Development of a Peer Research Consultant (PRC) Program

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ACRL ND MB Chapter
May 13, 2019
The Starting Point

- ACRL Stats
  - 21.3 million 2001 down to 9 million 2012 (57%)
- Librarian responsibilities
  - Staffing desk
  - Library instruction
  - Collection development
  - In-depth research appointments
Discussion

• Buy-in from librarians
  – Losing a favorite task
  – Concern about students doing their jobs
    • Referring?
    • Know boundaries?

• Chester Fritz Library in the middle of remodeling
Peer Research Consultants (PRCs)

• 2016 - Paper
• 2018 - Discussion
• Spring 2019
  - Karlene’s position rewritten to PRC librarian
  - Contacting other libraries
  - Team created
• Fall 2019 - Pilot program begins
Background

- Access Services
  - Strong training program
  - Student promotions
    - Evaluation of Learning Outcomes
    - Strong customer service skills
    - Reference training
- More prepared
Reasons to use PRC model

- Aligns with UND Goals
  - Liberal arts foundation
  - Increase graduation rates
  - Enhance discovery

https://und.edu/about/strategic-plan/
Reasons to use PRC model

- Literature
  - Student preference
  - PRCs and supervisor
Job Description

• Nine months
• Peer reference assistance
• Assist librarians
• Attend trainings
• Available during business hours
Required Qualifications

- Minimum of three semesters
- Reference training
- Resume, cover letter, class schedule
- Essay
- Communication & customer service
- Critical thinking
- Understand referral process
- Collaboration
- Demonstrated accountability
Preferences

- Evaluation 35/40
- English 130
- 3.0 GPA

Hours & Wages

- 10-15 per week
- $11.01 per hour
Training Tools

• Basic training already complete
• Literature & Libraries
  – Interactive games
  – Group discussion
  – Roleplay
  – Online tutorials
  – Videos
• Student requests
  – Checklists
  – Benchmarks

Image by Gerd Altmann from pixabay.com
Going Live

- Summer 2019: Develop training modules
- Fall 2019: PRCs shadow reference librarians
- Spring 2020: Autonomous on reference desk
- Fall 2020: Knowledge Commons
  - Writing Center
  - Academic Support
  - Career Services
Assessment

- Clear vision BEFORE beginning job search
- Success: usage and data collected
  - National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards
  - Learning Outcomes Evaluation
- Use of results
  - Program improvement
  - Campus buy-in
Considerations

• Must have buy-in from stakeholders
  – President / Provost
  – Library Dean / Director
  – Reference librarians

• Paying PRCs
  – Justify higher wages
  – Sources of funding

• Marketing
Final Thoughts / Benefits

• Highly sought-after employment skills include research, communication, leadership, peer supervision, conflict management, and critical thinking skills.

• Giving student employees increased responsibility can increase pride in their work. The energy and enthusiasm of student employees can be contagious for all library staff and increase staff morale.
References


Thank You! Questions?

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