



# Development of a Peer Research Consultant (PRC) Program

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ACRL ND MB Chapter

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# 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



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# 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



Author's photo

# 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.

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# Thank You! Questions?

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