
Editorial: The future of peer-led research services: trending now or still trending?

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The call for papers for this special issue of *Reference Services Review (RSR)* provides context and rationale for a special issue on peer-led research services. The call states “The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional service models in academic libraries. However, out of those disruptions emerged innovation, reconceptualization, and shifts in how and who delivers front-line services. Often out of necessity, libraries and information organizations have increasingly turned to student employees to maintain critical service points in physical and virtual spaces.”

Readers who are thinking “But wait, peer-led research services are not a new concept within academic libraries” are correct. Peer-led research services are not trending now – they are *still* trending. Peer learning and support has long existed in libraries, but the nature of the pandemic highlighted the need for these services to expand and transform in new ways. Now that libraries are focusing on the future of these and other programs that evolved to support pandemic needs, the innovative practices in this issue can support organizations looking for ideas, methods and examples for inspiration. Learners tend to seek out their peers for support before looking outside of their peer group. As our authors demonstrate, libraries should, and can, create service models that can lead to effective and meaningful learning experiences in libraries – without librarians on the front lines.

Authors from a wide variety of institutions responded to the call for papers, providing Chris Granatino, Guest Editor for this special issue, with over a dozen abstracts to review and from which to choose to invite submissions. Granatino brings both experience and passion to this task. As Director, Research Services, in Seattle University’s Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons, he and his team have successfully implemented a student peer research consultant program. A strong advocate for students as facilitators of learning, he believes in redefining help through peer support. He has seen it work firsthand and observed impacts on student engagement as well as student learning.

This special issue of *RSR* explores how peer-led research services have evolved and what opportunities the future may hold for peer research support. A rich and diverse reading experience awaits readers interested in learning more about creative library practices and innovation for student success. More specifically, readers interested in peer-assisted learning in academic libraries, or about building a peer-learning service in an academic library, will not be disappointed.

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