Moving to Action with Your Student Employees: Cultivating Success at the Reference Desk

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Background

We needed changes in student employee training based on:

- potential of student employment as a High-Impact Educational Practice (Kuh)
- role of Iowa GROW in making connections between academics & job skills
- vocational development focus related to University of Dayton institutional values

Elements

- Online training
  - Isidore content (institutional LMS)
  - Quizzes
  - Google forms

- “Searching UD CATalog” game
  - Built using Twine
  - Supplements LoC and catalog search training

- Badges
  - Credly
  - Can be displayed on LinkedIn

- In-person training
  - All Info Commons departments
  - Small group and one-on-one
  - Student-led training

- Team building
  - Ice breaker games
  - End of semester party
  - Staff and student employee directory

Outcomes

Student employees will:

- Articulate connections between their student employee role and vocational and academic interests
- Set goals for intentional skill development, tracking progress through self-reflective exercises
- Recognize and explain their role in community building and supporting the institutional mission through work with patrons of varying needs and skill levels

Feedback

“When I need help, I know that I can go to anyone because of the combined training.” -- Lauren

“I really feel that helping [students] find relevant academic articles and fixing the printer when it inevitably breaks down makes their days a bit better and is a way I contribute to community at UD.” -- Sean

Recommendations

- Show, don’t tell students the value of your training program
- Use tools students already know, like an institutional LMS or Google classroom
- Incorporate active learning strategies: games, leadership opportunities, earning badges or rewards
- Collect data formally & informally for assessment, direct student feedback most valuable