

Service industry runs dry

By David Milton
STAFF WRITER
DEMILTON@UNCA.EDU

UNC Asheville students and graduates working in the service industry struggle with finances amid a dwindling job market and a shrinking economy, several students said.

"There is not a job to be found in this town," said Tierney Oberhammer, 22, a literature major who graduated from UNCA in December. "It sucks. I wish I could say it more eloquently, but it just sucks."

Oberhammer, who normally works as a host and a server at Jerusalem Garden Café, is temporarily unemployed, as the local restaurant has closed for January for renovations.

To pay her bills, she has recently taken babysitting jobs.

"As a graduate, even when I am employed, I feel like I am underemployed," Oberhammer said.

As a server, Oberhammer has noticed a seasonal decline in personal income because fewer people have been dining out.

Servers depend on the amount of business more than anyone because their pay is directly dependent on it, she said.

"Working a 12-hour shift and making less than \$70 simply because people aren't going out to eat as much, that just

doesn't cut it," Oberhammer said. "I can't even pay my bills with that."

Rachel Lawless, 20, an ecology major, is also a working student.

Lawless works for the Residential Education and Housing Operations and is grateful to have the job, she said.

"Because I work on campus and for the university, and because I am a student, I have less chance of losing my job or losing hours," Lawless said. "The university is trying to make the student body as unaffected by the economy as possible."

There are limits for on-campus student employment.

According to the Career Center Web site, students are not allowed to work more than 20 hours a week during the school year. Students can work multiple on-campus jobs as long as the total amount of hours stays below 20.

On-campus jobs can pay up to \$10 an hour, but cannot pay more than that without permission from the work supervisor and the divisional academic dean.

Lawless worked as a server last summer at Bier Garden, a downtown restaurant and bar.

The income Lawless earned while employed at Bier Garden was significantly greater, but she said the stability associated with an on-campus job was more im-



Photo courtesy The Bier Garden

Wes Ogden, a server unaffected by job cuts, fills pitchers at the Bier Garden

portant.

"Working in the restaurant industry, it would have been much more likely my hours would have been cut back," Lawless said. "But working for the university I only make around \$300 a month."

Lawless said Bier Garden did cut back hours for its servers and hosts this winter, because business has slowed. Bier Garden

hires college students, like many other restaurants and bars in downtown Asheville but right now they are not hiring. Applicants come in everyday.

"The down-turning economy has been hurting us since last summer," said Nathaniel Wardell, manager at Bier Garden. "We've had to cut back a lot of shifts for our front-of-the-house employees."

University tightens belt: school's budget cut by 6 percent

By Heide Penner
STAFF WRITER
BMPENNER@UNCA.EDU

The aftershocks of the stock market drop in September resonate in the additional cuts to UNC Asheville's budget.

"The national and global economic meltdowns have caused financial and trade crises combined with the collapse of spending," said Jane Fernandes, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in an email. "All state agencies, including University of North Carolina campuses, have to contribute money back to the government so that our state budget is balanced."

North Carolina mandated an additional 2 percent cut from all state agencies, for a total of 6 percent this year beginning in February.

"They're hitting the university system with a 6 percent tax right now, but we

are also under instructions from the university president to add an additional 1 percent contingency," said John Pierce, vice chancellor of finance and campus operations. "Nobody really knows how bad it's going to be."

This year, the university will have \$2,047,000 less due to the cuts. There may be further cuts to the budget in the future, according to Pierce.

"Let's keep it consistent—apples to apples," Pierce said. "Six percent on this year's budget is \$2,047,000. Six percent on next year's budget is \$2.4 million. So we would have to come up with another \$350,000 some odd dollars in cuts next year."

Pierce attributes the cuts to a lowered



Jane Fernandes

amount of money within the government.

"Basically, what we have is a state revenue shortfall in terms of sales tax collections and income tax collections," Pierce said.

The state is required to have a balanced budget, said Merianne Epstein, director of news services at UNCA.

"When the tax revenues are low, people are shopping less, their income taxes will be less because either their investments went down, or they're out of work or they made less money, so now the state's income is lower," she said. "Then they have to adjust the budget because they didn't get as much money."

This year, 18 states added double-digit cuts to their higher education budgets. Nevada's governor proposed a 36 percent cut and South Carolina's proposed a cut of 16 percent.

"I think that we're really fortunate to

be in a state that's managing its finances pretty conservatively," Pierce said.

Low enrollment courses will feel the brunt of the budget reductions, but a loyalty to the quality of education resounds within the UNCA administration.

"Education is our priority and we will continue to assure that we provide a top-notch teaching and learning environment for our students," Fernandes said. "The ability of faculty to deliver our curriculum is our primary concern. Having said that, no part of the institution will be immune from the painful cuts to come."

Other changes include keeping vacancies open, cutting back on temporary employees and adjunct faculty, as well as placing restrictions on purchasing and travel.

"With a focus on our core mission of providing exemplary liberal arts education

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