We Couldn’t Do It Without Them: Student Assistants, Fieldworkers & Volunteers

January 9, 2009

Professional Development Day

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00 am</td>
<td><strong>Coffee Meet n’ Greet.</strong> Information on your nametag will help you find a seat.</td>
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<td>9:00-9:15 am</td>
<td><strong>Welcome &amp; Introductions</strong> (Jenny Schmidt &amp; Bill Topritzhofer)</td>
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<td>9:15-11:45 am</td>
<td><strong>What Would We Do Without Them: Our Work with Student Workers, Fieldworkers &amp; Volunteers</strong> (Jasmine Cieszynski)</td>
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<td>9:15-10:15</td>
<td>Recruiting &amp; Marketing Common Objections &amp; Concerns</td>
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<td><em>Exercise 1 &amp; discussion topics:</em></td>
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<td>--Advertising &amp; position descriptions</td>
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<td>--Interviewing &amp; hiring</td>
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<td>--Fieldwork students</td>
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<td>10:15-10:25</td>
<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>10:25-11:05</td>
<td><strong>Student roles &amp; evaluation</strong> Training</td>
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<td><em>Exercise 2 &amp; discussion topics:</em></td>
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<td>--Scheduling</td>
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<td>--Safety concerns</td>
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<td>--Effective supervisor traits</td>
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<td>11:05-11:45</td>
<td><strong>Creative/Innovative new positions/roles</strong></td>
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<td><em>Exercise 3 &amp; discussion topics:</em></td>
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<td>--Risk taking : innovative positions</td>
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<td>--Recognition &amp; retention</td>
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<td>11:45-1:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>1:00-1:15 pm</td>
<td><strong>SWITCH Update</strong></td>
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<td>1:15-2:15 pm</td>
<td>Innovative Interfaces – ResearchPro</td>
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<td>2:30-3:30 pm</td>
<td>Serials Solutions – 360 Search</td>
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Read the following scenario and jot down your immediate reactions. Discuss the scenario, using the items provided, with others at your table. Be prepared to give a 5-minute “report” to the entire group.

**EXERCISE 1**

You work as a cataloger and have never had a fieldwork student, student worker, or volunteer assist you in your job. Currently you have a large backlog of faculty donations to process and would love some help. You are not sure about the timing, however, because the library has just started weeding two major sections of the main collection and has been working hard to complete its first online digital collection before the end of the semester.

**Items for Discussion**

- Describe the type of job duties student workers perform in all areas of Technical Services.
- Do these same students also work in Public Services (Circulation, Reserves, ILL, Reference) or no?
- For staff who do not typically work with student assistants, fieldwork persons or volunteers, what are some new job duties you can think of that would be of use to you? Try and brainstorm a variety of examples even if they don’t apply to your library right now and consider all avenues including work a student worker could do in public and tech services.
- Does your library provide a mix of routine and challenging tasks? If so, describe how you vary work/tasks of students, volunteers or fieldworkers?
- Has your library ever worked with UWM-SOIS to place a fieldwork student? Share your library’s experiences and things to look out for when using a fieldwork student. What amount of time/effort was required to train the person?
Read the following scenario and jot down your immediate reactions. Discuss the scenario, using the items provided, with others at your table. Be prepared to give a 5-minute “report” to the entire group.

EXERCISE 2

It is Friday night around 9:30pm. The library closes at 11:00 pm. There is no reference or circulation librarian on duty. You (a student worker) and two other student workers are the only staff in the library at this time. A student comes in frantic saying she has a paper due the next day and has to get at least two full text articles. She approaches you to help her find the articles mentioning that she’s desperate and cannot come back to the library tomorrow when a professional librarian is on duty. She also asks if there is word processing on the computers in the library and if you can help her get started formatting a document. How do you respond?

Items for Discussion

- Do student workers in your library know how to respond to this type of scenario?
- Do they know how to help students access and use the online databases?
- Do you want them to provide this type of help? Explain why or why not?
- Do librarians or student workers provide any support for MS Office and other campus software?
- Explain how your library handles this request from students and whether a student worker is trained to give assistance in Office and other programs.
- What do you think about using a scenario like this for student worker training?
- Below, list any information you now provide to workers for this type of situation. What policies, web information, etc. do you have in place?
Read the following scenario and jot down your immediate reactions. Discuss the scenario, using the items provided, with others at your table. Be prepared to give a 5-minute “report” to the entire group.

EXERCISE 3

You have two student workers who are roommates and good friends. They have a few ideas for creating a YouTube video on the library. You are the supervisor of the students and like the idea of having a new video especially one giving an overview to the library. You decide to give them a chance at making one.

Items for Discussion

- How do you proceed with this project at your library? Who should be involved besides the students?
- When is the best time to do such a project without disrupting the students’ other work tasks?
- What is a realistic timeframe to set for such a project?
- List what your library would like to include in such a video?
- Can you think of any potential issues that could arise in doing such a project? What?
- How do you help guarantee the library is well represented by the piece?
- What do you do once the project is done?
- Can you think of any ways this could impact other student workers positively or negatively?
- If you had to select one training topic for a video (made by students or librarians) what would it be?
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Advertising & position description**

Here are some suggestions for where to recruit and share information about working in the library:

a. **On campus:** Human Resources, Career Services, At Freshman Orientation, in Residence Halls, etc.
b. **Online:** On your library web site, FaceBook page, web pages of other local organizations or associations such as: ____________________________
c. **Recommendations from current workers:** create a form for them to fill out or ask informally. What will be on the form?
d. **Any campus/neighborhood locations/haunts** you could approach?

e. **Library school offices** (e.g. UW-Milwaukee’s School of Information Studies)
f. **Write brief profiles** about student workers and post in the library or online
g. Have current workers **share quotes** about the benefits of working at the library
h. **Top Ten Reasons To Work For The Library**
   http://library.udayton.edu/basics/departments/bldserv/topten.php
   or have your student employees make their own!

Other methods:

a. Identify where people currently go to find information about your library and employment? Is the info current? Does the library reach out to other offices on campus? Do you do so on a regular basis?
b. Summarize and publicize your library’s mission in a few key library locations including on your web site. Consider making a video to use for current and future hires.
c. Have job descriptions ready and make them available – post them online so it’s easy for workers to learn what to expect from the job
d. ____________________________
e. ____________________________

**Follow-up activities:**

- Write position descriptions for current student positions (if you do not already have them).
- Start with departments which hire the most students! Read these for ideas:
  - Southwestern University, TX   http://www.southwestern.edu/library/employment/student-job-descriptions.html
  - Check the wiki for others:   http://tinyurl.com/57y7jo
- WLC Job Description example at wiki:
  http://switchlibraries.pbwiki.com/f/2_ %C2%A0job%C2%A0description_WLC.pdf
- Check if your library employment information is current and accurate
- Interview current student workers or patrons. Ask how they find employment information/for new ideas.
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Interviewing & Hiring**

Share what your library/department does. Take notes on ideas you want to try:

**Where we conduct interviews:**

**Application (Online? Written? Library-specific?):**

**Hiring of friends/relatives:**

**Use of referrals/references:**

**Questions we ask/Guidelines (see lavender sheet on table):**

**Positive traits I look for:**

**Negative traits I notice:**

**Limited to work-study students?**

Do you talk about evaluation/performance review during the interview/hiring process? Do you require a “trial” period for new student employees?

Consider incorporating campus learning outcomes and institutional philosophy into the job expectations or job description. Who on campus could you work with to do this?

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**Follow-up activities:**

- Read this publication by the State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development, Equal Rights Division, Civil Rights Bureau: "Fair Hiring & Avoiding Discriminatory Interview Questions" #1 in a Series, [http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwd/publications/erd/pdf/erd_4825_pweb.pdf](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwd/publications/erd/pdf/erd_4825_pweb.pdf)
- Find out if your campus has guidelines for questions you can (not) ask during interviews.
- Where do you interview? Designate a private place for interviews—free of interruptions.
- Try a team-interview, where two library staff members interview and discuss each candidate.
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Fieldwork students**

**Possible sources**
- SOIS library school or SOIS undergrad information science major, independent study project
- High school (perhaps developmental students who need job skills)

**Considerations**
- Number of hours required?
- Designate one coordinator—to work with student and/or school
- Student may have contact with multiple librarians and staff, depending on project(s)
- Is student's availability compatible with supervisor’s availability? With projects?
- Who will document hours and project? The student?

**Possible projects** (Should include a “teaching” or “learning” component)
- Teach the collection development or weeding process; have them assist in a given area(s)
- Teach how your library currently handles different media formats and ask fieldworker for new ideas for organizing, publicizing and deselecting these items
- Fieldworker oversees a usability testing project for the library web page (using student workers as the testers)
- Fieldworker creates a patron or faculty survey and analyzes data
- Fieldworker observes, then assists at Reference Desk
- Fieldworker assists with library instruction or library orientations
- Fieldworker oversees student workers to create library videos (with librarian as supervisor)
- Fieldworker helps create new training materials for other student workers
- Fieldworkers assists with digitization project

**Follow-up activities:**

“Host Sites: Fieldwork experiences include both time-honored traditions and the dynamic growth and change currently occurring in the library and information professions. The range of settings and opportunities available has expanded dramatically in recent years and includes wide-ranging options from archives … [and] reference and technical services to database development, and … web design ….” –University of Washington Information School

- Notify SOIS that your library is interested in being a fieldwork site. Develop project proposals and be proactive. Chad Zahrt SOIS: zahrt@uwm.edu or 414-229-5421
- Develop a more long term project that’s on-going soliciting help each semester or each year.
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Scheduling**

- How do you handle student scheduling at your library? Are there a maximum number of hours any one student can work (during the semester? On breaks?)
- How flexible is your library with schedules? What is the process for notifying supervisors/requesting a substitute?
- Do you post schedules online for convenience of all?
- Are there specific hours when it’s important for assistants to not be alone?
- Do you have guidelines for scheduling new and experienced student assistants together?

**Further reading:**


Find other options by searching Google for library employee scheduling (without quotes).

**Follow-up activities:**

- Request a trial of an online scheduling software. Use it to create your Spring semester student schedules for service desks & computer labs then consider purchasing a subscription.
Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

Training methods

- How do you cover all departments /areas of the library to new workers (part of tour? Covered during “interview,” each department provide information?)
- Do you have a checklist of tasks to cover? What’s on it? (see FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY below)
- Do you use any type of “cheat sheets?” Which ones would be most helpful? 
  EXAMPLE: A library “cheat sheet” translates jargon into easy-to-understand definitions (See TAN HANDOUT)
- Do you use multiple formats of instruction to address different learning styles. See http://www.princeton.edu/stat/ids/lstyles.htm
- Does your library have restrictions in terms of attire? What about use of personal technology on the job (iPods, cell phones, laptops, etc.) – Part of training?

Ideas

- “Follow the Book” training session: student is shown the process of a book from acquisitions (ordering it) through checkout.
- “Request an Item” - student requests an item from another SWITCH library and has to track all of the things that happen until it’s in her hands.
- Create a video on certain key tasks that you cover repeatedly, so you don’t have to do it in-person with each new hire
- Write a brief script and let veteran student workers cover key tasks with other assistants
- Use technology in training - Use PowerPoint, Camtasia or other web tutorial software to document your processes. Student can (re)view as often as needed. (SEE WIKI)
- Post training materials in a wiki or in the campus course management system (e.g. BlackBoard)

“MUST SEE” ONLINE TUTORIALS and RESOURCES

Check out these two excellent online training tools

- Louisville Student Assistant Training Program – includes exercises & info for supervisors: http://library.louisville.edu/training/
- Student training from Appalachian State University (see tan handout): http://www.library.appstate.edu/elearn/student.html

Shelf Reading Resources

- Call Numbers & LC Classification, http://www.imunet.edu/library/LCtraining/training1.html
- LC Shelving Game- http://www.lcsc.edu/library/satchlcall/
- Dewey Shelving Game - http://www.solent.ac.uk/library/informe/criminology/booklist/solution3game.stm

Millennium Resources

- CS Direct web tutorials (swit, jack5): http://csdirect.iii.com/tutorials/ Mil Circ, Basic Millennium, Mil Serials) – Go to the TUTORIAL or SITE MAP to find tasks easily!

Follow-up activities:

- Compare the checklists of some other libraries:
- Louisville Student Training http://library.louisville.edu/training/check.htm
- Train in the ‘Proper care and handling of books': http://louisville.edu/library/training/shelf.htm
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Evaluation**

“Evaluating student employees... proves to be a valuable tool in helping student employees find out how they are doing on their jobs and provides an excellent means of communication and development.”

http://www.biola.edu/undergrad/financialaid/applying/student_employment.cfm

Describe the feedback methods you currently use: 

________________________________________________________________________________

Can you imagine your students using a self-rating or peer rating tool? In what ways?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Does your library have a formal process for discipline? Verbal and written warnings? Employee files? How/when do students find out about this? Can anyone at the library intervene if a student worker is making a serious error, or are immediate supervisors the only ones who intervene?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

**Ideas**

- Hold an “open discussion” asking workers about customer service as a way to improve or encourage good service practice.
- Use a white board on a daily basis to indicate who is responsible for what. Allows for quick changes and promotes accountability.
- Provide ongoing feedback and plan a formal evaluation after a specified period of time (amount of time may vary by department, 2 to 6-weeks).
- Catch them doing something good. Provide ongoing feedback during training and plan a more formal evaluation (end of semester? end of academic year?)
- Consider a “trial” period of 2-6 weeks. Length of trial period depends on complexity of duties in your department and number of hours worked. At end of “trial” student or supervisor can decide not to continue with a “no fault” attitude if job and student are not a good match.

**Follow-up activities:**

Compare evaluation tools/forms from a few other institutions. Look for ways to improve your process:

- **Olivet Nazarene University Performance Form:** http://tinyurl.com/4f5jb9
- **Louisville Performance Appraisal Form** - http://louisville.edu/library/training/perfapp.htm
- Have students fill out their own evaluation? http://www.slc.edu/library/student_employment/studeval.pdf
- Read this 1-page student evaluation from Walla Walla University, http://www.wallawalla.edu/fileadmin/user_upload/human_resources/pdf/StudentWorkerEval.pdf. As an experiment, print and fill it out for your top and bottom student workers. Did you find it included options which backed up your “gut feeling” about the students? What other activities do you need to do in order to have enough information to fill out a form like this?
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Safety concerns**

Are there specific hours when it's important for assistants to not be alone?

Has the campus safety department created emergency procedures document? Is it available at multiple service desks? In staff offices?

Does your staff practice emergency drills? When patrons are in the building? Fire extinguisher training?

Are emergency numbers posted at service desks? (campus safety, 911, supervisor/library director)

Do students have the option of saying “no” to late-night shifts?

Does campus safety make “extra” rounds during certain hours? Help during building closing?

Does your library have policies about facility use by non-campus patrons/guests? (Internet access? Use of group study rooms? _________________)

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**Follow-up activities:**

- Make an appointment with the head of Public Safety. Discuss specific issues of concern to library employees.
- Create or locate campus emergency-plans.
- Have fire and tornado drills.
- Give a presentation to staff on Job Safety. See Appalachian State U’s example: [http://www.library.appstate.edu/elearn/safety.ppt](http://www.library.appstate.edu/elearn/safety.ppt)
- Pay for key student employees to attend first-aid certification.
Talk with others about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Effective supervisor traits**

Write five personality traits of effective/great and ineffective supervisors based on your experiences and knowledge. Share with your table.

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<th>Ineffective supervisors are...</th>
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Brainstorm some potential “weak spots” of library supervisors. The goal is to simply to help individuals to identify areas they may need to improve upon. In brainstorming, feel free to share any suggestions on how to avoid these weak spots. (Source: [http://www.thesimpledollar.com/2007/07/01/review-the-12-bad-habits-that-hold-good-people-back/]())

- Does too much for students (I can finish this up myself“); Is not an effective delegator
- Tries to be the students’ friend / Lines of authority are slightly blurred (Where do you draw the line?)
- Avoids conflict until it becomes an issue (among students or between student and another coworker)
- Is insensitive to student workers in regards to it being exam time; not breaking up tedious tasks; pushing to do even more
- “Shares Too Much” – shares personal information, gossip, confidential information, etc.
- Spends too little or too much time planning
- “Corrector” – tendency to hover over and/or recheck student’s work
- OTHER:

Identify positive changes you can make that would benefit the library as a whole.

_____________________________________________________________

**Management Quiz**

1. You should always praise ________

2. Listening is the most important management skill: True/False.

3. Most managers spend too little time planning. True/False.

4. You should always discipline ________

5. Every employee can benefit from additional training. True/False.

**Follow-up activities:**

- Look at this list of Supervisory Job Behaviors: [http://www.library.yale.edu/lhr/pp/supjobbehav.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/lhr/pp/supjobbehav.html), identify a new skill to improve and create an individual learning plan using this form: [http://library.princeton.edu/hr/training/IndivLearningPlan.doc](http://library.princeton.edu/hr/training/IndivLearningPlan.doc)
- Do a self inventory to explore what type of manager you are and if you can see the big picture.
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

Risk taking: creating innovative student assistant positions

*indicates ideas from Olivet Nazarene University

- **Assist with weeding projects***
  - Suggest items for withdrawal
  - Check price, last copy in consortium/state
  - Process item (stamp, desensitize, etc.)
  - Recommend replacement items

- **Reference Assistant***
  - Staff Ref. Desk Fridays, weekends, and evenings (9pm-midnight)
  - Requires ongoing training

- **Participate in freshmen library orientation***
  - Write & test “hands-on” scenarios for new students
  - Staff posts throughout the library & provide assistance as needed

- **Assist with digital conversion projects***
  - Prepare materials
  - Scan documents
  - Enter meta-data

- **Research Assistant***
  - Upper level students serve as mentor/help faculty use the library (show how to search databases, recommend books, preliminary weed lists)
  - Provide instruction sessions to underclassmen and general education students

- **Personal Assistants***
  - Work for one librarian (make copies, type, do filing, update web pages, etc.)

- **Install software***
  - Provide assistance to students in campus software
  - One-on-one training for library staff

- **Updating the library web page or wiki***
  - Requires access to software and network file permissions!

- **Create library displays***
  - Decorate for different semesters; seasons; holidays

Share unique job duties from your library: _____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

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**Follow-up activities:**

- As a whole staff or a small group, brainstorm duties that could be delegated to students
- Teach students how to refer references questions: [http://louisville.edu/library/training/refer.htm](http://louisville.edu/library/training/refer.htm) and understand the Reference question flowchart: [http://louisville.edu/library/training/flow.htm](http://louisville.edu/library/training/flow.htm)
- Identify high-potential/high-performing students to mentor
- Use this “volunteer planning” document to develop & prepare for any new position, [http://www.casanet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/planvlps.htm](http://www.casanet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/planvlps.htm)
Talk with others at your table about current practices at your libraries. Use the following guide as a conversation starter. Pick one follow-up activity that you will accomplish after the Professional Development Day.

**Recognition & retention**

- Olivet Nazarene University’s – “Library Workshop”
  - Pizza dinner the evening before Fall semester classes start
  - Chance for student and staff to meet people from all departments
  - Director make announcements about the upcoming year (new policies, professional staff members, etc.)
  - Picasa/Flickr slideshow in background showing one picture of each student assistant and library staff member. Pictures represent what people did over the summer break
  - Prizes for years of service
  - Summer students create skit or YouTube video on the library or a new policy
- Thank you luncheons or other social events to build a sense of community (e.g. Christmas and end-of-year carry in by staff for students to enjoy)
- “Trick-or-treating” at staff members’ desks
- Use National Library Week to honor students (and staff). Allow patrons to post positive feedback about specific workers on a bulletin board/display
- Write brief profiles on individual workers and post in the library or online
- Include student workers in online and/or in-person learning opportunities in which staff participate. Have them attend a WLA conference or library meeting with staff?
- Prepare information about a library graduate degree (from UW-Milwaukee or Madison). Invite recruiter to campus—sponsor time for Q&A and meet-n-greet.
- Gift for each graduating senior.
- Create levels within each department—so students can advance in title and pay rate, by taking on additional responsibilities.
- Send weekly e-mail message with “kudos” for shelf-reading and other accomplishments.

**Follow-up activities:**

- Pick one special event to “give” your students during the 2008-2009 year.
- Create a “professional librarian” packet of materials with our field current salary info, SOIS and SLIS’ graduate program information, invite a recruiter once a year, a handout that explains all our library acronyms (http://ct.webjunction.org/disaster-planning/articles/content/452394)
- Create brief profiles on individual workers you post in the library or online
- Create positions with a higher pay rate for returning students who train newer students.
- Provide library t-shirts students can wear for special library events/days.
- Ask students what types of gifts are most desirable (food, gift certificate to campus café or book store, etc.).