The Undergraduate Experience: Is it Enhanced Through Employment as a Library Student Worker?

Rutgers University has made this article freely available. Please share how this access benefits you.
Your story matters, [https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/47058/story/]

Citation to Publisher  
Version: No citation available.

Citation to this Version: Charles, Leslin H., Lotts, Megan & Todorinova, Lily. The Undergraduate Experience: Is it Enhanced Through Employment as a Library Student Worker?, 2015. Retrieved from doi:10.7282/T31J9CMZ.

Terms of Use: Copyright for scholarly resources published in RUcore is retained by the copyright holder. By virtue of its appearance in this open access medium, you are free to use this resource, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings. Other uses, such as reproduction or republication, may require the permission of the copyright holder.

Article begins on next page
The Undergraduate Experience: Is it Enhanced Through Employment as a Library Student Worker?
Leslin Charles–Instructional Design Librarian, Megan Lotts–Art Librarian, and Lily Todorinova–Undergraduate Experience Librarian

ABSTRACT
Student employment on campus can be one of the best predictors of academic success. There are many implied benefits for students working in the libraries, including greater understanding of library resources, as well as proximity to services and people with expertise.

The authors surveyed approximately 350 Rutgers University Library student workers, and received 121 responses and 69 completed surveys. The survey gathered information about undergraduate student workers, including who they are and how they engage with university clubs, organizations, and partnering units, such as residence halls and tutoring centers.

The authors investigated the library contribution to the undergraduate experience of student workers, to see if there is a correlation between academic success (perceived or real) and working in an academic research library. The authors will address whether working in an academic research library helps students form community or provides them with valuable peer networking opportunities. The results of this survey will inform new programs and activities to enhance the experience of the undergraduate library student worker and provide additional mentorship and professional development.

HYPOTHESES
H 1. Library employment is related to higher than average academic achievement, retention, and information literacy/critical thinking skills. In addition, library employment is positively correlated with students’ development of skills which employers have reported to value, such as technology, communication, teamwork, and others.
H 2. Working on special projects and being mentored by library faculty and staff is positively correlated with academic achievement and better job satisfaction.
H 3. Library employment is positively correlated with greater involvement on campus, through organizations and academic, as well as non-academic activities.
H 4. Students who are employed at the library form and experience “a community,” which is particularly important in a commuter campus environment.

RESULTS
Students indicate that working in the library has influenced their academic performance.

Skills that students say working in the library has helped them to develop.

Students are able to make connections/friends by working in the library.

SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCLUSION
- Library employment has academic, professional, and social benefits, and is more than “just a job.”
- It is fair to conclude that we are not tapping into the full potential & skill sets of the Rutgers University Library student workers.
- In conveying their value to the institution, academic libraries can include the benefits that employment in the libraries bring to the undergraduate experience.