Libraries Engaging and Impacting BIPOC Student Academic Success: Peer Information Consulting Program

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Overview

- Peer Education Theory
- PIC Program History
- What We Do
- PIC Present Day
- Peer Reflections
- Impacts
- Starting Your Own

Description: Photo of student group (workers in UM Peer Information Consulting Program)
What is the PIC Program

The University of Michigan (UM) Library Peer Information Consulting (PIC) Program is a peer education program that fosters the unique perspectives and skills of culturally diverse student employees so they can assist their peers to be academically successful, to serve as library ambassadors and as expert resources for the library, campus, and broader community.
What is Peer Education?

“Because edgewalkers embrace cultural complexity with unusual creativity, they provide insight into ways groups and individuals can deal effectively and openly with difference” (Krebs, 1999).
Peer Teaching/Mentoring: Theoretical Framework

- Social learning theory
- Identity theory
- Reinforcement/affect theory
History and Background

- Founded in 1985, the Peer Information Counseling program was designed to help bridge the gap between Black, Indigenous, and students of color and other marginalized populations on campus and the library system.
- It was the first program of its kind to arise in academic libraries nationally.
- PICs thrive in a cohort environment training and working together in groups.
What We Do

PIC students receive extensive training in library research skills and services, and are able to provide information and research consulting services to UM students, faculty, and staff. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Assist students and library patrons to better navigate and utilize the MLibrary system and its resources
- Help students to find and retrieve print and electronic sources the library website
- Help to refine research topics, identify scholarly research materials, and check/write proper citations
- Host quiet study table sessions where students can receive research consultation and advice on majors/classes
- Co-host and facilitate public and student events
- Engage with multiple-use spaces around the library system
- Help library staff to lead research oriented classes and workshops (on and off campus)
- Provide library tours to UM students and middle and high school students
- Assist with special projects within the library
The Team

- The PIC program is comprised of a culturally diverse cohort of undergraduate students and, this year a graduate student. There are currently 21 PIC students, with plans of extending the cohort.

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Partnerships - Internal

- Operations: Shapiro & Graduate Circulation, Askwith Media Library, Duderstadt, Shapiro Lobby Team, Ambassadors/Greeters at Library Programs
- LPI: Instruction support, UX, tabling, exhibits, event support
- Connected scholarship: Design Lab, Video Game Archive
- Research: Special Collections, event planning/support, exhibits

Image: Group of students (PICs) and library staff. They are hosting a late night coffee break for students studying in the library.
Partnerships - External

- Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives
  - SuccessConnects, FirstGen
- Wolverine Pathways - Pipeline program
- Comprehensive Studies Program (CSP)
- Center for Educational Outreach
- Trotter Multicultural Center
- Sweetland Writing Center

Two students (PICs) helping at a Fall welcome event - Party for Your Mind 2017
Pivoting the Work during COVID-19

- Virtual Services & Programming
- Internal focus and increased Library Presence
  - Undergraduate collections service design task force
  - Anti-Racism lesson plan team
  - Remote work support team
- Challenges
Future plans

- Connections with undergraduate housing
- Pilot PIC program for graduate students
- Deepen relationships with current partners
- PIC mentors assigned to specific success programs
- Develop new partnerships with other units on campus
Personal experiences and reflection
Halima Haque

- **Previous engagements:**
  - PIC/Sweetland and Scholar Space Research Consultant
  - 3 Shapiro Technology Exploration Team Member
  - Detroit Pedagogy Project Researcher
  - Wolverine Pathways Instructional Assistant
  - Hatcher Gallery Event Host

- **Current engagements:**
  - Hatcher Ask a Librarian
    - Answers research questions
    - Assists patrons with finding library resources
  - Marketing Content Creator
  - PIC Training Canvas Modules
  - Anti-racism Instruction Committee
Michael Ocasio

- Previous Engagements:
  - PIC/Sweetland Research Consultant
  - Scholar Space Research Consultant
  - Hatcher Graduate Library: Gallery Space
    - Event hosting
  - Library Election Week Programming

- Current Engagements:
  - Library Study Hours (Virtual Room)
  - Answer questions about and refine research questions
    - Help patrons navigate library website
The Potential of Peer Learning Programs Within Library Spaces

- Outreach to students who are underrepresented in library spaces
- Equitable support for students who come from communities with less resources
- Think about what other groups are not “in-the-room” or absent from library spaces and why? How can we expand to those groups
  - Those of diverse gender and sexual orientations
  - Those with disabilities
- Teaching/mentorship programs to prepare students for library science degrees
- Increasing teaching research and mentoring skills remotely (especially in light of COVID-19)
- Recruitment to the profession
How to develop similar programs in your own libraries/spaces

- Make the case to your organization’s administration
- Develop a training plan in library research, database navigation and soft skills such as communications, anti-racist practice, leadership...
- Outsource peer educators to spaces where marginalized students (youth) receive mentoring, research, and tutoring opportunities
  - Spaces may include predominantly first-gen, low-income, multicultural spaces
THANK YOU

Questions?

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