

Public Comment on Student Hiring Delays

2-27-2025 | ARC Academic Senate | Sarah Lehmann

Good afternoon. I'm Sarah Lehmann, I'm a faculty librarian and the library department chair. I would like to make public comment on the topic of student hiring, and specifically the extreme delays that have been occurring with student hiring in both the Library and the LRC.

In the library, I've learned that we have students we've been trying to hire since September 2024, but who are still not hired. Last year we had similar monthslong delays with getting students and temporary classified staff hired. In talking with my library staff colleagues and our dean, here are some of the challenges they've noticed.

First, the hiring process is very complex, involving multiple steps and lots of paperwork. There are [written instructions](#) that explain the process, but these instructions don't seem to be distributed very widely. There is a lot of turnover in staff and dean positions, and these are the folks who typically would manage the student hiring process. But newly hired staff who are tasked with hiring students aren't always made aware of these instructions. It will surprise no one to learn that the instructions are very hard to find on the ARC website. ***Could it become a practice to regularly share out these instructions with anyone who might possibly be involved in student hiring?***

Second, because the hiring process is so complex, it is easy to make a small mistake. A missing signature, an incorrect budget string, or an email sent to the BSO inbox instead of the BSO hiring inbox. But when mistakes like this happen, we have noticed in the Library and LRC that there is typically not consistent or timely communication from our local BSO to help folks who are trying to do the hiring to correct the error. This means that the process can get stalled for several weeks without anyone knowing that there is a mistake that needs correcting. ***Could BSO staff proactively contact the requestor and the area dean when a mistake needs correcting?***

To make matters worse, the ONLY person who can log back into the online intent process to see or correct the mistake is the person who originally submitted the request. This causes challenges when there is staff turnover or someone puts in an intent then moves to a new role. Also, the dean can't see all the intents that are pending in their areas if the intent was initiated before their arrival. ***Is there a technological fix for this issue?***

Third, the hiring process takes a really long time. According to the instructions, if there are no mistakes it will take at minimum, 5 to 6 weeks, before a student can start working. This long timeline is not ideal. Take tutoring as an example. Faculty often recommend student tutors who have already taken their class and can support other students as tutors. These student tutors take the class and go through tutoring training, but then they must wait at minimum 5 weeks before they can begin working. This means the students in the class miss out on almost a third of a semester of tutoring support.

As an LRC tutoring faculty shared, "As we pilot embedded tutoring with the goal of supporting historically underrepresented and underserved students, these delays undermine our efforts to build strong relationships with faculty and provide timely academic support. Worse, it reflects poorly on us, making it seem as though we are not following through on our commitments when, in reality, the issue lies in the hiring process."

Also, the student tutors must wait several weeks to begin earning money. As a library staff member shared, “the Library prioritizes Federal Work Study and CalWORKs eligible students so that we can support students’ access those funds that are not available without the work component. Delaying hiring, especially for these students, often erect barriers to student success and that may amplify other barriers like access to essential resources.”

In the library, we end up short staffed for long stretches of time because our new student workers and temporary classified staff are left in hiring limbo for months at a time.

Other organizations are able to hire people within a much shorter timeline. *Is there any way we can speed up our process a bit?*

So to sum up, I know hiring is a complex process, and errors will happen. I know we are all doing our best to work within the limits of our large, bureaucratic system, including the staff at BSO, who I know work hard to support our complex organization. But it does seem like there are a few concrete changes that could greatly improve this process. ***I am hoping that a cross-functional team can work with BSO to review the student hiring process and make recommendations for improvements. I would like to ask the Academic Senate officers to advocate for this type of workgroup to be formed.***

Thank you.