Hiring and Mentoring Student IT Employees for Today's Tech Industry

Alissa Powers, Su Wang
UC Irvine - Office of Information Technology

Overview

- Hiring
- Getting started
- Day to day work
- Mentoring

Who are we?

Academic Web Technologies

- Agile on-campus development team
- Web application for our campus needs
- 4 current devs w/ 2 openings
- Support team
- Most of us are UCI grads

Who are we?

Su
Previous Student Supervisor /
Technical Lead

Alissa
Student Supervisor /
Software Engineer

Student positions on our team

What positions do we have?

- Year round part-time position
- Summer internship

Why two positions?

Student positions on our team

What do they work on?

- Student facing updates / features
- Creating value directly for campus and peers

Hiring

Hiring Process

1. Online Application
2. Technical Phone Interview
3. In-person Technical Interview

Challenges

- Multiple positions
- Job titles are important
- Web development experience
  - Python took over the world
- Interview experience
- Perception
  - Not a "real" job

Getting Started

Administrative Stuff

Before their first day

- Prepare in advance
- Set up a workstation, plan their first day, etc.
- Meet with the student
  - Set expectations, answer questions, set a start date and work schedule

Working with student schedules

School work first, then work work

- Asynchronous communication is key
  - Add to calendar system
  - Post above cubicle
  - Avoid email

Administrative Stuff

First week

- Team introductions
- Touring the office
- Rules and expectations
- Online timesheets
- Required trainings

Technical Onboarding

Quick overview of environment
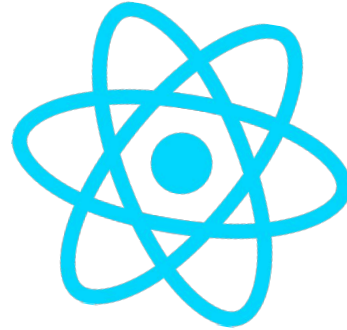
- PHPStorm (JetBrains)
- GitHub
- Jenkins

Overview of application(s) they will be working in

- How to navigate code
- Where data comes from
- Getting started

Technical Onboarding

- Setting up local dev environment
- Any necessary tutorials

Selecting work for students

Projects increasing in complexity

- Tiny bug bundles
- Projects (increasing in size/complexity)

Other considerations

- Variety of work
- Balancing productivity with learning opportunity

Student-Team Interaction

How involved should they be in the team's process?

Need versus experience

- Involve as necessary
- Provide sampling of Agile meetings to provide experience
- If something that needs their presence (and input), will move the meeting to accommodate

Communication

Guidance for projects

- Useful information provided in a Jira ticket
- In-person meeting with the UX designer
- Implementation plan

How to ask questions relating to projects?

- Slack, Jira, GitHub

Communication

Giving feedback

- Immediate feedback
- One-on-ones

Manager Tools - "The Trinity"
Podcast
https://www.manager-tools.com

Career Mentoring

One-on-ones

- Job searching
- Career questions
- Building a resume / portfolio

Resume review / feedback

- Going from school resume (class focused) to work focused (project/experience based)
- General guidelines

Interview help

- Mock interviews
- Both technical and behavioral
- Feedback

Concluding Thoughts

Why do we do all this? Why don't we just code more ourselves rather than managing students?

- Want to be able to give back to campus, not just with the tools we're developing
- We are in unique position as development team on campus to be able to help students figure out what they want to do before the real world.
- We have tools that mainly developed by student staff, for students.

Where have the little birds flown off to?

- Some students became UCI staff members
- Some students went off to Amazon, Blizzard, Obsidian, Google, Disney Imagineering, Twitter, Zynga, Western Digital etc.

Questions?

More questions?

Contact us!

Alissa
aapowers@uci.edu

Su
suw@uci.edu