

College grads working where a degree not required

By Alana Semuels, New York Times

In a packed pub in midtown Manhattan, Ryan Flagherty is surrounded on three sides by people clamoring for his attention.

He spins one way and pours a shot of vodka into a glass, then turns around and wedges a lime into a bottle of Corona, pushing it across the counter. Ignoring the annoyed gaze of a bulky man on his right, he turns again to a touch-screen register to ring up the sales.

It's just a minute out of the grueling, physically demanding eight-hour shift that will last long into the night. But Flagherty, 28, isn't complaining.

With the generous tips of New Yorkers and his pick of shifts, he pulls in around \$80,000 a year as a bartender. It's more than he was offered for various office jobs he considered when he arrived in the city, even though he's highly educated.

"I have a master's in economics and I'm bartending in New York," he said with a shrug. "It's a good way to make money."

A college degree once all but guaranteed a well-paying job and higher earnings than high school graduates. But fewer of these good jobs are now available because of both long-term economic changes and the lingering effects of the Great Recession.

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