Fostering Great Experiences for UX-Tasked Student Workers

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Designing for Digital
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1. THREE DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS
Penn State
CSU San Marcos
(and also the University of Central Florida)
2. FOSTERING SUCCESS
Create the right environment
Building partnerships

★ Value their voices
★ Make use of their networks and experience as a student
★ Invite them to the table
How do we make the experience meaningful?
Create meaningful work

- Let them make important decisions
- Offer flexible schedules so they can incorporate their work into their already busy schedules
- Give them options in the type of work they do - don’t give them grunt work
Create meaningful work

★ Provide real projects with challenges to be solved
★ Consider longer projects so they develop a sense of ownership
★ Let them fail once in a while - it’s how we learn best
★ Overcoming tough challenges can bring immense joy
How do we support our student workers?
Top motivation

★ Earning money
★ Gaining work experience
★ Developing skills
★ Building a resume

Survey responses

★ Positive feelings
★ No correlation to their majors
★ Not beyond “a token line on a resume”


Training begins with supervisors’ intentions.

Provide support (besides paycheck)

- Clear expectations
- Ongoing encouragement and engagement
- Work experience
- Applicable skills
- Research opportunities
- Emotional support
- Diversity (“representation matters”)
3. OVERCOMING CHALLENGES
Sometimes things don’t go as planned.

★ Investment of your time
★ High turnover
★ Interest in work
★ Lacking soft skills
4. BENEFITS FOR STUDENT WORKERS
They will graduate...

★ Workplace skills
★ To put on a resume
★ Gain confidence
★ Learn about a different career path
★ Ongoing mentorship
★ Connections in the field
5. BENEFITS FOR LIBRARIES
Their voice and perspective

- Both users and service providers
- Tips for recruitment and retention
- Genuine responses from testers, peer-to-peer interaction
- Reducing other students’ “library anxiety”
- Their energy and personality
Examples

★ Photo elicitation
★ Cognitive mapping
[B]y understanding their contribution to the success of their student workers, [libraries] may be better equipped to communicate their overall value to the university community.

Thanks!

Any questions?

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