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Partnering Outside the Library: A Joint Workshop Between the Business Library and Career Center

The Haskayne School of Business was founded at the University of Calgary in 1967 as the Faculty of Management and was renamed in 2002. The student body consists of approximately 3000 students enrolled in its bachelor's, master's, doctorate, and executive education programs. The Business Library is jointly funded by the Haskayne School of Business, and Libraries and Cultural Resources, and works closely with both areas to ensure that the learning needs of the students are met.

The Business Library serves a variety of groups, from undergraduate business students to MBA and management PhD students. We pride ourselves on maintaining a high level of service for all of our users. To provide the best possible service, the Business Library offers a wealth of resources to this group. We provide access to exclusive business databases such as Bloomberg, Capital IQ, and Thompson EIKON which attract our more experienced users in addition to hosting a variety of business resources aimed at all levels.

The Career Centre provides services to all of the students at the Haskayne School of Business with consultants that target both the undergraduate and graduate programs. They offer career development workshops, resume workshops, job fairs and postings, individual career counseling, and various services as needed and requested.

Early in the fall 2012 term, the MBA Career Consultant approached the reference desk at the Business Library to enquire about types of services we provide our alumni with and how our databases can be used to optimize a career search. This led to a discussion on how the Business Library and Career Centre could partner to create a blended workshop that would allow students to effectively utilize two service points and enhance their career prospects.

The MBA career consultant was in the midst of planning a “Who’s Who in Calgary” session aimed to introduce students to the variety of career opportunities in Calgary. We decided that this would be the perfect fit for library instruction. She would discuss some of the major companies, and I could show students how to use library resources to screen for potential employers.

The session was planned for lunch near the end of the term. There were about fifteen students registered and about ten in attendance. They were in various stages of their degrees, but all wanted to begin searching for opportunities in their fields. We wanted to make the session very informal and invited audience participation and input.

We started the session with the Calgary specific company section prepared by the career consultant as a way of introducing students to all of the career options in the area by industry. We then launched into the library portion which showed students how to develop and implement a research plan aimed at career resources.

Unfortunately due to an IT interruption, we were unable to do live demonstrations of the websites, but we were able to discuss them at length. We discussed using a business directory and how to use NAICS codes to identify businesses by industry. Some of the students were familiar with the databases that we planned on demonstrating so we turned it in to a conversation about how to use library resources to career plan. It was quite effective in that students ended up instructing each other about library resources that they were familiar with and how they could be used outside of the academic sphere.

As a follow up to the presentation an updated PowerPoint was posted to the student Blackboard site with step-by-step screenshots outlining how to use the databases with a focus on Career searches. After the session we had a brief meeting to assess the success of the session and to brainstorm other session possibilities. At this point in the term we are pretty busy helping our areas wrap up, but we will hopefully be able to provide joint services in the new term with an influx of new part-time MBAs.

By looking outside of our immediate areas and partnering with other services on campus we are able to increase our relevance in the library community. Current students who are our future business leaders will learn how the library can benefit them as professionals instead of just students. This partnership will hopefully start to establish a committed user base, even after they graduate from their programs.