



Study shows students pay expectations are unrealistic

So, you're in university to get paid the big bucks, but do you know what you are actually worth?

A recent study by Sands & Associates, a Vancouver-based bankruptcy firm, indicates a huge gap between what students expect to earn within five years of graduating and reality.

The survey sample was students under the age of 25 at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. There were 350 voluntary respondents.

73 per cent of students surveyed expected to earn \$50,000 or more within five years of graduating.

Unfortunately, only 23 per cent of British Columbians earn that much, with half of the working population earning less than \$30,000 per year.

What does Langara College think about these findings?

According to Langara College accounting and financial management co-op instructor Sean Padley, graduating students have an inflated sense of self-value.

“Employers basically tell me that students race through school, then have the expectation that their academics will lead them to their career job immediately, and that is just unrealistic,” he said.

This is because students don't take the time to investigate what they need, such as work experience and job-specific skills, to secure the job they want.

“Being a degree student gives some people the idea that entry level jobs are beneath them,” said Padley. “Unless you know someone at the firm, pretty much all employers won't hire someone with zero experience into a higher level position.”

He suggested students take advantage of online resources such as roberthalf.com, glassdoor.com and hays.com, which break down hiring trends and salaries by job and region.

Students need to do this at the beginning of school to get a sense of what they're really worth in today's market, he said.

In-person networking is also crucial to getting that career job when you graduate.

Time to get out from behind that laptop and hit the pavement

"It is much to your advantage to network in-person before you apply for that job," he said. "Ultimately they will bring you in for an in-person interview, so if you can preclude that by getting face-to-face time, that's invaluable."

Blair Mantin, vice-president at Sands & Associates, agreed with Padley.

"Nobody knows a thing about what their rights or their resources are until their backs are against the wall," he said.

Michael Curry, a second year computer science student, said his parents paid his tuition and he wouldn't know how much he would make until he finished school at UBC.

Reported by Bill Everitt