

# Lab Management

Kathleen Ford  
University of California, Los Angeles

## Cooperative Recruitment of Student Employees/Classroom Service Unit, UCSB

by Patricia Lamb  
University of California, Santa Barbara

*"Of course, most of us want the **most** energetic, intelligent and eager students working in our labs. So, how do we find them?"*

Hiring, training and supervising student employees is an important part of most lab directors' responsibilities. Students are a pleasure to work with. They have energy, intelligence, new ideas and are eager to work in an interesting environment. Of course, most of us want the **most** energetic, intelligent and eager students working in our labs. So, how do we find them? Following is a description of the strategy we have developed at the Instructional Development Department of the University of California, Santa Barbara—the third largest employer of students on the campus. Our Classroom Services Unit alone employs more than 100 students each year. The jobs are not only interesting, but also require technical training. Hiring students in the fall, two days before classes begin, does not make for a very pleasant Fall Quarter. Therefore the various areas of Classroom Services decided to cooperate and hold a Job Information Meeting in the spring in order to attract a diverse population of students from which to hire for the following academic year.

Our first step was to write a mission statement for our unit as a whole. We felt that if we could clearly state what it is that we are trying to accomplish, we could better convey to potential employees the types of skills and commitment we are looking for in our workers. Writing a mission statement can be an excellent exercise in organizational realization. It may be difficult to get everyone to agree on a succinct statement of purpose. In our case, even though the individual areas within Classroom Services vary considerably, we are all engaged in providing a service and could easily agree on the statement we wanted to make.

## Classroom Services Mission Statement

*Classroom Services is the arm of Instructional Development that meets the needs of professors, students and staff in all delivery and display capacities. We are the front-line point of contact for technical support in the classroom, lecture halls and special events. Our charge is to provide "no miss" service: to be on time, reliable, courteous under duress, and technically competent.*

Our next step was to design a generic job application which would work for each of the seven supervisors within Classroom Services and would further explain the requirements of the job to the applicant. The front side of our application asks for the usual information: name, address, past experience. We also included a list of the seven areas, asking applicants to indicate their first, second and third choice of area, thus facilitating the cooperative nature of the application and saving time and paper. On this one application students are actually applying for seven different jobs and are able to indicate their preferences. Lots of other information can be included on the front of the application depending on the employers' needs. We like to know when the students expect to graduate, if they would be willing to work at night, if they expect to have a work-study allocation, etc. The most interesting part of the application is on the back where we provide our mission statement and then ask a series of very important questions. Each of the seven supervisors thought about the most important skills and attitudes required for the jobs s/he had to offer and summed up their thoughts in the following five-part question: What experiences have you had which display your strengths in the areas of: 1) self-motivation, 2) punctuality, 3) reliability, 4) attention to detail, 5) dealing with a variety of people and situations? The answers not only make for some interesting reading, they also help prepare the applicants for the eventual interview.

When setting a date for the Job Information Meeting, we considered the students' schedules first and foremost. We wanted to hold the event early in the quarter before the students became too immersed in their courses and on a day which would not conflict with classes. We decided on a Saturday morning, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The location would be the Learning Labs, where there are plenty of chairs and tables already in place.

Once the date and location were set, we were ready to advertise. We asked our graphic artist for an eye-catching flier. He designed one featuring a pair of eyes with a **We Want You** theme. This flier was distributed to the Educational Opportunity Components, the Black Student Union, Latino Business Association, sororities, fraternities, on-line computer groups,

other student groups, dorms, eateries; and it was generally plastered all over the campus and the local student community. We also paid the campus newspaper for a three-day ad and posted a job request form in the work-study office.

The format of the actual event was fairly simple. The Classroom Services Manager spoke first. She welcomed the students to the meeting, described the mission and service-oriented philosophy of the unit and introduced the first supervisor. The supervisors spoke in turn, providing details about the jobs they had to offer in their areas. We included information about work schedules, training, duties, policies, rules, pay and promotion, etc. We tried to provide the students with as much information about the jobs as possible in order to allow them to make an informed choice among the areas. We allowed time for questions after each supervisor spoke and again at the end of the presentations. We then distributed the application forms and made ourselves available to answer additional questions individually. Several current student employees also attended to assist in answering questions.

After the meeting the applications were divided up among the supervisors according to first-choice area selections made by the applicants themselves. As the supervisors reviewed the applications and made decisions about whom to interview, they passed any applications they didn't intend to pursue on to the second-choice area and so on. In this way the applications were circulated among the supervisors before and during the interviewing process. Since the jobs do vary considerably in duties, scheduling and style, the needs of many different types of workers could be met by the unit as a whole—a situation that may not have been possible if the students were applying to only one area within the unit.

We considered our event a success and are repeating it this year at the beginning of Spring Quarter. We have added some outreach activities which we hope will increase the diversity of our student staff. Instead of simply distributing a flier about our event, the supervisors have divided up the responsibility of actually attending various student group meetings and visiting pertinent campus offices to make our meeting known through personal contact with the student population.

We are extremely proud of our student staff. We depend on them heavily. Their youth and vitality keep us on our toes. When they graduate, we hate to see them go, but there are always newcomers ready to take over their many responsibilities. ■

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*Kathleen Ford is Director of the Language Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles.*

*Patricia Lamb is Labs Manager, Instructional Resources, at the University of California, Santa Barbara.*

**INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES CLASSROOM SERVICES**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Application Date \_\_\_\_\_

Major \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Graduation Date (mo/yr) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ PERMANENT INFORMATION

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION**

The Classroom Services Unit includes services in the areas of:

Do you have a Work-Study allocation?  YES  NO

Do you have a Work-Study allocation?  YES  NO

How many hours would you want to work each week? Minimum \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

Please list your past work or volunteer experiences starting with your current or most recent position.

**1** Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_ Position Held \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

**2** Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_ Position Held \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

**3** Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_ Position Held \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

**4** Employee \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
 Type of Business \_\_\_\_\_ Position Held \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reason for leaving \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

(Continued on Back)

**CLASSROOM SERVICES INSTRUCTION STATEMENT**

CLASSROOM SERVICES is the core of Instructional Development that meets the needs of professors, students and staff in all delivery and display capacities. We are the front line point of contact for technical support in the classroom, lecture hall, and special events. Our charge is to provide "no min" service. To be on time, reliable, courteous under duress and technically competent.

What experiences have you had which display your strengths in the areas of:

**1. Self motivation** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Punctuality** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Reliability** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Attention to detail** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Dealing with a variety of people and situations** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a friend or relative working for Classroom Services?  YES  NO If yes, who?

References (non relative, non student)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_