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Library Olympics for Student Employees

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PURPOSE

Celebrate student employees with a year-end appreciation event. Adapt it for use as a training event at the beginning of the year.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Student circulation staff

INGREDIENTS

- Enthusiastic and competitive student workers
- At least one stopwatch-wielding staff member for each event
- Signs with event names and instructions posted at each event
- A score sheet for each participant (see figure 47.1)
- A paper torch
- Gold, silver, and bronze medals
- An upbeat playlist

INSTRUCTIONS

Preparation

1. Design events that showcase skills student workers use at their jobs.

2. Plan carefully and test events with staff before the Olympics to make any necessary adjustments.
3. Recruit staff to help.
4. At least one person should moderate each event. This allows students to move among events at their convenience.
5. Use a scheduling tool to find a good time and date when students are able to attend.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin the festivities with an opening ceremony.
2. Explain the rules for each event and pass the torch to launch the competition.
3. Instruct students to take their score sheets with them as they move through the events.
4. Have staff monitor each event, timing students, checking for accuracy, and recording scores.
5. Encourage accuracy by assigning penalty time for mistakes.

Name: _____

Event	Base Time	+ Penalty Time	= Final Time	Points Scored (3, 2, 1, 0)
Shelving Spring (2nd floor)				
Tiding the Tomes (1st floor)				
Ream Retrieval (2nd floor)				
Circulation Circus (Circ Desk)				
Book Balance Bolt				

Figure 47.1. A sample scoresheet.

6. For each event, score three points for the fastest time, two for second, and one for third.
7. At the end, tally the scores to find out which students have won gold, silver, and bronze.
8. Top it off with a closing ceremony, awarding medals to students with the highest scores.

Example Events

Shelving Sprint

1. Select five to six books with call numbers that require students to read carefully and travel to different areas in the library.
2. Time how long it takes from when the student picks up the books to when they return.
3. Follow the student to the books they just shelved to verify that they are correct.
4. Retrieve the books for the next student.

Paging the Pages

1. Give competitors a list of books to find and time their progress. Provide a basket to carry the books.
2. Compile a different list for each participant, similar in location and size, to avoid reshelving books during the event.
3. Make sure the books are in proper locations before the event.
4. If planning far enough in advance, store the books on a cart and shelve them just before the event begins.

Tidying the Tomes

1. Students put a set of books in the correct

call number order.

2. Choose books with similar call numbers—the longer and more confusing, the better!
3. Place books on a book cart. Cover cart with a sheet to deter peeking before and between events.
4. Decide on a default out-of-order arrangement so everyone starts on level playing ground.
5. Create a photo answer key for both the out-of-order and correct positions for easy setup.

Circulation Circus

1. Competitors must check out a book.
2. Desensitize books.
3. Run with them through the security gate and back without setting off the alarm.
4. Sensitize them.
5. Check them in.
6. Run them through the security gate again, this time setting off the alarm.

This event inflates circulation numbers for the selected titles, so make sure your collection development librarian is on board, or have students scan books without the ILS running.

Book Balance Bolt

1. Tape out racing lanes on the floor in an open area of the library.
2. Select books that are roughly uniform in size, shape, and weight.
3. Time each student as they walk from the start to the finish line while balancing the book on their head.

4. Dropped the book? Back to the starting line!
5. Three drops earns a score of zero.
6. Multiple students can compete simultaneously, provided there is a staff member timing each student.

CAUTIONS/ADVICE

It can be difficult to schedule the Library Olympics when the majority of student workers are free or to predict attendance. Sending your student workers a Doodle poll or using a Facebook event to invite students may aid scheduling.

The Library Olympics are fun, loud, and disruptive. It's best to do this when the library is closed. If this is not an option, schedule the event during the slowest hours, locate it away from patrons, and communicate with library users about what is happening.

ASSESSMENT

The Library Olympics not only allow your students to compete with each other but also allow you to assess their performance on circulation tasks in a fun way. If you note that students perform poorly in a certain event, you may want to offer additional training in that area.