

# LEVEL UP! Online Strategies for Managing Student Workers

MARIAN UNIVERSITY  
Indianapolis®

Lynné Colbert, Acquisitions Librarian, lcolbert@marian.edu - Mother Theresa Hackelmeier Memorial Library, Marian University - Indianapolis

## LEVEL 0



Photo courtesy of Megan West  
PALNI Digital Communications Manager

### Background

Marian University is a small liberal arts university in Indianapolis, IN. The library Staff is small but mighty and thrives on the power of our student workers. To successfully manage student work, I created an online space in our learning management system, incorporated project management applications, Google apps, and free web-based tools to assist with supervision.



Photo courtesy of Lynné Colbert

### Library Demographics

- FTE: 3400+
- Full-time librarians: 3
- Part-time librarians: 2
- Student managers: 4
- Student workers: 11

## LEVEL 1

### Learning Management System (LMS)

In 2012, I took over managing student workers. The first issue I noticed was a lack of centralized communication. To solve the issue, I created a class in the university's learning management system, Canvas.



With the help of our Director of Academic Technology, we enhanced the class by creating an online space for the student handbook, orientation and training modules, and communication. Thus Student Assistant Library Orientation (SALOR) was created. Students are informed of policy changes, hour adjustments, and meetings through announcements in Canvas. I assess effectiveness of training modules through post-tests.

### Pros

- Centralized communication
- Online training platform
- Online student handbook



### Cons

- Passive communication (no interaction)
- IT spam filters strong, some notifications go to junk mail
- Students not referring to it as regularly as hoped



## LEVEL 2

### Google Calendar



In 2013, I began maintaining student work schedules in Google Calendar. I embedded the calendar in Canvas so students could view their schedules as well.

### Google Drive



I migrated all student worker documents to Google Drive to have a centralized location for files. I linked to key items within Canvas to increase student accessibility.

### Google Forms



Previously, all time off requests were done via email and would get lost in an inbox. I created a Google Form to keep track of requests as well as verify that shifts are covered.

### Pros

- Centralized location for all documents
- Students can access material from anywhere
- Time off requests are compiled on a Google Sheet for ease of viewing



### Cons

- University uses Microsoft Suite instead of Google
- Passive communication



## LEVEL 3

GAME CHANGER

### Project Management Applications

In 2015, I looked for a more efficient way to assign tasks to students. Previously, I left written notes in a file slot or wrote notes on a dry erase board. Neither method was well received.

I had students experiment with two project management platforms - Trello and Slack - to determine which better satisfied our needs. After several tests, Trello advanced as the winner.



Students agree this platform is the best online management tool I have incorporated thus far. Tasks are clearly assigned and announcements are easy to find. Librarians can clearly see what a student worker should be doing.

### Pros

- Easy to use
- Well received by students
- Any staff member can assign tasks to a student
- Smartphone app available and easy to utilize for both librarians and students



### Cons

- Students do not utilize it when not at work
- Cannot push notifications for coverage requests



## BONUS LEVEL

### Group Texting Apps

In 2017, I incorporated a group texting app, GroupMe, into my online strategy. Students already utilize the app for essential communication in the dorms. Several students asked if we could use it in the library.



It is too soon to determine the success of group texting although early experimentation is encouraging.

### Conclusion

Overall, each online resource fulfills a unique need in managing student workers. We utilize our LMS for training and orientation, Google apps for document management, Trello for project management, and GroupMe for communication. The combination of all these resources has made for a successful online management of our student workers.

### Resources

- **Canvas** – [canvas.instructure.com](https://canvas.instructure.com).
- **Google Calendar** – [google.com/calendar](https://google.com/calendar)
- **Google Drive** – [google.com/drive](https://google.com/drive)
- **Google Forms** – [google.com/forms](https://google.com/forms)
- **GroupMe** – [groupme.com](https://groupme.com)
- **Trello** – [trello.com](https://trello.com)