

UH Libraries News

Student Success at the UH Music Library

The [Music Library](#) at the University of Houston has created a culture of leadership and collaboration among its student assistants through project-based work and ongoing training. Staff have empowered the students to take charge of projects and coordinate tasks with others, leading to an inclusive, team-oriented atmosphere that emphasizes student success.



Vocal Performance graduate student Kate DeYoung stands near the student assistants' space in the UH Music Library.

Stephanie Lewin-Lane, music librarian, says that the goal is to help students build transferable skills they can use after graduation. For example, Music Library staff established a “continuing education” program for its student assistants. Online modules were created to provide training on relevant topics such as copyright issues and time management.

"We try to balance with both practical and theoretical training, and we're always looking at new ways to improve the student assistant experience," Lewin-Lane said. By strengthening their knowledge base, "it benefits us and our student workers."

In addition to professional development, assistants have a student-centric physical space within the library that displays up-to-date information on campus resources, résumé and cover letter advice, and inspirational quotes. Music Library supervisor Timothy McGittigan emphasizes that student assistants are encouraged to reach out to staff when they need guidance. "They're always free to ask the staff anything," he said. "It's a friendly working environment."

Kaylie Kahlich was a student assistant who, after completing her Master of Music in Voice Performance, transitioned to a temporary staff member. "While in school, working at the UH Music Library gave me a leg up on research skills and critical thinking," she said. "I was also given the opportunity to work on projects related to my field of study." Since graduation, Kahlich has enjoyed assisting current music students navigate the resources of the Music Library. "I love helping first-year students get acquainted with the unique research environment of an academic library and all the resources it has to offer."

The team also found a way to make mundane tasks fun by incorporating friendly competition. The score clean-up project involved identifying damage and erasing pencil marks from nearly 40,000 music scores. The students participated in a tournament, which they named *Ye Olde Palimpsesto*, based on the medieval verb *palimpsestus*, or scraping text off of manuscripts, that motivated them to get through the large collection within a certain time frame.

Sarah Jung, a biotechnology student, said that working at the Music Library has strengthened her professional interpersonal skills and attention to detail. "This job establishes discipline, responsibility, and focus in a comfortable environment," she said. "My coworkers and supervisors are very encouraging in regards to my studies. The overall mission of the library is clear to the workers and the patrons: to establish an environment that cultivates growth in knowledge and community. As a student, I appreciate being a part of that."

Kate DeYoung is a second-year vocal performance graduate student and has also found the Music Library to be an incredibly beneficial place to work. Two of her projects involved creating a logo for the Beta Space and categorizing the sheet music

collection. “It’s been really great for my research; I’ve learned how to locate information from different places,” she said, a skill she passes on to her friends when they need help finding the right source. Her role at the Music Library has even led to collaboration with faculty for her own research project. “It’s helped me not only as a student, but also as a performer and collaborator.” She’s also been able to place new skills in marketing and promotion on her résumé as a result of her experience at the Music Library.

“In a library, there are so many different types of projects to do, and we thought this would be a great way for our students to have a learning experience, not just a job,” Lewin-Lane said. “We’re creating an environment where students are an active part of what we do.”

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