

CAUL-CBUA Grant Report

In October, 2013, Ryan Lewis, Jeannie Bail and Amanda Power, all librarians at the Queen Elizabeth II Library, Memorial University, applied for the \$1000 Research and Innovation grant offered by CAUL-CBUA. We were working on a research study of Canadian library services offered to international students, which we entitled *Internationalization and the Academic Library: What Are We Offering?* Shortly after, we were informed that our project was one of the recipients of the grant. The following report outlines our project, the results of the project, the dissemination of the results and our expenditures.

We would like to thank CAUL-CBUA for their financial assistance. The grant made an important contribution to the dissemination of the study's findings.

The Study

Internationalization and the Academic Library: What Are We Offering?

This research study was based in part on a survey of Canadian academic libraries. The survey was sent out electronically on provincial and regional listservs across Canada during the spring and summer of 2013, in both English and French. There were a total of thirty three responses, with seventeen coming from university libraries in Western Canada, eleven from Central Canada, and five from the Atlantic. The survey asked ten questions, about the percentages of international students at the institution and the home countries that they represented, what kinds of library information sessions and activities were offered by each library, what other campus organizations libraries were partnered with, and what services, in languages other than English or French, were offered by the library. The intent was twofold: to take as national a snapshot as possible of library services for international students, but also to determine how services to international students at the Queen Elizabeth II Library compared to other academic libraries in Canada. The survey was incorporated into a paper that included summaries of services to international students at the QE II Library, and a more general literature review of services across Canada.

Abstract of the paper

Although the population of St. John's, Newfoundland, is largely homogenous recent Census data reveal that its inhabitants are 98% English speaking and visible minorities make up around 1% of the population one can't help but notice that from behind the Information and Research Help desk at the Queen Elizabeth II Library (QEII) of Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), things look a lot more diverse than reflected in the general population (Statistics Canada, 2006, 2012). Despite the remoteness of the province and its small size (around half a million people call it home), what is happening on the MUN campus is part of a greater trend in academia affecting university campuses all over Canada and the United States, which is the rise of the international student. This research study was undertaken to examine the role of the library within the Canadian academic institutions these international students attend, and the services that are being offered to them. The main questions we sought to answer are: do academic libraries in Canada offer specialized services for international students? And, if so, what types of programs are being offered? This information will be useful for future program development at our institution, and other universities and colleges throughout Canada and the rest of the world.

Conclusions of the research

The findings of the research indicate that most of the surveyed Canadian academic libraries are conscious of, and are concerned about, offering specialized library services to international students. However, knowing the population you hope to serve is a crucial step in delivering quality service. One major finding of this survey was that twenty seven percent of the respondents were not aware of how many international students were enrolled at their institutions, which underpins the necessity of libraries reaching out and establishing relationships with units on campus that can provide information on who the international students on campus are, and their numbers.

There was some diversity in the responses regarding which campus organizations libraries partnered with, but almost all of the libraries surveyed had established relationships with other offices or organizations on campus. These included international student offices, student advising or continuing education offices, and second language programmes. In some instances, librarians also made connections with off campus community organizations, suggesting there was an ongoing process of engagement between some universities and their broader communities.

There was also some diversity in the responses concerning what programmes international students were enrolled in, and what the entrance requirements were. On some campuses, international students had to pass a language test before they could enroll as regular students, while on others, second language students were allowed to take regular classes. Comprehension levels and institutional requirements therefore varied from campus to campus. Levels of understanding could also vary even amongst regular students. Some librarians suggested that some foreign born naturalized Canadians, enrolled as regular Canadian students, could benefit from library instruction designed for international or second language students.

Of the thirty-three libraries that responded to the survey, about forty percent offered formal specialized instruction specifically for international students. The remainder did not offer instruction to international students, although some stated that they had offered instruction for international students in the past, but only on an occasional basis. Fifteen percent of the surveyed libraries did not offer specific instruction sessions for international students, stating instead that as regular students, international students were included in regular library instruction. Services were also offered more consistently to some groups and not to others, as was the case with library instruction for undergraduates and graduates. The majority of the instruction was given to undergraduates, while about fifteen percent of the libraries surveyed offered regular instruction sessions to graduate students. This statistic suggests that more needs to be done to include international graduate students in library outreach.

Recommendations for Future Studies

To determine how best to serve this target group, a needs assessment of international students should be conducted. While a few small scale needs assessments of international students at Canadian academic libraries have been done, a similar contemporary study on a larger scale would be helpful. Such a study would better prepare librarians to engage in profitable and positive interactions with these students; to provide beneficial and needed resources and

services; and especially in planning effective and successful library instruction and orientation sessions for international students.

Dissemination of findings

The findings were presented on May 26, 2014, at a session at the CAPAL Conference, entitled *Empowering User Communities*, held during the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, at Brock University.

We have also included our findings in a paper, which is abstracted below, and can be accessed through the Memorial University Research Repository: <http://research.library.mun.ca/6417/>

List of expenditures

\$1000 CAUL-CBUA Research and Innovation Grant

CAPAL 2014 Conference

Conference fee (Ryan Lewis)	\$245
Conference fee (Jeannie Bail)	\$245
1 Return flight, St. John's to Toronto	\$510
Total	\$1000