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Foundations for a Scholarly Communications Program: Interviewing Faculty at a Small Public Liberal Arts College

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INTRODUCTION Librarians at SUNY Geneseo, a small liberal arts college, conducted interviews with eighty-seven professors to learn about faculty attitudes and practices related to scholarly communications and open access. Our project can serve as a model for other small college libraries wishing to engage faculty in a discussion about scholarly communications while dealing with staff constraints and limited budgets. The interviews provided an excellent opportunity for outreach and education, and revealed faculty concerns about open access, digital scholarship, peer review, data storage and management, and co-publishing with students. **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT** Interview results were shared with library staff as well as faculty, college administration, and the committee responsible for tenure and promotion decisions. Librarians were able to incorporate this knowledge into their work and make stronger connections between faculty and the library. The Scholarly Communication Team used this information to plan workshops and events aimed at faculty, and identified important topics for further professional development for librarians. We were also able to spark campus-wide conversation about scholarly communication issues. **NEXT STEPS** Listening to faculty concerns has proven the single best way for librarians to remain responsive and relevant in the scholarly life of the campus. As a result of this project, all library liaisons at our institution will include scholarly communication issues as a regular part of their work.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent developments in academic research and publishing have presented scholars with many challenges and opportunities. Technology has impacted how research is conducted, published, accessed, and promoted; how data is archived; and how scholars communicate with each other. Changing attitudes about free access to information have also influenced scholars; a mandate requiring federal grant recipients to digitally disseminate the results of their research has affected decisions about where to publish. Traditional scholarly processes such as peer review and journal impact factors have had to be reexamined in light of the digital world. Finally, the movement to increase student involvement in faculty research and publishing has presented its own challenges and opportunities.

To address these issues, scholarly communication programs started appearing in libraries, especially those at large research institutions where funding patterns and the larger scholarly output result in a high level of interest about new methods of publishing. The movement towards innovative scholarly communication is slower in small to medium-sized institutions largely due to a lack of time and staff resources, but also because faculty at teaching universities may be more risk-averse when it comes to scholarly communication issues (Del Toro, Mandernack, & Zanoni, 2011). Precisely because of their small budgets and staffs, however, small to medium-sized academic libraries need to initiate conversations with faculty. The advantages of open access (OA), such as greater visibility of faculty output and accessibility for students (Del Toro et al., 2011; Furlough, 2010; Wagner, 2010) can have an even greater impact on smaller universities than larger ones.

When faculty at the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Geneseo, a small public liberal arts college in upstate New York, had questions about their research and publishing activities, they sometimes sought help from the librarians who eventually formed the Scholarly Communication Team at Milne Library. The librarians welcomed the opportunity to talk with faculty about scholarly communication, but it became apparent that if we were to meet faculty needs, we had to investigate how faculty were researching and publishing in the changing environment. Were they wrestling with digital projects or participating in open access opportunities? Were Geneseo faculty archiving their data or co-authoring with students? Our goal in answering these questions was to create library services that would help faculty with these publishing endeavors.

To answer these questions, Milne librarians interviewed 87 Geneseo professors over the course of 1.5 years. Rather than present the data collected from these interviews, our goal in this article is to describe the process that SUNY Geneseo librarians undertook to reach 36% of faculty through face-to-face interactions. We hoped to broaden scholarly communication

conversations on campus and learn about the scholarly practices of these scholars. Our conversations with campus faculty also served to raise awareness on campus of scholarly communications issues and the role librarians can play in helping faculty navigate this rapidly changing system. It is our hope that the description of this direct, slow, and steady approach will assist others at small to mid-sized universities as they face the same scholarly communications challenges as larger institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic institutions and other groups have recognized the importance of learning about faculty practices and have utilized several methods for soliciting information from researchers.

Surveys

One of the most common methods reported is the online survey. Surveys allow researchers and librarians to get feedback from a large number of respondents, within or across their institutions. These surveys are often supplemented by interviews of small focus groups. Creaser et al. (2010) conducted an extensive survey of over 3,000 European researchers in order to understand researcher knowledge and opinions of institutional repositories and open access. Several small focus groups helped researchers clarify the survey results. They were able to recommend ways of improving researcher knowledge of open access issues to both libraries and publishers. With a focus on researchers in the United States, Ithaka S+R routinely surveys faculty about their teaching, research, and publication practices (e.g. Housewright, Schonfeld, & Wulfson, 2013). In a series of reports, they combined this data with focused interviews of faculty in the disciplines of biosciences, history, economics, and education (Dawson & Rascoff, 2006; Griffiths, Dawson, & Rascoff, 2006; Manville & Smith, 2008; Quinn & Kim, 2008). These reports provide detailed information about the opinions and practices of faculty in the corresponding disciplines. The researchers surveyed for these reports were primarily affiliated with large research universities.

Individual institutions have surveyed their own researchers about scholarly communication issues. Lercher (2008) surveyed faculty at Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge to explore faculty values related to the use of unpublished materials in scholarship, and to uncover searching behavior of institutional repositories by faculty. The study also uncovered a potential connection between attitudes about repositories and behaviors in using them. Kocken and Wical (2013) surveyed faculty at their own institution in an effort to understand the open access needs at their mid-sized regional university. Mischo and Schelembach (2011) focused on researchers in one discipline, surveying engineering faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign about their attitudes and behaviors related to open access.

Few small institutions reported surveying their faculty. Laughtin-Dunker (2014) surveyed faculty at Chapman University revealing faculty confusion about open access and posing questions about institutional repositories; the author concluded that faculty need to learn about data management, storage, and preservation. These results will undoubtedly impact future approaches to addressing scholarly communication issues with faculty, particularly by appealing to potential faculty benefits—higher exposure, for instance—rather than the big picture impact of open access (Laughtin-Dunker, 2014).

Focus Groups and Interviews

At other institutions, librarians have spoken with faculty in small group settings. Courtois and Turtle (2008) describe the use of focus groups at the beginning of a scholarly communication program to learn about the priorities and knowledge of the faculty at Kansas State University. They recruited faculty who were likely to know about scholarly communication issues, and recruited nine faculty members to participate in two focus groups addressing faculty awareness of issues such as open access, self-archiving, and author rights. Courtois and Turtle (2008) were able to use the results of these focus groups to educate librarians about issues, add information to their library website, and create other online resources. As part of an overall effort to improve library outreach to faculty, Stebelman et al. (1999) experimented with focus groups to learn more about faculty attitudes toward library services.

Librarians at Miami University (Ohio) used a faculty learning group to educate faculty about scholarly communication issues, but also to learn about faculty attitudes (Bazeley, Waller, & Resnis, 2014). Faculty were engaged in on-going discussions of issues over time, and librarians gained a better understanding of faculty knowledge of scholarly communication issues. Bazeley et al. (2014) suggest that faculty learning communities can be effective ways to share information and identify common goals.

Rather than asking faculty to join a focus group or learning community, librarians at Utah State went directly to the faculty, meeting with them in departmental meetings to discuss scholarly communication issues (Duncan, Walsh, Daniels, & Becker, 2006). They reported that faculty were very receptive to these meetings, and several departments subsequently requested additional meetings. These meetings focused on escalating serials prices and library budgets, and allowed librarians to show faculty the pro-active steps the library was taking to mitigate the problem. Librarians could also show faculty how their publication practices could have an impact on the future of scholarly communication practices (Duncan et al., 2006).

Few institutions have interviewed faculty about their research and publication practices. Carlson et al. (2011) used interviews with faculty and graduate students to learn about

their data management practices, but did not specifically address issues related to open access, publication decisions, or peer review. The researchers' interview questions and methodology were broadly shared as a part of the Data Curation Profiles Toolkit (Brant & Carlson, 2013). The Association of Research Libraries released information and resources to help librarians advocate for open access at their institutions, including a series of interview questions in an "Opportunity Assessment Instrument" (Association of Research Libraries, 2007). This instrument encouraged librarians to talk with faculty about their attitudes and practices related to open access. Librarians at the University of California Berkeley interviewed faculty to learn about their beliefs and attitudes related to publishing behaviors (Harley, Earl-Novell, Arter, Lawrence, & King, 2007). Librarians were able to learn more about the decisions faculty make when deciding on a publishing venue. These interviews also illustrated the centrality of peer review in the publishing process and helped librarians understand the concerns of faculty regarding the tenure and promotion process. Both Carlson et al. (2011) and Harley et al. (2007) interviewed faculty at research institutions; at Milne Library, we were curious as to whether the attitudes of faculty with high research and publishing expectations would mirror the attitudes of faculty with high teaching loads.

ABOUT GENESEO, MILNE, AND THE SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION TEAM

SUNY College at Geneseo is a small public liberal arts college consisting of about 5,000 undergraduate students and a few hundred graduate students spread between two accredited master's-level programs. The college is situated in the Genesee Valley, approximately 30 miles south of Rochester, NY. SUNY Geneseo prides itself on its selectivity of high-achieving students, low faculty-to-student ratio in the classroom, excellent teaching, and a strong culture of undergraduate research. As such, the college regularly finds itself at the top of annual rankings from publications such as *US News & World Report*, *Washington Monthly*, *Princeton Review*, and *Forbes* (SUNY Geneseo, 2014).

To support the high level of scholarship happening across campus, the staff at Milne Library are dedicated to outstanding customer service, responsive collection building, and classroom support through technology and teaching. With a culture of collaboration, innovation, and excellence, the library at SUNY Geneseo has earned national awards in areas of resource sharing and information literacy instruction.

Academic libraries have been helping faculty with publishing endeavors for decades without the title of "Scholarly Communication Program." When we formed the Scholarly Communication Team, we found that we were already providing many related services to our faculty, but not in any consistent or cohesive manner. We had a loose liaison program in place, where librarians supported academic departments primarily in instructional needs

and, to a lesser extent, in collection development. We were organizing special events such as an annual celebration of faculty publications and luncheons to discuss library budgets, digital scholarship, and open access. We recognized a need to better educate ourselves in scholarly communication topics in order to gain confidence in our knowledge of the issues. We also needed to get to know our faculty better to see how these issues might affect them. This would allow us to develop a coordinated outreach program to support faculty in their publication efforts and educate them about issues related to scholarly communication.

To tie all of these seemingly disjointed efforts together, we formed a scholarly communication Team consisting of six librarians from public and technical services. We worked on a mission statement—

“Promote and support the College’s scholarly endeavors by providing tools for, information about, and assistance in research, scholarship, and publishing.”

—and three main goals: Promote faculty scholarship, educate Geneseo faculty and staff about scholarly communication issues, and assist faculty and staff with their scholarship and publishing endeavors. The priority for our activities at the onset of this new team was to inform and educate ourselves (the team members and other librarians on staff) on scholarly communication issues, align our existing efforts to these areas, and then focus energy on meeting with faculty from all departments to learn more about their research and publication interests. In doing the latter, we would be building new relationships, re-establishing those already in existence, and, overall, connecting the dots between faculty needs and the support that the library could provide.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The decision to embark on this ambitious project was partly prompted by some existing survey instruments and projects. The Opportunity Assessment Instrument from the Association of Research Libraries (2007) and the Purdue Data Profiles (Brant & Carlson, 2013) had a big impact on the survey instrument we developed. These resources were designed for research institutions so some modification was necessary to ensure that our interviews uncovered practices and issues of concern to our faculty at a small, public, liberal arts college.

Late in 2010, the Scholarly Communications Team reviewed several existing survey instruments and developed a set of questions that would provide us with information about the areas in which we were most interested. Because we hoped to elicit information from faculty that they might not be consciously aware of, in-person interviews were deemed the

most productive method of finding answers. The interview questions we developed (see Appendix A) focused on undergraduate research, perceived value of publication types, and collaboration of scholars (within the university, across disciplines, and across institutions). We also asked a few questions about open access and data storage/management.

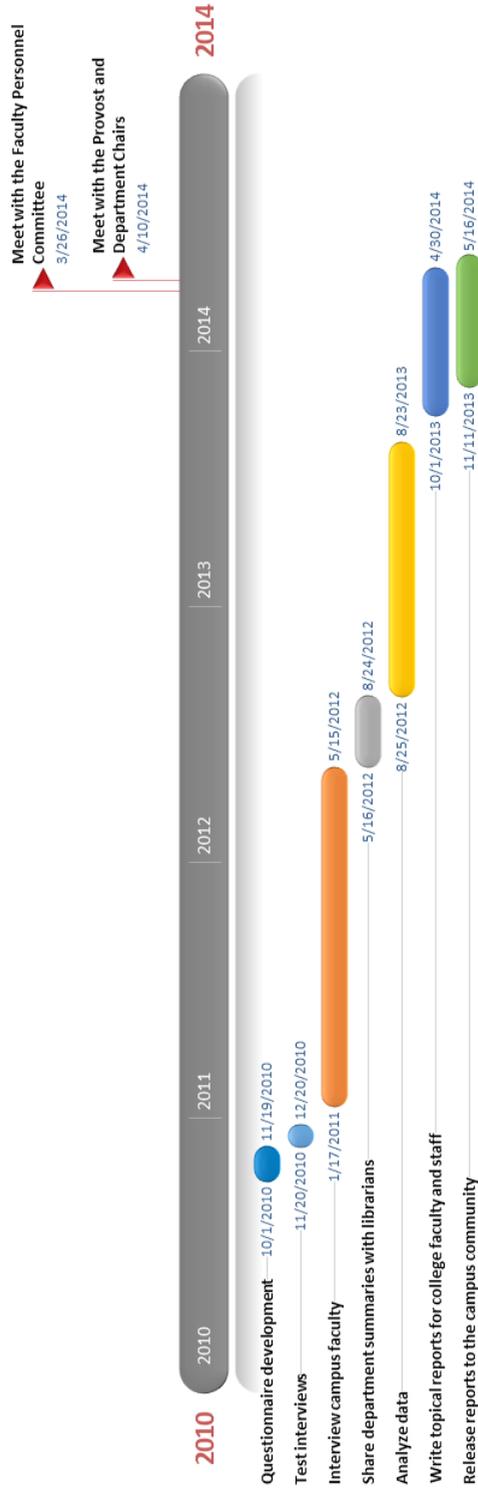
After developing the survey, each librarian recruited one faculty member for a small set of pilot interviews (see the timeline of project events in Figure 1, following page). The faculty members we selected were typically well-known to librarian interviewers and willing to be project guinea pigs. After the pilot interviews, the Scholarly Communication Team met to discuss the interview form, the interview process, and the timing. We made a few changes to the interview instrument and began developing plans to interview faculty across campus. Our goal was to interview 50% of SUNY Geneseo's 241 full-time faculty members. While our final total fell short of this, we were still able to interview 36% of all full-time faculty. The IRB at SUNY Geneseo deemed our project exempt as the results were primarily intended for internal assessment purposes and service improvement.

Six members of the Scholarly Communication Team conducted interviews, as well as three additional subject liaison librarians. The Scholarly Communication Team members provided several training sessions to the subject liaison librarians in order to outline the project goals and pass on strategies and tips learned during the pilot interviews. Librarians generally interviewed faculty in the departments with whom they worked most closely.

For the project to succeed, we needed faculty participation. The library director was asked to send an email to faculty informing them of the upcoming project, and librarians sent requests for interviews directly to faculty via email to set up appointments. We received a mixed response, with some faculty failing to respond to our requests and others welcoming the opportunity to talk about their research. Faculty were more likely to respond if we provided concrete meeting times in our invitations. Librarians often checked faculty teaching schedules to find times when the faculty member was most likely to be free.

We started interviewing faculty in January 2011 and continued through May 2012 (see Figure 1 for a complete timeline of the project). Progress was slow but steady, as a result of tight schedules and heavy workloads for both faculty and librarians. Librarians used a shared Google spreadsheet to track progress, with one member of the team responsible for checking in with librarians to check on progress and develop suggested timelines. Most librarians interviewed one or two faculty members a week in order to stay on target. Multiple librarians conducted interviews over a year and a half, and interview techniques may have varied over time or between librarians. This project was largely exploratory, and these variations were acceptable for our purposes of learning more about our faculty and planning a scholarly communications program.

Figure 1. Faculty Interview Project Timeline



In the end, we talked to a total 87 faculty representing every academic department, both experienced scholars and newer faculty, grouping them into three broad disciplinary categories:

Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geological Sciences, Mathematics, Physics & Astronomy

Social Sciences: Anthropology, Communication, Geography, Psychology, School of Business, School of Education, Sociology

Humanities: Art History, Art Studio, English, History, Language & Literature, Philosophy

We interviewed 25 professors from the sciences, 35 from the social sciences, and 27 from the humanities. The interviews were conducted in person for the most part, and librarians took copious written notes for each. We did not record the interviews because some faculty would feel it was invasive and threatening. We needed faculty to understand that we were there to learn about them, not to critique their behaviors or practices. To clarify unanswered questions, follow-up via email was necessary in some cases. As a small institution, we needed time to fit these interviews into our already busy schedules and interviewed faculty over the course of several semesters.

Either during or after the interviews, notes from faculty responses were compiled and entered into a Google Form. We removed identifying information before data analysis. Milne librarians prepared reports focused on overarching themes that surfaced again and again in the interviews: Undergraduate Research, Digital Scholarship, Open Access, Scholarly Communication and Output, Peer Review, and Data Management.

While our primary objective was to collect information from faculty, we also viewed these interviews as an outreach and educational opportunity. We often found ourselves explaining concepts such as open access, and had a great opportunity to discuss how the library hoped to use this information.

While a few of our questions could be analyzed quantitatively (e.g., 22% of faculty interviewed had self-archived an article), most of our open-ended interview questions were best suited for descriptive qualitative analysis. We used a basic content analysis (see Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) approach to code the responses. Two or more librarians identified recurring themes in the responses (e.g., undergraduate research, open access). After careful discussion about our content categories, librarians carefully examined each interview response to see how it fit into the categories we developed related to each section.

While results were being analyzed, librarians were already using and sharing departmental results with each other. After the analysis was completed, brief reports were written and shared with the campus.

GENERAL FINDINGS

The results of the faculty interviews were informative and revelatory but did not radically shake any of the assumptions we had before entering into the project. More detailed reports can be found in our complete series of reports, *Scholarly Publishing Across the Disciplines: Interviews With Geneseo Faculty* (Pitcher et al., 2014).

Modeling Good Scholarly Behavior

Overall, many of the findings concerning the research and publishing landscape at SUNY Geneseo are in line with what can be expected at an undergraduate college that places teaching and learning as a top priority. Faculty mentioned “modeling good scholarly behavior” for their students as one of the factors motivating them to publish (along with intellectual engagement, contributing to the field, and tenure), and while most are hesitant to share their research data publicly, they are willing to share it with students.

High Impact Learning Experience

Geneseo faculty are continually finding ways to involve students in their research and publishing endeavors, thereby providing them with a high-impact learning experience. At the same time, undergraduate students present several challenges to faculty’s desire to collaborate with them, even within the sciences and social sciences where collaborations are more common than in the humanities (Dawson & Rascoff, 2006; Griffiths et al., 2006; Manville & Smith, 2008; Quinn & Kim, 2008). Unlike graduate students, most undergraduates lack the knowledge, skills, ability to travel, and long-term availability that meaningful collaboration requires.

Only Peer-Reviewed Will Do?

The faculty interviewees constituted a fairly representative sample in terms of disciplines and academic status. Virtually all of them were currently engaged in producing some sort of scholarly output. Across the disciplines, articles published in peer-reviewed journals were seen as the most valued form of scholarly output, but this is dependent on the discipline (e.g., books ranked highest among humanities faculty) and career stage (e.g., some tenured faculty cited the “luxury” of writing for a wider audience). Faculty still working to gain

tenure were most concerned with the rigor of the publication—only peer-reviewed will do. We see these sentiments mirrored in the Berkeley study where “personal desire and interest . . . are often the drivers for participation in newer modes of communication and publication for senior faculty” and “publishing in online-only resources is perceived among junior faculty as a possible threat to achieving tenure because online publication may not be counted as much, or even at all, in review” (Harley et al., 2007).

Faculty Perceptions on OA

Indeed, the primacy of tenure concerns and the need to publish in peer-reviewed outlets influences nearly every aspect of faculty’s research and publishing behavior and decisions. Harley et al. (2007) found that questions surrounding the peer review process in electronic-only publications were enough to prohibit faculty—even those who valued the quality of open access publishing venues—from submitting manuscripts. Interestingly, the ability of open access to increase visibility of authors’ works is not largely seen as a selling point by younger, untenured authors at Geneseo and is even seen as a negative by some. As Harley et al., (2007) stated, “Simply put, they know that the individuals reviewing their work for advancement may well not have that (same) awareness.” Milne Library’s continuing efforts to raise understanding and perceived value of peer-reviewed open access journals as legitimate and frequently better alternatives to print may be changing faculty perceptions, but slowly. For example, we have sponsored speakers and events during Open Access Week, partnered with faculty in created open access journals, coordinated a series of workshops on scholarly communication topics, and promoted our efforts via our library blog, newsletter and conversations with individual faculty.

Changing Faculty Attitudes

Faculty attitudes regarding digital scholarship were enlightening, starting with the realization that there is a general lack of definition of what it is. One thing faculty across the board could agree on, however, is that the value of digital scholarship (to them, their departments, their fields, and the college) depends on whether or not it is scholarly, peer-reviewed, and rigorous enough to count toward tenure or promotion. Overall, humanities faculty at SUNY Geneseo appear to be the most receptive to the idea of digital scholarship and scholarly projects. Perhaps this is because much of their work has traditionally been solitary and low-tech (Griffiths et al., 2006), and the potential to collaborate and to employ 21st-century tools is an exciting prospect. It may also be due to the ambitious, high-profile success of the Digital Thoreau project, led by faculty in the English Department in collaboration with scholars and institutions from around the nation (Schacht, Easterly, & Root, 2015).

Exploring Best Practices in Data Archiving and Preservation

These interviews revealed to librarians (and probably some faculty who had not thought much about it before) that there is much work to be done in the area of data storage and preservation. This is not to say that there is widespread alarm about the loss of data, but rather that there has been no systematic approach to saving and archiving. Although most faculty have not sought advice, they would likely welcome guidance from the library and/or CIT (Computing & Information Technology). Milne Library staff have been exploring best practices in data archiving and preservation (e.g. Carlson et al., 2011), as well as how to help faculty share and acquire data sets, and have taken a leadership role on campus in bringing these issues to light.

OUTCOMES

Sharing the Results

The librarians who conducted the interviews with faculty immediately began using what they learned, framing interactions with faculty in light of their research projects and habits. As we discussed the interview results, the shared knowledge of faculty research within and outside our respective disciplinary areas was extremely beneficial. Reference desk interactions with students and library instruction sessions were improved by our new understanding of disciplinary research. Sharing the interview results with all library staff members became a priority once the active interviewing stage was over. We were also aware (because of comments made during our interviews) that faculty were very interested in what each other had to say (i.e. how other faculty were answering our questions). We knew we had to share the information with faculty as well. Finally, there were numerous issues that came up in the course of the interviews that college administration and the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC, reviewing tenure and promotion decisions) would also benefit from hearing.

We shared our data in three separate ways: 1) in a series of presentations to library staff, 2) in a series of widely disseminated reports that outlined various themes from the data, and 3) in meetings with the FPC and department chairs. Sharing with department chairs and the FPC was important due to the impact they have on faculty behavior (Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013).

In the presentations to library staff, each librarian who conducted interviews gave overviews of the themes that emerged as they spoke to faculty and also produced charts and graphs and shared pertinent quotes. In the humanities, for instance, we discovered that because

most scholars conduct their research and writing alone, few of them involved undergraduate students in their scholarly publishing efforts. This was interesting for librarians who work mostly in the sciences and social sciences to hear, as it differs greatly from their departments, who commonly use armies of students to gather data and even engage students to write sections of the resulting articles. While we were each aware that differences existed between disciplinary approaches to the production of scholarship, the interviews revealed details about work habits that were useful in understanding faculty publishing. Similarly, when we gave our presentations, librarians were surprised that knowledge about open access issues varied so greatly from department to department.

After completing these informal, internal reports, we started work on a series of small reports aimed at SUNY Geneseo faculty and staff. Our small internal reports focused on each discipline, but the written reports examined many of the subjects that arose during our interviews (see the General Findings section above for a brief summary). The brief reports were issued monthly over the course of a semester and made available via a LibGuide (Pitcher et al., 2014). We received some interesting feedback from faculty members, and the topics discussed in the reports have been brought up in other meetings, suggesting that they had an impact across campus.

Our meeting with the Faculty Personnel Committee was informal and focused on those areas related to the value of various forms of scholarship in which faculty said they were unsure about the perceived value. We were able to share faculty concerns about the value of digital scholarship projects and related the oft-cited request for greater guidance from the Provost's office about these issues. Librarians were also able to learn about how the FPC assesses scholarship. Because we often get requests for journal impact factors or acceptance rates from faculty up for tenure and promotion, this information helped us put these requests in context. In some cases, we were able to provide information that faculty hadn't asked for but that the FPC liked to have. After meeting with the Faculty Personnel Committee, we were asked by the Provost to give a brief presentation to department chairs. During the presentation, we highlighted some of the issues and concerns raised by the interviews, and shared some of the recommendations we made in the reports. Faculty were engaged in the conversation, and the members of the Scholarly Communication Team felt that relationships with faculty were strengthened as a result. The Provost later used this information as the impetus behind a project asking departments to clarify their tenure and promotion requirements.

Impact on the Library

Throughout the project, even as our data was still being “crunched” and our conclusions formed, Milne librarians were taking steps to address many of the issues that were revealed.

We began working more closely to help train undergraduate students to be more effective research assistants, facilitating open dialogue concerning the place of OA and digital scholarship in the tenure process, and providing nuts-and-bolts assistance with both traditional and new forms of scholarly publishing. The new Scholarship and Publishing website (Milne Library, 2014) was launched in early 2014 as an answer to many of the concerns revealed by faculty, not only in our interview sample, but in our day-to-day dealings. Listening to faculty and students has proven the single best way for Milne librarians to remain responsive and relevant in the scholarly life of the campus.

As a result of this project, librarians at SUNY Geneseo have been able to:

- Connect faculty working on similar and/or complementary research projects with one another, within and outside of their departments.
- Highlight the lack of communication within some departments about projects and expectations.
- Plan public forums in which faculty could discuss their research.
- Use data to defend decisions and assumptions about our research tools and services.
- Publicize the research projects of faculty to students.
- Bring clarification to the Faculty Personnel Committee about the differences between faculty output in the sciences, social sciences, and the humanities.
- Highlight issues regarding non-traditional forms of publication for the tenure and promotion process.
- Reconnect with faculty who were not frequent visitors to the library.
- Enhance our collection development efforts in the areas of current faculty research.
- Understand that our assumptions were not always accurate when listening to colleagues outside our areas of expertise.
- Question students more effectively about their understanding of assignments.
- Meet new faculty (especially important for new librarians).
- Spread news about the library's services.

Lessons Learned

Over the course of conducting the interviews and analyzing the results, we learned many lessons about our methods.

Although we engaged librarians not on the Scholarly Communication Team in some discussions about our goals, process, and general scholarly communication concepts, we could have expanded this training and education. Some librarians felt unsure when talking with faculty about issues like self-archiving and open access.

Librarians had various ways of entering survey results into our form. As a result, some of our data represented direct quotes whereas other data represented librarian summaries of faculty answers. This created some confusion during the analysis phase, and emphasized that we should have thought more about our data analysis at the beginning of the project.

As we analyzed the results, we learned that some of our questions were not as useful as we would have hoped (e.g., what the scholars were reading). We also wished that we had asked more pointed questions about the peer review process and that we had pushed more faculty to talk about their research data (especially those who might not think of it as data). See Table 1 (following page) for our list of tips for libraries who hope to engage in a similar project.

CONCLUSION

By interviewing faculty across our campus, Milne Library's Scholarly Communication Team learned about the issues facing researchers at our institution who try to publish their work. We learned a lot about how our campus climate impacts many scholarly communication issues such as open access, data sharing, and self-archiving. By sharing our results with faculty, we were able to initiate discussions of these important issues, positioning the library at the center of topics related to scholarly communication.

Although the project was time-consuming, without this information, our scholarly communication program would have relied on guesswork and anecdotes. The project provided the Scholarly Communication Team with the information needed to develop and formalize programming and informational resources for faculty.

The interview project and its impact on the library and across campus demonstrate the importance of scholarly communication knowledge and activity for librarians in all fields. As a result, scholarly communication activity will be incorporated into all library liaison roles and scholarly communication issues will be discussed as a regular part of reference department work. In the future, scholarly communications will be more prominent at Milne Library and SUNY Geneseo.

Tips for Conducting a Faculty Interview Project

Leverage existing liaison relationships when assigning librarians to conduct interviews.

The library director can show support and encourage participation by sending an initial announcement to faculty.

Suggesting specific times based on faculty teaching schedules and office hours can speed the scheduling process.

Be flexible in the way librarians record interview notes; some may type directly into a web form during the interview, others may want to take notes and transcribe later.

Be sure that interviews take place face to face; more passive approaches (such as email) prevent conversations from evolving.

See these interviews as an opportunity to get to know faculty personally. Invite them for coffee or lunch rather than hold the interviews in traditional office settings. Strong relationships could be made, leading to future collaborations.

If you have difficulty finding agreeable faculty try visiting faculty offices to ask them to agree to an interview at a later time. It is hard to say “no” face to face.

Create a solid system of tracking the progress of the interviews (a spreadsheet, for instance); assign one person to regularly check in with others about their progress.

Don't wait to analyze results; your first findings can help breathe new life into a project that could take a few years.

Interviewers should meet often to discuss possible new services that emerge from the interviews; put into place any services that seem quick to implement.

A librarian representative on the faculty tenure/promotion committee is extremely beneficial when getting the word out about faculty scholarship issues.

Table 1. Recommendations for libraries engaging in a similar project involving faculty interviews

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APPENDIX A

Interview questions used by librarians in meetings with faculty.

General Questions

1. What research projects are you currently pursuing?
2. Have you (will you) co-authored any publications with your students as a result of this research?
 - a.* May we have a list of these publications?
 - b.* Do you feel that the students were well prepared to do this kind of research and writing? Why or why not?
3. How are you incorporating undergraduate students in your research/publishing endeavors?
4. How are you collaborating with other scholars?
 - a.* May we have a list of these publications?
 - b.* At Geneseo? Other institutions? Other disciplines? (Which ones? With whom?)
5. For the projects you are currently working on, where are you hoping to publish (i.e. publishers, journals)?
6. Where have you published in the past?
7. What influences this? (Impact Factor? Open Access? General reputation? Subject matter? Other factors?)
8. What motivates you to publish?
9. What kinds of scholarly output are there in your discipline? (articles? books? conference presentations? technical reports? commentaries? reviews? creative works? Other?)
 - a.* How are they valued in your department?
10. How are online/digital projects valued? In your discipline? In your department? On campus? (For example, the creation of a multimedia website, contributions to an online encyclopedia like the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, online resource guide for professionals, blogs, etc.)

11. Have you posted a copy of one of your publications online?
 - a. On your personal website (not on the LMS or course reserve)
 - b. On another website (Institutional repository, disciplinary repository)
 - c. Other:

12. What was your motivation/reason for doing so?

13. Did you keep the right to do that in your copyright transfer agreement? (Yes, No, Don't Know)

Optional questions (depending on the conversation)

1. What journals do you read regularly? And how do you access those journals? (Print subscription, online portal, professional society member websites, other)

2. How do you communicate informally with other scholars?(Hallway conversations at conferences, news publications, direct email, web forums, listservs, blogs, other)

Data

1. What kinds of data are you creating with your research?

2. What do you do with it? Why do you store it? Where do you store it?

3. Do you share your data? With whom? Would you like to?

4. Do you have security concerns about the availability of your data? What are they?

5. Do you delete your data? Why or why not?