Our Students, Our Strength:

Answering a library management challenge by applying a new student staffing model

**Background**

- Overall foot traffic increased, and there was a marked increase in students studying in the building and using resources (over 100% increase).
- From 2005-2010 we saw an increase in academic programs and student residents on campus.
- Historically we were staffed with non-permanent and student staff on nights and weekends, and many hours were solo-staffed, but this was insufficient for the new needs.
- We had no budget increases for staffing, and none anticipated.

**Advantages & Disadvantages Considered**

- The challenge was to find a way to maintain quality library services in a safe environment with increased demands from users and a stagnant budget.
- Better consistency and quality of services.
- More students working on shifts without regular permanent staff interaction.
- Better ability to monitor building and respond when needed.
- More regular training needed.
- Possible need to eliminate staff.

**A New Staffing Model**

In summer 2010, decision was made to formalize a new staffing model beginning in 2010-11 academic year: students, who had always played a vital role as the first visible service providers and triage point in our single-service-point environment, would be doubled up on all shifts occurring after 5pm on weeknights and all hours on weekends.

- We eliminated all part-time non-student staffing and most of non-Federal work study student staff.
- We increased the presence of permanent staff available via IM.
- All new student hires were Federal work study only.
- Students were paired up according to experience and abilities in informal mentor/mentee groupings.

**Continuing Assessment**

- More training needed.
- Possible need to eliminate staff.
- Students had better back-up from peers and another person to discuss solutions to situations, and newer students had an on-shift model of exemplary behavior and service.

**Initial Assessment**

- In first academic year overall student hours of coverage increased almost 25%, and shifts were regularly double-staffed.
- Students had better training on shifts and in situations.
- Quality control measures must be enacted to ensure the quality of user interactions remains high and consistent.

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