

Assessment & Planning: Student Hourly Impact Coding 2022

Purpose

As the largest employer of hourly student employees on campus, the Libraries wanted to better understand the impact of student hourly workers on the Libraries' services and on the student employees personally. Funding for student hourly employees was expected to be a key request in the annual budget narrative and impact data and stories would assist in the Libraries' ongoing advocacy. This project provided an opportunity to raise the visibility of the hidden work students do to provide services within the Libraries and helped us enrich the student experience and grow as a learning organization, two strategic goals for the Libraries.

Methods

- The UW Libraries established a Student Employee Scholarship program in 1998 that has grown steadily since. Students apply with a short essay on a specific topic provided by the scholarship committee and winners receive \$1000 toward their tuition and fees.
- Assessment staff reviewed the 84 winning student employee scholarship essays from the years 2021-2022 as qualitative data. The prompt for these applications were: (1) *Tell a story describing a contribution you made to UW Libraries and its impact.* or (2) *How has working at UW Libraries supported your personal, academic, or professional growth?*
- Assessment staff identified impact stories within the overall essay, extracted relevant quotes describing what happened, and applied content codes. Based on the methodology described in Belanger, Faber, and Oakleaf (2017), the two key elements in identifying impact are: 1. What the library, staff member, or student employee provided and 2. what this enabled the respondent, user, or writer to accomplish.

Results

High-level data about where hourly student employees worked was compiled with quotes and summary statistics from this project. The stories were used in the UW Libraries' Provost Reinvestment Fund (PRF) request for backfill for unfunded minimum wage increases for Student Hourly Wages. This request was approved, and \$500,000 was added to the Libraries' budget ongoing.

References

Belanger, J., Faber, M., & Oakleaf, M. (September 2018). Three Thousand Library Users Can't Be Wrong: Demonstrating Library Impact Using One Open-Ended Survey Question. Britto, M., & Kinsley, K., eds. *Academic Libraries and the Academy: Strategies and Approaches to Demonstrate Your Value, Impact and Return on Investment*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

Appendix: Codes

- Type of impact
 - Personal: the impact that working in the Libraries has on the student personally
 - Organizational: the impact the student helps the organization make on users through the services they offer and the expansion of the Libraries capacity
- Category of impact
 - Academic success & Research skills
 - Career development
 - Connection / Community
 - Personal growth or skills development (e.g., people skills, confidence navigating the university)
 - Transformative experience (changed directions/career path/research interests)
 - Innovation (new idea/contribution to emerging area)
 - Helping people/User support/customer service
 - Other
- Feelings of gratitude or appreciation; positive emotions such as inspiration, motivation, or excitement without the two "impact" categories, and providing feedback or contribution to operations without a specified result were not coded as impact.