Improving Community and Academic Success through Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

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Breakout Session
Purpose

• To discuss the ways that implementing peer-to-peer services in academic libraries can benefit both the library and students employed there, as well as better serve students.
Background: UW-Milwaukee

- Urban, +25,000 students (UWM Facts, 2018)
- Undergrad Tutor (2007-10)
- Campus Ambassador (2008-10)
- Graduate Student Research Assistant for Center of Volunteerism (2011-13)
- Research and Instruction Graduate Intern (2012-14)
- History Graduate TA (2013-14)

https://www.collegeswimming.com/team/369/
Background: KSU Polytechnic

- Smaller, more isolated campus
  - <1000 students, +90% male, ~75% first generation, 14% veteran students
- Undergraduate Services Librarian
- Tutoring Center Director
- Chair of the First Year Experience Program
  - Collaboratively created New Student Orientation
  - Orientation Leader training

http://salinapost.com/2018/02/05/civic-luncheon-lecture-at-k-state-polytechnic/
Background: IU Bloomington

• +48,000 students (38,000 undergrad), significant international student population, strong Greek life (IU Rankings, 2018)
• Learning Commons Librarian
• ~25 Research Consultants
• Collaboratively developed cross-training program for ~200 student staff with campus partners

http://music.indiana.edu/departments/ensembles/marching-hundred.shtml
Background: Commonalities

- Generalist and all involve working with peer staff
- Campus collaborations
  - Important to not silo
  - Similar plans related to institutional visions & missions
  - Outreach and collaboration prevents overlap
- Similar trends across the campus sizes/types
Peer-to-Peer Staffing

- Students serving students
- Library and beyond

Peer-to-Peer Rationale

- Peer-to-Peer fosters community (Eyler, 1997)
- Can be more relatable and relevant to those served (Soloman, 2004)
  - five theories that underlie peer delivered services, which include social support, experiential knowledge, helper-therapy principle, social learning theory, and social comparison theory.
- Can help change the library’s personality
- Low cost and effective at generally helping retain student usage and campus enrollment (Castleman & Paige, 2014)
Personal Perspective

• Information literacy is a campus/community issue
  • Info lit, critical thinking, need to be scaffolded and practiced (consistently)
  • Must talk about relevant and practical uses for finding information (Gardner, 2016)

• Peer-to-Peer Staffing benefits
  • Practical professional experience
  • Can help staffing and budget strains
  • Can be a way to spread the libraries’ mission
  • Student relate more (venting, shared experiences, etc.)
  • Can change some library stereotypes if adequately implemented

Planning a Student Service

- Academic libraries can seem silo-ed from other student service departments
  - Academic vs. student services

- Consider the outcome for library services
  - Next, consider how other student services on campus are run and marketed

- Have full-time librarian buy-in
  - Tasks and responsibilities ready
Training Student Staff

• Fully invest in service
  • Even if basic, consider the rationale in why the job is important and how it will prepare them for their professional roles
• Consider a pre-questionnaire
  • Ask what the service is to them now, what it could be
  • What do they want to get out of the experience for their professional goals?
• Have electronic and physical handbook copies available before orientation
• Empower staff to develop a mission and vision for the service
Training Student Staff

• Regular meetings after orientation
  • Librarian guest speakers, reflection, sharing experiences, snacks
  • Time management, “ref interview”, how to handle uncomfortable experiences

• Assess
  • Post-survey each semester for anonymous feedback
  • Summarize and discuss at meetings for changes

• Note the terms we use – we want peer staff to echo those terms on campus
  • If they can’t relate or don’t use the same terms, reassess?
Evolving a Peer-to-Peer Service

• Hear ideas for change and improvement
  • Consider them together
  • Invest time and energy in their ideas
• Evolve projects
  • Outreach, programming, online learning tools, social media and marketing, Pop Up Library, instruction, workshops
• Make a Peer Lead(s)
  • Brainstorm with them
  • Help with scheduling, training, outreach, etc.
Community and Student Success

• Community
  • Building more meaningful relationships with students
  • Students building relationships with peers
  • Having a common conversation about our mission with capable peer leaders

• Student Success
  • Fostering more understanding on information literacy in their field
  • Accessible and approachable services
  • New partnerships to support efforts
### ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

ACRL Threshold Concepts compared with earlier AAC&U information literacy learning outcomes/values and ACRL standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACRL Threshold Concept</th>
<th>AAC&amp;U's LEAP Value Rubric/ACRL Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority is Constructed and Contextual</td>
<td>Evaluate Information &amp; its Sources Critically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Creation as a Process</td>
<td>Evaluate Information &amp; its Sources Critically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Has Value</td>
<td>Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally</td>
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<td>Research as Inquiry</td>
<td>Determine the Extent of Information Needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarship as Conversation</td>
<td>Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching as Strategic Exploration</td>
<td>Access the Needed Information</td>
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From Otto, K and Jones, K. *First Year Experiences* (PP presentation). Retrieved from presentation notes.
Challenges

• Reframing our language
• Library buy-in (admin and faculty/staff)
• Student schedules
  • Expectations
• Time and $
Takeaways

• Think outside the library
  • How do other services run? What needs do they meet and why are they successful?
  • Who are we serving and why do we need to?
• Reconsider the terms we use, and ask students for feedback (collaborate)
  • Create more of a campus culture that integrates the library’s mission
• Make training more focused and regular
  • Not so much for training, but for community
• Work more with other campus departments
  • Gather support from departmental administration

https://pmstudycircle.com/2012/01/lesson-learned/
Ideas for Campus and Community Information Literacy Conversations

• Library has traditionally been a central campus resource
  • Campus committees
  • Embed the library in significant campus conversations and events
  • Attend campus open discussions
  • Be a part of faculty meetings and orientations
  • Market library services to other departments that offer services
  • Peer-to-peer (including training)
Questions

• How do we as academic professionals encourage students to consider how information literacy directly relates to their chosen future professions in our experiences with them in and outside the classroom?
  • Do we merge efforts with others on campus? Or is it largely individualistic?
• How does your library interact with other campus departments?
• Have you discovered efforts on other campuses you’d like to replicate, and if so what?
• From your role’s perspective, what is the level of community in general at your institution?
• How can librarians market their skills and services better?
Questions? Discussion?

http://www.quickmeme.com/meme/3ae7rx
Works Cited


