



HCL Partners with HUCTW in High School Intern Program



High school student worker Kenisha Cooper with her supervisor in Widener Serials Services, Library Assistant Elizabeth Do.

February 2, 2006 - HCL student worker Kenisha Cooper spends three afternoons a week shelving periodicals and helping patrons in Widener Library. In this respect, she's like student employees throughout the College Library—except that Cooper is still in high school. Since early October, the 17-year-old Cambridge Rindge and Latin student has been an intern at Widener's Serial Services division as part of the School-to-Work Program, an HUCTW-sponsored initiative.

The program, now in its sixth year at Harvard, gives students a chance to explore career ideas and think strategically about college. The goal is to teach students real-world skills: how to make decisions, solve problems, and work with others. HUCTW coordinates with the Cambridge Office of Workforce Development and the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School to place students in various Harvard offices. This is HCL's first year sponsoring a student.

"The program helps maintain our collaborative relationship with the HUCTW, while at the same time providing an opportunity for a high school student to learn new skills," said Steve Marley, Director of Human Resource Services.

"Kenisha is doing what most of our Harvard student employees do," said Library Assistant Elizabeth Do, Cooper's supervisor. Cooper reports to Serials three afternoons a week, where she spends one hour shelving and another hour working at the desk in the Newspaper Microfilm Reading Room. She prefers the latter, incidentally, because she can interact with patrons.

Do makes it a point to expose Cooper to the various aspects of library culture, arranging not only for her to talk with others in the division, but to see them in action at jobs like bookbinding. "We're having fun. She's coming from a different perspective than the college-age student workers," said Do. "And I think the experience will help her when she goes to college. It will help her use the library—she won't be intimidated."

As part of the program, Cooper will receive an ongoing project of her own—possibly relabeling a section of stacks—to complete between now and when the program finishes in May. She also attends a two-hour weekly HUCTW-sponsored seminar on Tuesday afternoons with the nine other program students.

"There we learn all the different techniques we can use on the job, and talk about what we're doing," said Cooper. The seminar sessions educate students about career exploration and workplace skills and issues through discussion, role-plays, and movies like *Office Space* and *The Firm*.

Cooper graduates this spring and hopes to enroll in Spellman College, UMass Amherst, or Northeastern. Her plan is to go pre-med and then attend dental school, but her library experience will still help her,

she thinks. "I never knew there was so much in a library. When I go to college, I'm going to know so much more."

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