

Service sector wages lag behind

Students in service jobs fail to get a taste of city income increases

BY ELLEN STEVENS

Recently, CBC published an article stating that the income for Thunder Bay workers has increased as a whole. Sadly, this largely excludes the service sector.

Considering many university students are working in this sector, *The Argus* sat down with a Lakehead student to talk about how this affects her. She is currently working at the local movie theatre, and transfers job locations between Thunder Bay during the school year and Newmarket, her hometown.

"It's really unfair that service jobs aren't considered 'real jobs,' as if they're something to do while you're looking for a 'real job,'" said the student. "[Especially] when you're doing fairly complex tasks quickly, working on your feet, and focusing on making customers happy – these jobs take time, effort, and professionalism. I don't understand why there is such a giant payment discrepancy between how much I make and how much my parents make in their 'professional' jobs. I see challenges in both."

Currently, minimum wage is steady at a mere \$10.25 an hour.

The student continued to explain how she takes pride in her job, works hard at it, and doesn't understand why the financial reward is minimal.

According to CBC's "Generation Boomerang" segment on the TV series *Doc Zone*, "The average Canadian student graduates with a \$28 thousand debt, and finding a job to pay off that debt is tricky." Currently in Canada, the unemployment rate for 15 to 24 year olds is at 14 percent. According to CBC, that's double the



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general population. They suggest that this leads to further trends such as, "51 percent of young Canadian adults between 20 and 29 still living with their parents."

Though *The Globe and Mail* suggests that universities need to reform how they go about doing things, the real culprits seem to be

the economy, the fluctuation of demand for specific types of jobs over others, and the discrepancy in wages.

"I'm hearing a lot of people say that they're having a hard time finding work for what they went to school for, at least right after they graduate, so they have to settle

for service-related jobs or 'medial' jobs for the time-being," explained another student. "The problem is that the pay is low and the hours fluctuate, and this is scary because there are loans to be accounted for. It's stressful."

Hopefully, the economy can stable itself out in regards to job

equity. Until then, employers suggest having a well-rounded résumé to improve your chances of landing a dream job. This means taking part in clubs, taking on leadership roles and opportunities with your school and other associations, and making yourself able to offer a variety of skills.