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Student Worker Experience Making It Meaningful For Today & Tomorrow, Roundtable Discussion

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STUDENT WORKER EXPERIENCE

MAKING IT MEANINGFUL FOR TODAY & TOMORROW, ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

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This article is the result of a Roundtable Discussion given at the 2003 annual ACL conference. The conference brochure description of the Roundtable follows: Most of us have student workers. How can we ensure that the experiences they have today equip them for the future they face after they graduate? Come prepared to discuss the role we can have in making our student workers time with us count both for today and tomorrow.

The author's intention was to discuss:

- Library employment as an opportunity to build good workplace habits
- Making sure our student workers are confident in utilizing library resources
- Encouraging and supporting them as they choose work study assignments that are more compatible with their majors and/or career goals.

Although the first two items were touched on, the focus turned to motivating students to consider librarianship as a profession as a result of their student worker experience instead of directing students to opportunities that would enhance their major and be relevant to their future career goals. Out of the seventeen roundtable participants, twelve gained valuable experience as library student workers and one returned to work as the library director at her alma mater.

The following are suggestions that were presented during our discussion:

- Have questions on job applications which will help in discerning the best department for the student to work in. Once the semester is underway, be on the lookout for those in other departments that you could use.
- Utilize Myers Brigs or other assessment tool.
- Regularly appraise the students work... warnings need to be in writing before firing. Make sure there is an appeal process for grievances.
- Ownership is vital to self confidence.
- Build a community via birthday parties, having them in your home, weekend trip to a cabin, etc.
- Make the job fun and they may be interested for life. Provide variety; look for those who show a special interest.
- Have a forum to discuss various opportunities in librarianship.
- Create a scholarship fund from monies earned via library book sales... motivation to do some weeding.
- Get to know your students... i.e. hobbies, majors, concerns. Use this information as you pray for and mentor them.
- Keep in touch with your student workers (current and former). You'll be encouraged and alumnae that are kept in touch with serve as excellent referrals for your institution.

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SUGGESTED READING

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