history? According to an EMU Press Release by Geoff

Larcom, there are 2,857 first-time freshmen this fall, a 42 percent increase since 2010.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), an entity of the US Dept. of Education, published their 49<sup>th</sup> yearly Digest of Education Statistics in May this year. The report reveals that enrollment in degree-granting institutions increased by 24% from 2002-2012, most of it full-time. But in Mich. as a whole, the increase from fall 2007-2012 was less than 10 percent.

With the talk of college attendance growth, I wondered if the job market could support it. Turns out prospects are improving in Michigan and nationwide. According to NCES, the Mich. unemployment rate for 20-24 yr. olds with a 4 yr. degree or more was 7% in 2013. The rate is even lower after age 25. However, college students who don’t finish school are almost twice as likely to be unemployed, and the rate climbs even higher for people with no college or no high school graduation.



While most EMU students I spoke with thought continuing their education after graduation would make them more marketable or give them more opportunities, several plan to pursue an advanced degree only if they find jobs that will help pay the cost. Several others only plan to continue if they are

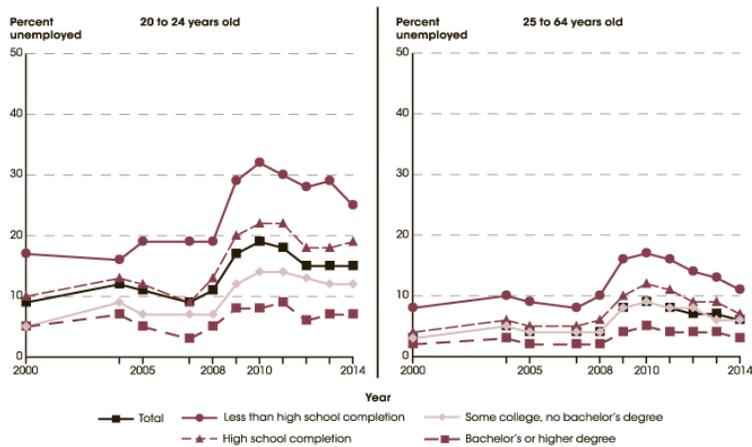
unable to find their desired jobs.

Rachel Dudzik, 20, a junior from Durand, Mich., believes working with agencies and networking are “pretty important, depending on what you want to do, your interests.” Dudzik said she plans to attend

graduate school, “just because if I want to do anything with anthropology, I probably should.” Dudzik believes it would be possible to find something but a graduate degree would open more doors.

EMU students tend to agree that networking is the best way to find employment. Lindsey Krantz, 28, a graduate student from Booneville, Ind., believes that agencies are “worthless compared to networking.” Krantz is pursuing a master’s degree after failing to find work upon receiving her bachelor’s degree. She plans to network through school and professional organizations at EMU and Univ of Mich.

What all this good news boils down to is this: Don’t be a Fool; Stay in School. The dooms-dayers don’t know the facts, and the facts prove them wrong.



Source: NCES: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=561>