



**Statistics Canada said Friday the losses were in both full- and part-time positions. Most job cuts were in the accommodation, food services and construction sectors, while the retail and wholesale trade sectors added workers, it said.**

**Photograph by: Mark Ralston, AFP/Getty Images**

OTTAWA — Joblessness among students has climbed to what may be the highest level ever in Canada as the country, overall, lost about 45,000 jobs last month.

Not since Statistics Canada began keeping such records in 1977 has joblessness among students reached such a peak, leaving one out of every five students, or 20.9 per cent of the total, out of work.

Observers say this could send ripples through the economy, as students grapple with high levels of debt and are held back from joining the workforce, forming families, buying homes and getting on with their lives.

Beyond the numbers, the voices of this temporarily lost generation are tinged with anger and disappointment.

"It's really hard to survive, you know, I'm 23 and I have a degree and it's so frustrating that I can't even get a minimum wage paying job and I have to call my parents and be all like 'Oh, I can't afford my rent this month,' " said Concordia University graduate Brittany Anderson.

Anderson, 23, graduated in 2007 with bachelor's degree in political science but couldn't find a career-related job, so she returned to school to begin a second degree.

She has worked odd jobs in Montreal in the service industry or retail, but says there are no career positions. This summer, she said, has been the worst and she can't find any job to pay the rent. So, she's packing up her bags this month and heading back to Regina.

Doug Porter, deputy chief economist for BMO Capital Markets, remarked: "This is definitely an extraordinarily severe recession for young people and students in particular."

In fact, numbers released Friday show that virtually half of the 414,000 people thrown out of work since the downturn began close to a year ago were young people, aged 15 to 24. In July alone, employment among young people fell by 38,000.

"In many ways, I can't imagine a worse environment for student employment than we saw this year. Tourism is about as weak as it can get . . . and of course the tourism sector is a big employer of students," Porter said.

"Then there's the fact that in any downturn firms are quickest to let the least experienced go or not hire, and of course student employment suffers in that environment."

But Ottawa is partly to blame, too, said Katherine Giroux-Bougard, the chairwoman of the Canadian Federation of Students.

"By not moving to reduce students' debt the government has ignored an essential part of economic recovery."

Friday's jobs release showed that after a temporary lull in April, May and June — in which only 13,000 jobs were lost — July's 45,000 jobs lost were much worse than the 15,000 economists had expected.

Porter said the turn was not entirely a surprise. "I actually believe the second quarter numbers were giving a false sense of security, and frankly when it was reported there were job gains in April very few believed it."

"So the fact that we've had another fairly serious job decline should not come as total shock . . . but it does cast a cloud on whether the economy has begun to recover just yet."

Numbers out of the U.S., meanwhile, indicate our largest trading partner is firmly on track to a second-half recovery, as the pace of job losses slowed more than expected, Porter said.

Payrolls fell by 247,000 after a loss of 443,000 in June, the Labor Department said Friday in Washington and the jobless rate fell for the first time in more than a year, to 9.4 per cent from 9.5 per cent.

In Canada, the jobless rate remained at an 11-year high of 8.6 per cent.

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