A Good Training Plan is Hard to Find

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Oxford College Library
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- Two-year undergraduate school
- 756 enrollment
- Liberal Arts Intensive
- Significant leadership opportunities for freshmen and sophomores
Student Employment at Oxford

- 282 students are awarded work-study
- All students are hired by the Financial Aid Office
- Students select their top job choices and are then assigned to campus departments
Oxford College Library

- Open 103 hours Sunday - Saturday
- Oversees adjacent 24/7 study space
- Over 90,000 volumes, 500 databases, and 40,000 online journals
- Eight full-time staff and 39 student employees (five FTE)
Two issues to be addressed

- How do you get the right person in the job?
- How do you get them trained?
Tried several ideas for scheduling and training that didn’t quite work
Maybe it’s not about getting the right person for the job, but helping everyone be the right person.
What Do We Want to Teach Our Students?

- Customer service skills
- Basic job skills
- Research skills
What Do We Want Them to Take Away from Working in the Library?

- Be able to help their classmates
- Be the library’s best PR
- Be life-long library users
- Become library professionals
Every staff member is involved in the program’s planning and has at least one student to supervise.
Early Contact

- New students are contacted mid-summer
  - Welcome
  - Determine skills and interest
  - Encourage early completion of paperwork
The Training Plan

- First day of work
  - Time and attendance
  - Finalize work schedule
  - Sign attendance contract
  - Sign statement of confidentiality
- Supervisors train in specific office tasks
- New students attend training tracks 1-3
Welcome
Reserves (electronic and physical)
Basic circulation and orientation to the desk
Training Track Two

- Customer Service
- Circulation Desk Expectations
- Circulation Checklist

- Staff member signs off on the form, giving feedback on the student’s performance
- Supervisor reviews his/her students’ forms for issues to address or efforts to praise
Training Track Three

- Job Skills 101
- Shelving and Shelf-reading
- Care and Handling of Books
Research Skills Training

- Basic research instruction is part of office training
- Supplemental instruction sessions, such as “Introduction to Zotero”
- “On the clock” research consultations for class projects
Attendance and communication are our main focus

Correction is explained in terms of future employment

Mid-year and final performance reviews

Summer job/internship resume class
Opportunities for creative input and digital creation

Overseeing our adjacent study space

Cataloging special projects

Researching archive questions

Outstanding students are chosen to be responsible for the library building from 10am-2pm on Saturdays
Student Employee of the Month

- Recognizes excellent customer service and special efforts
- Verbalizes our service priorities
- Award publicized in our monthly newsletter and other venues
Showing Our Appreciation

- Monthly birthday parties
- Exam bags
- Appreciation “picnic” with homemade food and end of year gifts
- Sophomore book selection and foyer display
They have their own personal cheering squad – the Librarians!
39 students are pushing our program’s limits

Training Tracks will be reduced to two

Returning sophomores will be scheduled with new students, so they can teach circulation basics and the circ duty checklists
Final Thoughts

Think creatively.

Accentuate the positive.
(Eliminate the negative.)

Expect great things and your students will deliver.
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