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# The Undergraduate that Could: Crafting A Collaborative Student Training Program

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# **The Undergraduate that Could: Crafting A Collaborative Student Training Program**

## **Abstract**

Since the mid-19th century, student worker programs have been an integral component of academic libraries, and the evolution of the profession has put more students, even undergraduates, into positions with greater responsibility, raising questions about the level of expertise of which undergraduate students are capable. The authors address these questions through the lens of the collaborative redevelopment of two distinct library student worker programs at a small liberal arts college. Included is a discussion of successes and challenges, as well as a consideration of the benefits of a “cross-library” support system in developing such a program.

**Keywords:** undergraduates, student library assistants, music libraries, training, collaboration

## **Introduction**

College of the Holy Cross is a Jesuit, undergraduate-only liberal arts institution located in Worcester, MA. Its small student body (approximately 3,000 FTE) and 174-acre campus produce a tight-knit community among students, faculty, and staff. The college has four libraries, including three on-site: the Music and Science branches and the main Dinand Library. Each of the branches has a dedicated following of students who either major in or have a passion for their subject areas, which has helped each branch to develop a unique culture and a strong connection with their associated academic departments. Both the Music and Science branches have dedicated staffs

including at least one librarian and one paraprofessional each, and all three campus libraries rely heavily on the contributions of student workers.

Student workers in the Holy Cross Libraries are largely recipients of federal work-study awards. With a few exceptions, campus policy requires students to work in the dining hall their freshman year, meaning that most library employees are at least second-year students. Just as each branch has its own culture, each has its own policies and procedures for hiring student employees, and each utilizes student employees in different ways. In the Science Library, for instance, student workers primarily perform circulation and shelving functions; in the Music Library, student workers must shelf-read, handle practice room keys and perform processing tasks more typical of paraprofessional work in addition to manning the circulation desk; and in the larger Dinand Library, student workers are assigned to a range of tasks across multiple departments (and under multiple supervisors) including circulation, reference, reserves, digital scholarship, and the College Archives.

Like many academic library systems, the Holy Cross Libraries have a rich history of student employment, dating at least as far back as the opening of Dinand Library in 1927. Students began sitting at the Dinand Reference Desk in 2006, albeit without reference-specific training. The Music Library's history is somewhat shorter, dating to its founding as a separate branch in 1978. However, in both branches, the needs of library staff and the nature of student assistant positions have evolved significantly, requiring a closer look at what it means to be a student worker in the Holy Cross Libraries.

This paper will address undergraduate student expertise through the lens of the collaborative redevelopment of two distinct library student worker programs. Through

examination of successes and challenges, the authors will introduce new insights on the topic of student training program design, highlight the benefits of a “cross-library” support system, and present a unique example of collaboration between specialists and generalists in the development of a rigorous and tailored student worker training methodology. Ultimately, the authors will consider the question: can undergraduate students adequately support enhanced and expanded front-line services? Through consideration of this question, this paper will speak to the interests of library administrators, particularly regarding student worker programs’ contributions to flexible service models and institutional educational goals, and to the pedagogical and professional benefits of this model for the undergraduate student.

## **Literature Review**

### *Why Student Workers?*

The library literature is not lacking in discussions of the value of the student worker. As White (1985, 93) chronicles, there is evidence of libraries utilizing student assistants as early as the mid-19th century, although the nature of these roles has varied widely over time and between libraries. Some of the earlier literature, in particular, is aware of the pitfalls of utilizing and of properly training student assistants (a struggle with which many a modern supervisor might empathize). In other reports, however, students shine through as a valuable source of labor that allowed small and understaffed libraries to maintain impressive collections and service (94). Nevertheless, White cannot help but conclude that student workers, at any and all levels, provide necessary support for librarians’ work (97).

Librarians then, as now, debated what role students should play in relation to librarians, how they should be hired and trained, and whether they should be trusted with higher-level duties (White 1985, 95-96). Much of this debate, however, comes back to the core question of why one might choose student workers to replace librarian labor. White cites case studies as far back as the 1970s at University of New Hampshire, SUNY Cortland, and California State University, in which student workers alleviated librarian workloads by supporting a tiered system (94). This is a rationale seen often in the modern literature on student assistants, especially as librarians take on increasing duties beyond the reference desk. Peters (2015) describes how shifting to a student worker plus on-call librarian arrangement at Central Michigan University proved one way to alleviate increasingly-burdensome librarian schedules; for Central Michigan, this was an especially prudent choice in light of steadily-decreasing reference desk traffic. Decreasing reference questions have prompted transitions in service at many institutions, including in Dinand Library (as reported in Whelan and Hansen 2017), where this student worker model also supports a burgeoning research consultation program.

Beyond convenience, there is also an argument to be made for the benefits of students working with other students. Bodemer cites the educational theories of Piaget and Vygotsky as a basis for the cognitive and social benefits of peer-assisted learning (PAL) (2014, 163), a technique already being used elsewhere in higher education. PAL, Bodemer argues, is a natural fit for higher education and for academic libraries specifically, and was implemented successfully as early as the 1970s. Use of this technique continues to the present day, including through the LibRAT program at Bodemer's own institution, California Polytechnic-San Luis Obispo. Hasty (2001) views

student workers on a more practical level, as public relations assets; as he aptly notes, “the library student assistant is identified more with the library than is the librarian” (34), making them ideal candidates to represent and promote the library to their fellow students.

### *Best Practices*

Many efforts have been made to articulate best practices for conducting student worker programs. A survey of the literature reveals that these practices are as various as the institutions reporting on them. While good hiring practices are often mentioned as an important aspect of successful programs (for examples, see Borin 2001 and especially Manley and Holley 2014), there has arguably been more said about the need for solid training.

One common theme seems to be that staff time (and/or paid student time) for completing this training is often at a premium (for example Gibbs, Chen, and Bernas 2001). As a result, independent training exercises such as worksheets and quizzes are a popular medium for conveying at least part of students’ training curriculum (c.f., Borin 2001; Connell and Mileham 2006; Manley and Holley 2014; Neuhaus 2001). At University of Northern Iowa, Neuhaus (2001) found that written exercises, which students had to bring to librarians in-person for further consultation, allowed for more individualized training experiences with more exposure to library staff. Of course, this came with the necessary tradeoff of increased staff time, increased student time spent training, and increased inconsistency as students attempted to balance extensive training against their service duties.

Some libraries have had particular success transitioning their training to an online environment, especially through the use of a learning management system (LMS)

(Gibbs, Chen, and Bernas 2001; Power 2011), while others continue to rely on a print format or a combination of the two. Gibbs, Chen, and Bernas report that students may fail to complete training when left to self-paced, online environments, particularly if they are unaware that their completion may be tracked (2001, 88). At UNC Pembroke, however, Power (2011) found the LMS to be an improvement over traditional training because of its ability to streamline documentation, communication and scoring, because it is more likely to ensure consistency in training, and because students far prefer this method.

Regardless of method, there is evidence in the literature that a personal touch helps. While Manley and Holley (2014) begin their training program at Marygrove College with a week of self-paced work, they also require students to spend an additional week shadowing a librarian, and to spend their first week of regular work co-staffing with a more experienced staff member, interspersed with plenty of on-the-job training. Reporting from California State San Marcos, Borin (2001) presents a similar training model, constructed on a combination of worksheets, extensive training on the reference interview and appropriate referrals (which Borin argues might be best provided via observation), and a variety of role-playing exercises.

Perhaps the strongest argument for this kind of individualized training, however, comes from Florida International University. In reporting on the library's student worker program, Hasty points out that student worker training is often overly task-based in comparison to training programs for new paraprofessionals and professionals (2001, 34). FIU's program seeks to provide a "professional quality training program" for student assistants that focuses, not just on rote task, but moreso on the principles of both customer and library service. For their program to succeed, he argues, "[e]ach

student assistant must realize that his or her role in library services and public relations is crucial and not overlooked” (35). In pursuit of this goal, not only does their training program provide more depth in content, it is also extremely interactive, resting mostly on a combination of discussion, “self-teaching” and skits offered repeatedly in small-workshop settings.

### *Challenges*

It will come as no surprise to anyone who supervises student workers that the literature is also rife with discussion of the challenges of such programs. Alberta Comer (2004) offers a particularly thorough and representative overview of her experiences at Indiana State University. The difficulties Comer describes among a subset of Interlibrary Loan student workers (absenteeism, poor job performance, poor attitude, and job dissatisfaction) are not particular to libraries, or even to student worker programs — they will sound familiar to most managers. But, as Comer eloquently sums up: “...the critical function of providing services to patrons would be seriously impaired if this negative culture among student employees was allowed to continue and spread” (2004, 104).

In the case of Indiana State, communication proved to be a major issue with library student workers, and this is a theme that manifests frequently and variously in the literature. For example, Comer found that the “greatest deficiency” centered around supervisors communicating with students, a task made more difficult by difference in work schedules, high turnover in student positions, and a lack of documentation (109-110). Similarly, Faix (2014), writing from Coastal Carolina University, reports that a major difficulty in managing reference student workers stemmed from a lack of communication or clarity regarding which staff member(s) was the “true supervisor”



(314), further complicated by the disparity between student and reference librarian schedules. These issues and others were so dramatic that, even though Coastal Carolina had originally had a promising student worker program supervised by reference librarians (Faix et al. 2010), by 2013, supervision of the program had been returned to Access Services staff.

Meanwhile, at Rowan University, the biggest communication hurdle seems to have been staff-to-staff communication; that is, a lack of consensus as to what student reference assistants can and should be expected to do (Brenza, Kowalsky and Brush 2015). This is another common concern; in fact, a change in this consensus affected Coastal Carolina's program as well. Shortly after the aforementioned switch to Access Services supervision of reference workers, Faix's library began to move towards an Information Commons model. Concomitantly, their service model shifted from reference student workers answering up to READ 3 questions before referring, to a general pool of unspecialized student workers answering up to READ 1 and 2 questions before referring (Faix 2014, 316). And of course, as White (1985, 95-96) discusses, the appropriate role of student workers has been a philosophical debate in academic librarianship for quite some time.

### *Similar Cases*

The literature as summarized above clearly demonstrates the broad benefits of utilizing student workers to expand the reach of library services. In restructuring the student worker programs at the Holy Cross Libraries, the authors were particularly aware of two key distinguishing characteristics: the often-different campus culture of small liberal arts colleges (SLACs) similar to Holy Cross, and the somewhat-unusual structure of the Dinand, Music and Science branch libraries. Gonnerman and Johnson

(2016) speak specifically to student worker programs at SLACs through their own experience at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN (an institution similar in FTE, philosophy and even branch structure to Holy Cross). They consider the defining feature of their program to be the close mentoring relationship between librarians and student workers, a dynamic which, they point out, is more likely to be found in an MLIS-granting university than an undergraduate-only liberal arts college (294). For Gonnerman and Johnson, this mentoring relationship is a reflection not only of what is possible at a SLAC as opposed to a larger university context, but also of the value of aligning institutional mission with the student worker program. This is an alignment which has also been helpful at Holy Cross, particularly in the reference department where the college's motto, "men and women for and with others," is appropriate for service-oriented activities. Likewise, the authors consider a particular benefit of Holy Cross's programs to be close working relationships with the student body as well as a culture ideally positioned towards undergraduates taking on work well above what they might be expected to do elsewhere.

Finally, a notable but less-common theme echoing the authors' experiences is the working dynamic between supervisors in different branches of a multi-library system. Holtze and Maddox address some of the challenges of such a system as experienced at Saint Louis University (2002). In their context, a successful approach to student worker training involved a combination of in-person and online training, with an effort to remain consistent across supervisors and library branches. They emphasize that supervisors should have a plan and a purpose for training; be aware of student workers' learning styles; and aim towards developmental training that goes beyond the immediate tasks of the job to prepare students for their ultimate employment. The

implementation of these principles proved the most challenging and, ultimately, the most rewarding in restructuring the programs at the College of the Holy Cross Libraries.

## **Beginnings**

The authors' collaboration began to take shape in the Spring 2016 semester. At the start of this semester, both the Coordinator of Research, Teaching and Learning and the Music Librarian had been supervising their student worker programs for roughly a semester — the Coordinator having assumed supervision of the program from the Head of Research, Teaching and Learning and the Music Librarian having begun his duties, both in August 2015. At this time, it became clear that a revision to the student training programs was in order. While the existing student staffing models had been reasonably successful in the past, times had changed. A six-month vacancy between Music Librarians had highlighted a variety of inefficiencies in the existing program in the Music Library, and it presented an ideal opportunity for the new librarian to re-envision not only how the student program could alleviate professional and paraprofessional workflows, but also how it could contribute to the culture of the library. The reference department in Dinand Library had undergone significant revisions in response to staffing changes as well (documented in Whelan and Hansen 2017), transitioning from a traditional reference model to a tiered, on-call model that emphasized scheduled appointments and left librarians staffing far fewer evening/weekend hours.

In both locations, student employees were increasingly being asked, in response to these changes, to take charge of their spaces, to serve as the primary representatives

of key library services, and to perform higher-level tasks without direct supervision, whether that included answering in-depth questions or performing complicated procedures. This raised a number of questions: could undergraduates rise to the challenge of running services without supervision? Could they be trusted with the responsibility of professionally representing the libraries? And, if so, how could the authors, their supervisors, prepare them to succeed in doing so?

At first, both supervisors were grappling with these questions on their own. However, the closeness of the Holy Cross Libraries' staff led to informal conversations over coffee and at staff events, followed by a deeper collaboration. Despite the differing nature of the student worker positions, many of the same concerns (e.g. student professionalism) as well as the same needs (e.g. for robust training materials and successful examples) were present in both programs. This realization allowed the authors to begin sharing resources and support, and in the summer of 2016 it evolved into a concerted effort to completely redesign both the Reference Assistant and Music Library Student Assistant training programs.

### **Creating a Successful Training Program**

As the literature demonstrates, designing a comprehensive training program is one of the largest challenges to undergraduate student worker success. In order to foster exceptional work performance, programs need to consider students' learning styles, differences in campus cultures, the significant time investment needed from supervisors to administer the program, and the value of continuous training. Of course, no one training program is adequate for all undergraduate academic libraries, but there are many common themes between programs. While formal assessment has not yet been

conducted, the following discussion is based on anecdotal observations by the authors and by colleagues in other library departments who interact with student workers.

Both programs contain many similarities, however, the branch libraries tend to have different priorities and responsibilities when compared to the large, central branch. For instance, students are required to keep the Music Library open during times when the Music Librarian and the (paraprofessional) Music Library Assistant are unavailable. At Holy Cross, each library often shares student workers with other libraries; thus, students also need to be aware of the intricacies of differences between main and branch libraries to understand how their job duties differ. Dinand Library has multiple departments of student workers: access services which handles main circulation desk duties, stack shifts, interlibrary loan, and course reserves; archives; content and information strategies, which handles print processing; and, of course, reference. In short, responsibilities in Dinand Library are spread across a larger group of students where not everyone handles every task. All Music Library students have the same group of specialized duties, equating to most positions in Dinand Library except that of Reference Assistants. These differences in position responsibilities have necessarily informed individual approaches to each student worker program. For a detailed comparison of the distinct features of each training program, see Table 1.

### *Cultural Challenges*

A major barrier in incorporating new policies for both programs was the process of changing existing work cultures. Seasoned student workers had difficulty taking policy changes seriously, particularly when these added more work to their day-to-day responsibilities. It would be remiss not to underscore this challenge, in part because of the personnel issues that may arise when implementing change. In contrast, new hires

were eager to acclimate to these policies. The importance of explaining the reasoning behind old and new library policies in great detail, to both new and returning workers, quickly became apparent. Although it may seem obvious, this greater depth of understanding is critical to students' job satisfaction. Students were more likely to accept policy changes if they understood and felt invested in the reasoning for the change. For example, the Music Librarian approached a change in scheduling policies by communicating to students that he wanted shift times to be convenient for them; however, he ensured that these times also met the needs of circulation desk staffing.

Undergraduate students also need to understand and connect how their work relates to the larger mission of the library. The Coordinator of Research, Teaching and Learning found success in positioning her student workers as a part of a complete reference "team," and in articulating that time spent at the reference desk doing a myriad of projects completes Dinand's reference services circle. In the Music Library, specific processing tasks of musical scores and other special formats (and the purpose of these tasks) can be difficult to comprehend for student workers who are new to the finer intricacies of music publishing. It has been helpful to remind students that the libraries' service philosophy culminates in Holy Cross' dedication to "men and women for and with others," a statement echoed in their classes. When students vacate their positions and proceed to the next step in their careers, it is hoped that they leave confident in the connection between their library work and this mission, and that they bring with them practical information literacy skills.

To understand concepts pertinent to librarianship, students often need guidance in taking learned information and using it in a structured situation, so that they learn tasks first-hand (e.g. learning by doing). Asking questions can supplement their

understanding, but at Holy Cross, there is a pervasive culture of perfectionism on campus, which precludes students from asking questions. Addressing this culture head-on has been vital to the success of the library student worker programs. In Dinand Library, it has been important to be explicit about core expectations and competencies. The Reference Assistant program uses a scaffolded approach: students are expected to handle basic tasks at the beginning of an academic year with increasing responsibilities added by the end of the first semester, culminating in complete training by the end of the second semester. Thus, students are aware of what they are expected to do as well as what they are **not** expected to do. For example, students are not expected to competently answer extended reference questions in their first, second, or even third or fourth week on the job. This scaffolded approach complements usual traffic and research patterns in the fall semester, which also serves students well in on-the-job training. In the Music Library, students can be unfamiliar with the content and formats specific to music research and critical to music discovery, including publication and distribution practices. Thus, many basic concepts about music publishing and the significant duplication across the Music Library collection needs to be explained to ensure students understand how best to help patrons; for example, why a score for one piece may be published in thirty different derivations and versions, or that using the search terms “Moonlight Sonata” returns everything but the piece in question. Without additional subject understanding, student workers will frequently make mistakes (for instance, neglecting to completely check-in sets of musical parts); however, once they understand these nuances, comprehension translates to better work performance.

### *Setting Expectations*

To enact any new initiative, clear expectations must be established as soon as the change occurs. Students have the ability to rise to the standards required of them; the higher the standards, the more effective workers students become. Students in both programs have a mandatory meeting the day before classes begin in the fall, led by the relevant supervisors. During this meeting, basic policies and procedures are established so that all students go into their shifts with a working knowledge of what is expected of them, and so that any initial misunderstandings or questions can be quickly addressed. Both supervisors have had success requiring students to sign a contract to confirm that they understand their job duties and what is expected of them. This contract is signed after initial training and before officially beginning work, and it functions as a written record of students' agreement to abide by the library's policies.

For many undergraduate students, work-study positions are their first jobs; thus, supervisors must recognize that all students work and learn at different speeds and in a variety of ways. Learning styles need to be taken into consideration when training new student workers to achieve the joint goal of having each student understand expectations as thoroughly as possible. For example, it has been helpful to explain policies and procedures in student handbooks followed by practical applications using worksheets or watching training videos. Offering training in a variety of formats has allowed students to readily retain the information expected of them, and both programs have utilized Moodle, the college's LMS, to create "course" sites to host training materials and other work documents. For Dinand Library's reference department, this includes information such as worksheets, training manual, job description, student schedule, and a link to reference statistics. In the Music Library, there is a series of training videos which are updated yearly. Students are expected to watch the videos



before their first shift in August to have a basic understanding of library policies, expectations, and technical “how-tos,” due to the library’s reliance on competent student workers the first week of the fall semester.

Students appreciate clearly defined expectations, which make it easier for them to rise to the occasion and sometimes even exceed initial expectations. They also appreciate when supervisors are willing to acknowledge their particular talents and/or interests, and to tailor work to those interests. In the Music Library, students are tasked with an array of projects that are negotiable based on student interest and prior experiences. For instance, many music majors enjoy pamphlet binding of musical scores or shelf-reading sections relevant to their instrument or musical interest, while non-majors prefer to shelf-read books or work on labeling projects. Keeping each student’s interests in mind when assigning special projects can be a more rewarding experience for both students and supervisors because it allows students to perform work that is meaningful to them. In Dinand Library, the reference collection in the main reading room is divided into equal sections for shelf-reading, and students are encouraged to pick sections relevant to their majors or interests. Additionally, many training activities encourage students to utilize library resources relevant to their studies. This has proved successful in engaging students in their jobs to a higher degree.

#### *Time Investment and Return*

Another significant challenge to implementing a successful training program is the time investment required of the supervisor, particularly during students’ first weeks on the job. In order to adequately explain policies and procedures to the level of understanding required of many paraprofessional staff positions, a significant time investment is required not only for initial training, but also periodically to ensure

continued development and training of student staff. This requires a commitment to establishing good work habits from the beginning; otherwise, significant time may be lost in chasing students for training, checking weekend logs to inquire about attendance issues, arguing with students about what they “should” have to do, to name but a few of the consequences once frequently encountered (in addition to inevitably having to fire and re-train new students).

The benefits of investing time in quality training have continually outweighed the initial cost. In Dinand Library, a highly-trained student workforce has enabled librarians to shift towards an on-call/appointment-focused model with fewer evening hours, while trusting that the reference desk has adequate coverage, patrons are being offered appropriate assistance, and difficult research questions are being referred to a librarian. The Music Library is staffed by student workers many night and weekend hours with no adult supervisors present; so, creating a self-sufficient work environment with written and documented policies and procedures has translated to a higher level of off-hours service to patrons. Additionally, many students serving in both positions have become positive ambassadors for the library and its services among their fellow students, faculty, and other administrators on campus. This, in turn, elevates the reputation of the library and its services to constituents in new and inventive ways. There is no better promotion of the library services and profession than students sharing with their friends.

In sum, a successful training program must be linked to documented learning outcomes and to the philosophy of librarianship. It is important to emphasize the end goal to students when they are acclimating to their work environments so that they understand how their work performance affects service points. Learning objectives are

ultimately tied to information literacy skills, and library student workers ought to have a much greater understanding of these skills than other students. The authors emphasize to their students that the library can be a valuable first job experience if they apply themselves to the task. Time after time, students rise to meet expectations set for them; however, lax expectations often cause students to care less-deeply about their jobs, which causes other issues (e.g. attendance, performance, and behavioral problems). Moreover, students need to be shown appreciation on a regular basis; they are critical to successful library operations, and should, optimally, be recognized both for the importance of their work to library services and for their ability to rise to a professional level of performance.

### **Points of Collaboration**

In developing these separate training programs, the authors were able to identify commonalities which have made it possible to collaborate, consult, and exchange throughout the design process. Despite the apparent differences in the Reference Assistant and Music Library Student Assistant positions, there proved to be significant content overlap. Thoroughly training students in referrals, for instance, is arguably the most crucial component of both training programs, since in both cases students are asked to rise to a level beyond typical undergraduate positions (even elsewhere on the same campus). Likewise, certain library functions and services, such as use of the ILS and discovery layer, interlibrary loan, Library of Congress Classification and other basic information, are equally essential to both groups of students.

Training methodology is another area where it has been possible to adapt and exchange rather than reinventing the wheel. When considering the best approach for training new students, some principles are widely applicable: videos, active learning

exercises (including worksheets), and regular communication through the LMS, in addition to semi-annual meetings, are often more effective than the supervisors droning on at a single August training session. In comparing notes, the authors discovered early on that their physical presence as supervisors also played an important role. For example, in the first year of training, the Music Librarian was present for and carefully structured every student's first shift; since Reference Assistant shifts had historically been during off-hours and on the watch of an evening circulation supervisor, the Coordinator did not. This made a significant difference in establishing authority and a respectful relationship. The next year, the Coordinator followed the Music Librarian's lead and rearranged her schedule to be present for the first week of evening reference shifts, with extremely positive results. Training materials have been another easy point of collaboration, and each program's training worksheets, policies/procedures manuals and other materials have taken inspiration from those of the other program.

Going forward, there is a great deal of work still to be done. As the programs progress, it is likely that they will continue to diverge in separate directions. While there are many similarities between the two programs, there are still many differences, and many different kinds of work. For Reference Assistants, of course, the emphasis of training is primarily on developing research skills, whereas student assistants in the Music Library are not intended to answer in-depth questions but need training in specialized processing tasks and circulation procedures. Students in the Music Library also must function with less supervision; Reference Assistants manage the reference desk but can quickly turn to the evening supervisors at circulation if necessary, while Music Assistants are more isolated. Despite these and other differences, however, the main element in the programs' success has been, and continues to be, the opportunity to

collaborate. Comparing notes and training materials has allowed both supervisors to inspire one another and to discover gaps in each other's programs, as well as to call upon each other to review and critique any content produced. Likewise, having a professional support system within the Libraries has been immensely valuable in navigating the programs' many changes, finding solutions to problems, and avoiding the unique kind of discouragement that seems to accompany training students for professional norms.

### **Looking Forward: Conclusions, Caveats, and Lessons Learned**

There is much to look forward to with the student worker programs as planning begins for the 2018-2019 academic year. The Music Librarian is in the midst of refreshing the Music Library's policies manual with the goal of developing a detailed, full-fledged procedures manual that will also preserve the institutional history of the Music Library. The Coordinator of Research, Teaching and Learning, meanwhile, is launching an advanced, second-year curriculum for the Reference Assistant program.

Maintaining a training program, of course, is a never-ending process, and both supervisors regularly revise the schedule of training meetings, training materials, and the general approach of each student worker program. Student feedback can be one source of these revisions, when thoughtfully provided, and both the Coordinator and the Music Librarian have solicited feedback via anonymous questionnaires in the past. While a majority of the commentary has been of a practical nature -- i.e., "I did not like the fact that I was not able to use my laptops (sic), and that I had to do shelf reading every shift" (Music Library), or "The shifts aren't at a good time, we can't eat dinner (4:30 is too early to eat and 8 is too late)" (Dinand Library) -- we've also received

feedback on what students are learning from their training, for example, “I definitely feel equipped [to answer questions I receive] because I learned many things that I would not have known before” (Dinand Library), and “[The training was] definitely adequate--the videos explained everything well and I got walked through what I needed to do on the first day I started. It's also really easy to use the handbook for any questions” (Music Library). The authors incorporate revisions and concerns expressed by students whenever possible.

The authors’ experiences have been a solid lesson in the value of cross-branch (and in some ways, cross-disciplinary) collaboration, but also a lesson in the core principles behind a successful student worker training program, many of which were addressed in the literature review. A strong student worker program starts with a diligent hiring process or, when hiring is out of the supervisor’s control, with a clear statement of position expectations from, if not prior to, the very first shift. Any training program must take into account students’ prior knowledge and experience (and/or, the lack thereof) as well as the level and sorts of job duties. Scheduling, too, is key; a training program for students working 2-3 times a week will take a different shape than one where students have a single weekly shift. However, communication is of the utmost importance: responsibilities, specific tasks, procedures and other important information must be communicated to students clearly and frequently, whether in a manual, through electronic messages or face-to-face with the supervisor.

As White (1985) aptly addresses, student worker programs have been an integral part of academic libraries for some time, and the evolution of the profession as well as continuing budgetary and staffing concerns will likely make their role ever-more important. From an administrative perspective, student worker programs allow for

more flexible service models, while also shoring up relationships between librarians and the student community and enabling a form of peer-to-peer interaction which offers demonstrated pedagogical benefits. In contexts where a thorough and rigorous training program can be applied, utilizing student workers additionally offers unique and beneficial student employment experiences, while empowering students to take on job duties well beyond the scope of their stereotypical role.

For many libraries, including those at College of the Holy Cross, growing student worker programs will put undergraduate students in the librarian's seat, and put librarians in the position of asking: can the undergraduate student rise to this occasion? The authors' experiences at this small liberal arts college have shown that, with proper training, dedicated supervisors, and above all, trust – the undergraduate, indeed, can.

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**Table 1.** Comparison of training programs.

	<b>Dinand Reference Assistants</b>	<b>Music Library Student Assistants</b>
<b>Job duties</b>	Shelf and shelf-read reference collection. Assist patrons with research. Track statistics. Maintain printers.	Shelf and shelf-read. Circulate materials. Open/close and maintain Music Library spaces. Process materials.
<b>Hiring process</b>	Access Services supervisors recommend reliable workers with 1 year of experience.	Application and interview with Music Librarian and Music Library Assistants.
<b>Training cycle</b>	Group meetings followed by intensive training for 1 week and weekly worksheets (2-year curriculum).	Group meetings followed by intensive training for several weeks and assigned tutorials.
<b>Training materials</b>	Library policies; call numbers; catalog searching; reference interview skills; keyword selection and Booleans; citation formats; research databases; source evaluation; et al.	Music Department spaces and layout; library policies; call numbers; circulation functions in ILS; catalog searching; physical processing of new scores, CDs, and DVDs; special formats and music publishing.