

# Peer Roamers in the Learning Commons; Bringing Service to the Students



**PEER ROAMER**

Chancellor Cuthbertson Student Success Centre

Taylor Family Digital Library

Susan Beatty, University of Calgary  
7<sup>th</sup> Canadian Learning Commons Conference

Bishop's University

June 10, 2014

# Outline

- Background
- Project outline
- Two years of experience
- Operations
- Lessons learned
- Future plans



# Backgrounder

- Taylor Family Digital Library – change is afoot
- Students have been part of staffing
- Collaboration with Student Success Centre
- Aware of similar services – EG. Australia
- Opportunity through SU grant

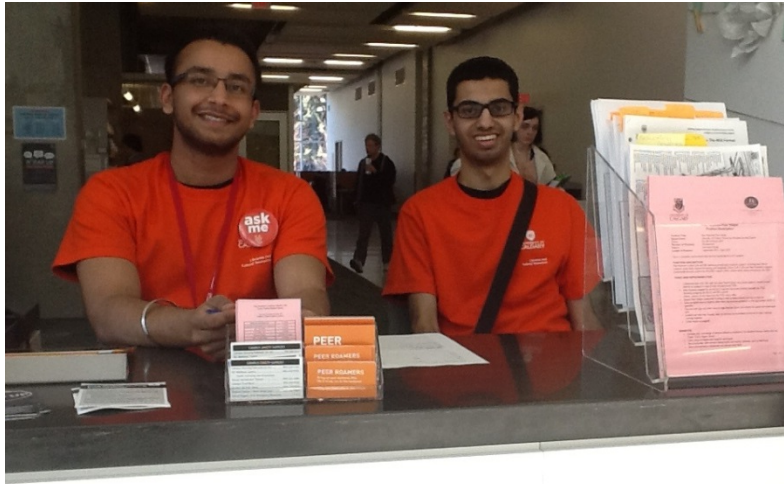
# Rationale

- Observation of student behaviors
  - Approach to service
  - Information search behaviors
  - Response to peers
- Vision : Students helping students
- Goal: integrated learning experience.

# Learning Commons Student Staff



# Peer Roamers



- What: Support with basic library research, citation skills, study skills
- When: Sunday – Thursday late afternoon to 8 pm
- How: face to face encounters
- Where: At main desk and roam the building, singly or in pairs.



# Budget

- Grant: \$41,300
- \$12,000 in second year
- Change in staffing model year one to year two
- Additional costs:
  - Tshirts
  - iPads
  - Marketing costs ( posters and portable banner)
  - Moveable laptop desks
- Staff costs for supervision, not part of grant, @ 10 hours per week. (estimated average)



# Opportunity: Volunteers

## Co-curricular or non-credit service-learning program

- Opportunities for students to learn and be involved on campus
- Develop leadership and other skills
- Gain credit through CCR:
  - official document that recognizes students' out of classroom experiences.
- Useful for presenting a holistic view of students' experience to future employers
- Main benefit is to student, gains soft skills and confidence

## Peer Roamers Posting in Co-Curricular directory

ACTIONS: [ [New Search](#) ]

### PEER ROAMERS PEER HELPER - PEER ROAMERS PEER HELPER

**Time Period:** 2013-2014

**Organization/Dept:** University of Calgary/Student Success Centre

**Description:**

Peer Roamers, a joint Library and Culture Resources and Student Success Centre initiative, provide peer academic support, including basic library research, study skills, citation formatting, and navigating various University of Calgary services. Peer Roamers create an academically-focused community of student support within various study spaces, particularly the Taylor Family Digital Library.

**Average weekly time commitment:** 3- 8 hours/week

For more information regarding this opportunity please contact:

**Name:** Susan Beatty

**Email:** [sdbeatty@ucalgary.ca](mailto:sdbeatty@ucalgary.ca)

**Phone:** 220-2629

**Website:** <http://>

## First year

- All were paid
- New Supervisor
- Training: initial, email and ongoing face to face, one round up meeting
- No drop-off of students
- Scheduling time
- Big learning curve
- Time with students every day

## Second year

- 2 paid team leads, 10 volunteers
- New Supervisor
- Training: initial, training sheets, and through email
- Three drop-off end of fall term
- Scheduling time
- Time with students every day
- Still learning

# PEER ROAMERS

Innovative assistance brought to you by



PEER ROAMERS  
ANSWER YOUR  
QUESTIONS

Monday - Thursday  
12M - 4PM  
5PM - 8PM

Ask About Us Today!

Peer Roamers  
What We Do

Learn more about the Peer Roamers program and how we can help you with your studies.

Peer Roamers are trained students who provide free, confidential academic support to other students. They can help you with your assignments, understand your course material, and provide a safe space to ask questions.

For more information, visit our website or contact us at [phone number].

# Operational highlights

- Supervision
  - Hiring
  - Training
  - Scheduling
- Communication
- Roaming
- Marketing
- Evaluation

# Collaboration benefits

- Two heads are better than one
- CCR was already in place in SSC, easier to initiate volunteer posting
- Able to share training and focus on learning needs of students
- Shared co-ordination , through shift report responses

# Collaboration considerations

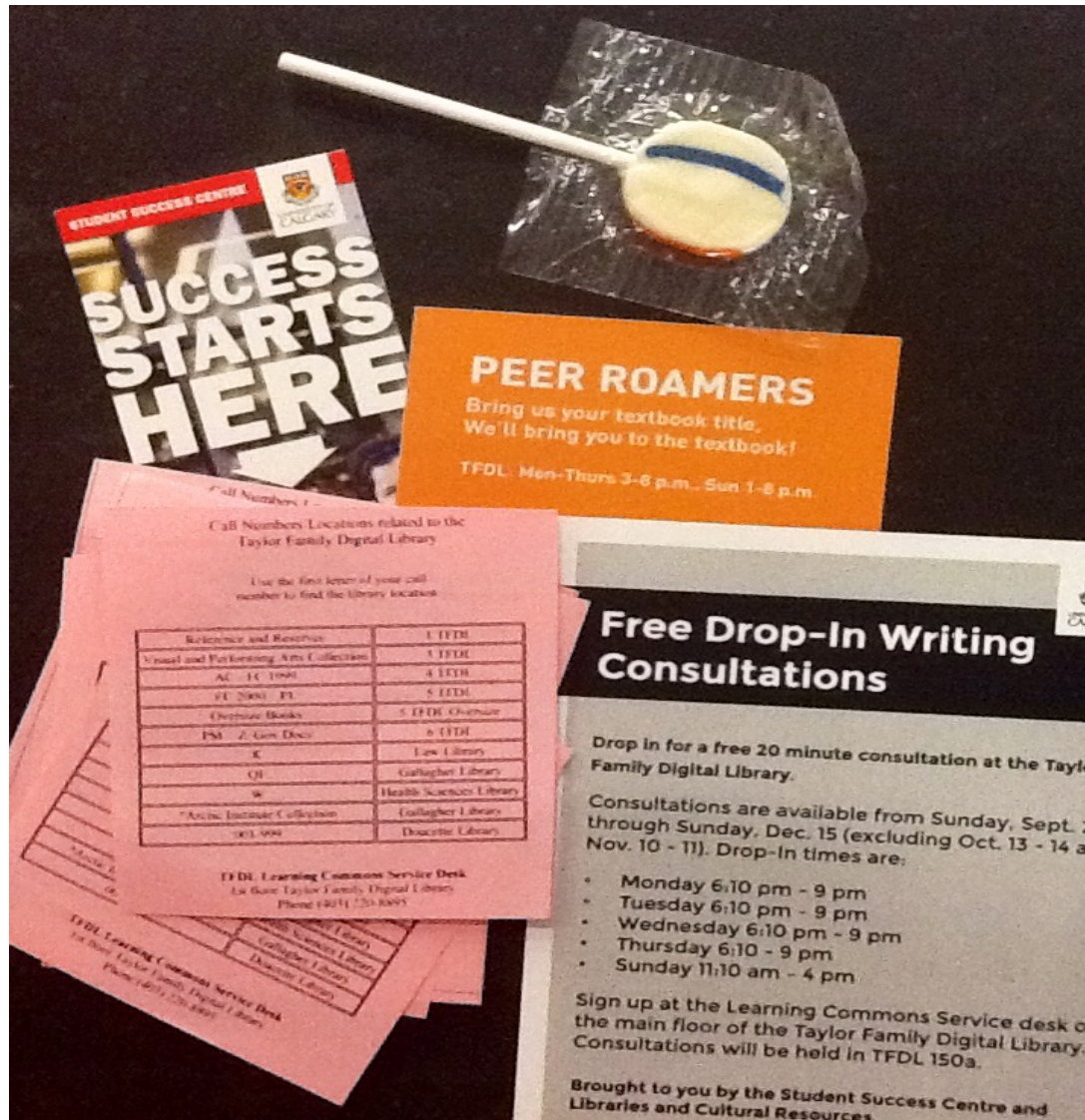
- How to ensure shared participation and shared benefit
- Can be problematic if not a priority for either partner
- Soft money, what else could the money be spent on
- Shared decision-making and problem solving
- Joint involvement in development
- Always an ongoing discussion
- Recognition for both parties needs to be maintained

# Best tools

- Shift reports
- Blackboard site
- iPads
- Banner and t-shirts:
- Color branding
- Enthusiastic students, team leaders who lead
- Whiteboard for interactions – who knew??
- Handouts make it real, e.g. citations, obvious what they can help with



# Tools of the trade









## Want to.

- Earn co-curricular credits?
- Gain valuable experience?
- Help others succeed?
- Learn about libraries and academic research?

Apply to be a Peer Roamer  
for 2014-2015!

- Applications ongoing
- Positive, campus work environment
- See Roamer or Service desk  
for details, or go to:

[www.ucalgary.ca/peerhelper/apply](http://www.ucalgary.ca/peerhelper/apply)

# Have Your Say!

What do you think about the TFDL?

@TFDLPeer

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KEEP RECORDS  
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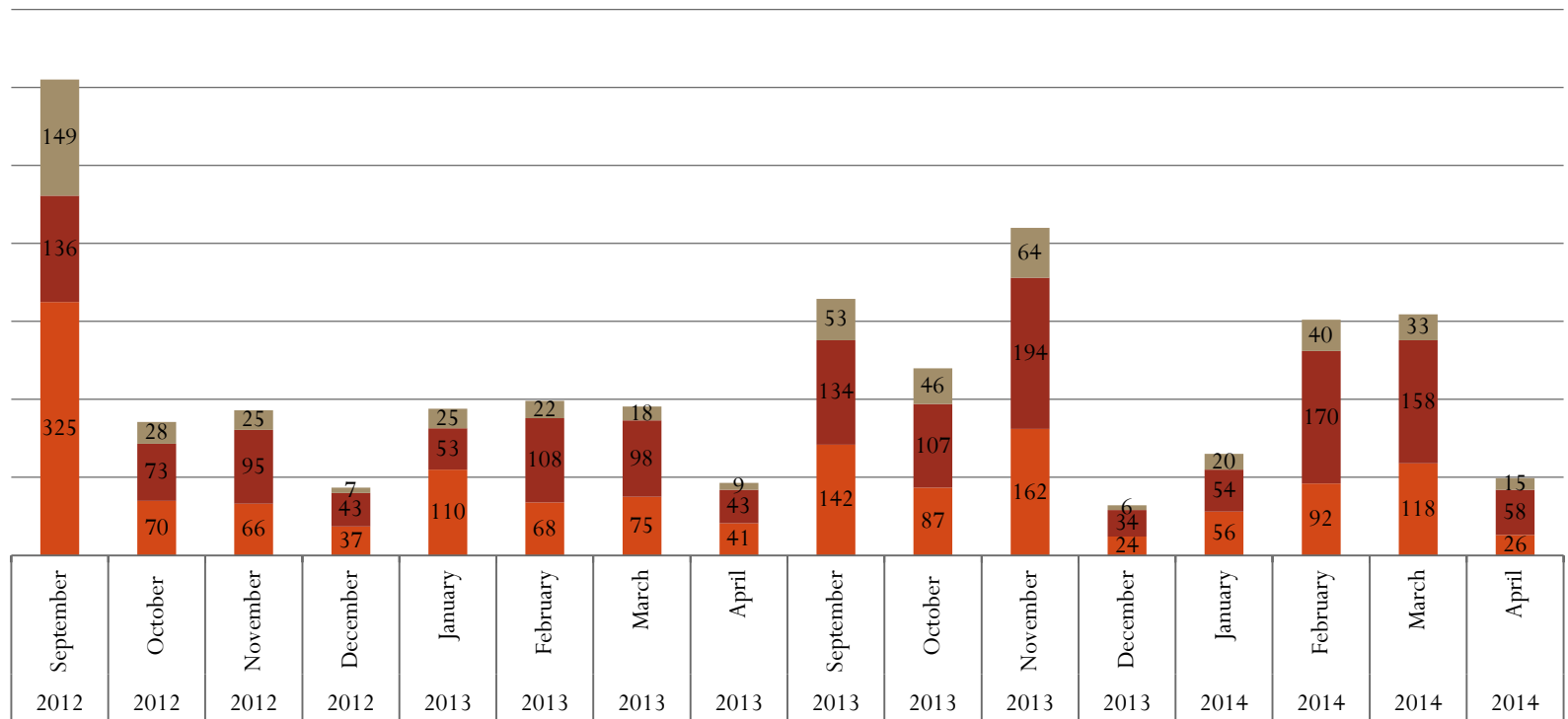
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# Statistics

## Peer Roamer Stats September 2012-April 2014

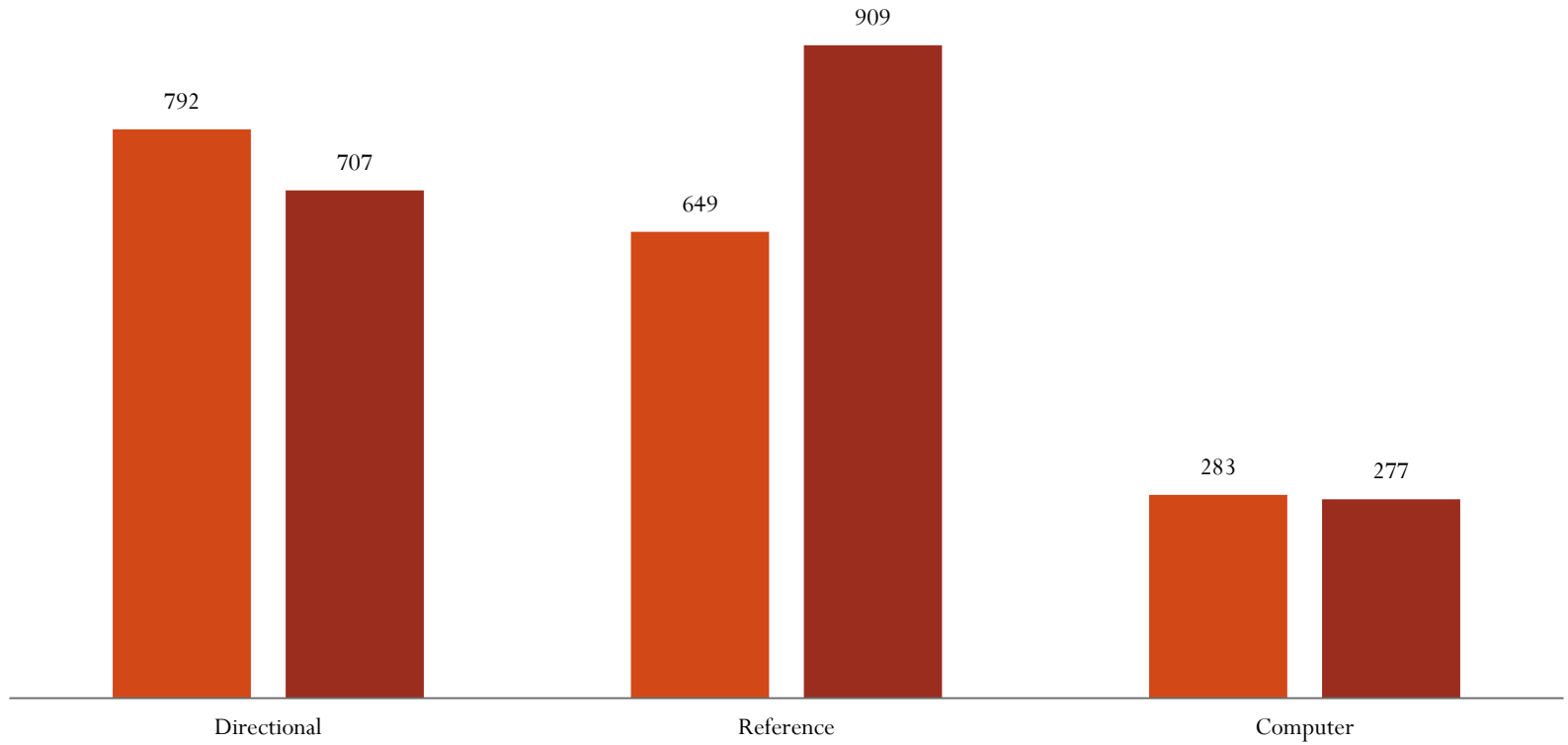
■ Directional ■ Reference ■ Computer



# Statistics

## Peer Roamer Stats

■ 2012/2013 ■ 2013/2014





# Student questions

## Directional:

- where do I go to find out how to choose courses for my second year?

## Citation:

- For an intext-citation using APA how do I separate multiple sources

## Reference:

Can you help me find Hamlet?

## Circulation:

How do I sign out a book, Where is this book?

# Peer roamer comments

- “Lots of questions! Everything to do with signing out / returning books, wifi, student cards, writing centre, SSC (whether there's a RefWorks workshop soon), what a peer roamer is, and is this desk free to use when roamers aren't on duty. One student wanted to know when the semester ends.”
- “It was a no mans land in here today. It was all only the hardest of the hardcore and even they were sleeping or goofing off :). Third floor was NUTS! And SO loud! Everywhere else was full but relatively calm.”

# Learning and training

- Overall I thought this was a great activity because I learned some new things, such as you don't need doi in MLA and how the ebrary works, and since the library was not busy it was something productive to do. (comment on learning activity assignment)
- H had a big moment! After a patron came up to ask about a gallery event and something didn't seem right, she went up to the patron all on her own to clarify the event details. It turned out that the patron came on the wrong night! Big applause for H because this was a big step from how shy she was when she first came to the Peer Roamers :)

# Relationships

- “Can I tell you about my day?” My brain hurts.
- Being a roamer was a really great wonderful experience( I still haven't decided if I can come back, though I really want to). I got to meet wonderful people and we had two really wonderful leaders, Yayyyy my shift report is longer than Grant's :) :)
- I just want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your incredible amount of support and understanding. Your patience made this semester enjoyable
- A senior asked me about the photoshop workshop on Monday. I'm impressed. People continue to learn. I want to be like him too.



# Problematic but working on it

- Scheduling and Training
- Regular meetings with Roamers
- Student awareness and uptake, requires stability, but growing
- Roaming vs desk encounters
- Twitter followers
- Supervisor's time commitment
- Embedded in library and SSC service program, need to have proof of concept
- Integration within staff and services at all levels.

# Plans for 2014-2015

- Continue with model of 2 Team Leaders and volunteer Peer Roamers
- Increase number of Peer Roamer volunteers
- Change in student staffing complement could lead to more requests of Roamers, will need ongoing assessment of learning needs, continuous training
- New supervisor (again)
- Qualitative evaluation- student feedback needed
- Create Peer Roamer LibGuide
- Have some fun!







# Thanks

- U of C Students Union
- LCR and SSC
- Brenda McDermott ( SSC) and Robin Lee ( LCR)
- All the roamers: Grant, Rachel, Sanpreet, Rahul, Emma, Braelyn, Chaitanya, Hadia, Manessa, Laura, Hooi Yee, Jenny

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