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PRACTICE

Starting Scholarly Conversations: A Scholarly Communication Outreach Program

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Abstract

As the scholarly communication system continues to evolve, academic librarians should take an active role in both developing their own knowledge and educating their campus communities about emergent topics. At Furman University, librarians developed an outreach program, aimed primarily at faculty, to increase awareness of current scholarly communication issues. Expert speakers were recruited to present throughout the year on open access, altmetrics, author's rights, and other relevant topics. This program addressed a number of needs simultaneously—outreach to faculty; education for Furman librarians; and education for the greater library community—and affirmed the importance of providing opportunities to discuss these issues beyond the libraries. The program also further established Furman University Libraries' role in educating and guiding its campus community through changes in scholarly communication models and practices.

INTRODUCTION

Every person on a college campus is a producer and consumer of information, a participant in scholarly communication. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) defines *scholarly communication* as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use" (n.d., ¶1). This system, which encompasses both "formal means of communication" and "informal channels" (ARL, n.d., ¶1) has been fundamentally changed by the Internet. The changing methods and mediums of scholarly communication have been especially disruptive in scholarly journal publishing, with the Internet providing new ways to share, license, and measure the impact of publications. And since every academic is a participant in scholarly communication, from faculty to students to administrators, these changes impact the entire campus. Academic libraries in particular have been affected by—and have helped shape—this changing environment. In the decade following the *Budapest Open Access Initiative* (2002), the *Bethesda Statement on Open Access* Publishing (2003), and the *Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities* (2003), libraries have been at the forefront of advocating for new business models for scholarly publications. Because of their visibility in this dimension of scholarly communication, they have become "the de facto center for scholarly communication on campus" (Corbett, 2008, p. 7).

Within this new and developing role, libraries must expand their attention from how scholarly publishing issues influence their work and budgets and also consider the positive effect libraries can have on their faculty, students, and administrators through the development of campus conversations and deeper engagement with scholarly communication topics (Hahn, 2008). To

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begin these interactions at our institution, the Furman University Libraries developed an outreach program, *Scholarly Conversations*, with two main goals. The first goal was to increase awareness and knowledge of a few key scholarly communication issues—publishing models, author copyrights, and impact metrics, particularly among the faculty—and spark dialogues about how we create, share, and consume scholarly information in a new, ever-changing environment. The second goal was to pilot a model of scholarly communication outreach—a series of guest lectures by experts throughout the academic year—at a liberal-arts university. This type of outreach is not usually described in the literature for any type of institution, let alone a small university such as Furman.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly communication is the foundation of every institution of higher education, regardless of its size, prestige, or endowment. Over the last 20 years, new methods for creating, evaluating, disseminating, and preserving scholarly work have radically changed how we complete and value these tasks, with an emphasis on creating methods that are more open and economically sustainable. As with many developing issues, large research libraries have been among the first to address these changes, particularly with regard to open access. They host publishing platforms, manage data content, and dedicate working groups or entire library positions to scholarly communication (Radom, Feltner-Reichert, & Stringer-Stanback, 2012). However, smaller colleges and universities are engaging with open access and related topics as well; the membership list for the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions (COAPI) displays the growing diversity of institutions active in this area (SPARC, n.d.). For those who have not started such programs, Miller (2011) provides guidance on supporting open access policies on any campus, while Alexander (2011) elucidates the impact of the changing scholarly communication landscape on liberal arts campuses and gives recommendations on embracing those changes.

But does every library really need to get involved in scholarly communication outreach? The *JISC/OSI Journal Authors Survey* (Swan & Brown, 2004) reveals an interesting indicator of the importance of this type of programming with regard to participation in open access publishing. Swan and Brown found that 42% of authors who had published open access indicated that their home institution had brought attention to open access and institutional repository issues while only 24% of toll-only authors reported the same. The report also notes that "[m]ore important reasons, though, for not publishing in open access journals are that they are perceived to be of lower reputation and prestige, but most importantly of all, authors are not familiar enough with the open access journals in their field to submit work to them" (Swan & Brown, 2004, p.1). These findings indicate both an educational gap that libraries can fill and a direct benefit—increased open access publishing—from doing so.

Beyond educating student and faculty authors about the characteristics and benefits of open access publications, there is also important education libraries can provide to all authors, regardless of where they decide to publish. The rights retained by authors vary across publishers and sometimes differ title by title within publisher catalogs. Libraries can provide education to help authors understand these differences. For example, Wirth and Chadwell (2010) describe a workshop designed to educate librarians about publishers' copyright transfer agreements. While that workshop approaches the topic for library and information science authors, it allows librarians to then tailor the workshop to the other disciplines that they work with on campus. Crow (2002) also notes that copyright restrictions can impact the ability of faculty to self-archive publications in an institutional repository, and that "continued education on the issues will be a necessary component to any institutional repository communications program" (p. 21).

As more libraries become involved in scholarly communication education on their campuses, the literature suggests the most common methods of delivering this education are digital materials and live presentations. *Scholarly Communication Education Initiatives* (Newman, Blecic, & Armstrong, 2007) provides many examples of digital materials such as websites, presentations, blogs, and newsletters. Another common theme is utilizing Open Access Week for librarians to give presentations or host panels; many authors describe Open Access Week as a chance to capitalize on international buzz at a local level (Cryer, 2011; Gilliland, 2010; Hannaford, 2011; Vandegrift & Colvin, 2012). Other librarians have taken advantage of faculty meetings at the start of the academic year to present on scholarly communication issues (Duncan, Clement, & Rozum, 2013; Taylor, 2009).

As the need for such programming has increased, it has been folded into larger library initiatives, as evidenced by the growth of committees and entire positions dedicated to scholarly communication (Radom et al., 2012). It may seem redundant for so many libraries to be developing scholarly communication materials, but the constant changes in scholarly communication coupled with the unique research and teaching requirements of every institution results in the need for campus-specific, even department-specific, resources. Corbett (2008) notes that the print materials on scholarly communication developed by the Boston Library consortium were too general to be useful and that the most successful programs were created in-house for specific members. Institutional culture influences the success of any program, and scholarly communication education is no different. Libraries can join together, however, to develop frameworks for programming that could then be tailored to particular institutions or occasions.

Because more librarians are dealing with scholarly communication both from a library perspective and a patron perspective, libraries are turning their attention to internal education as well. As some libraries expand the role of liaison librarians to include scholarly communication issues (Malenfant, 2010; Vandegrift & Colvin, 2012), there is a growing need to educate library personnel about scholarly communication topics. This new type of professional development has been achieved through external programs such as the ACRL Scholarly Communication 101 Roadshow (Vandegrift & Colvin, 2012) and in-service presentations developed by a small group and then presented to a large contingent of librarians (Malenfant, 2010). York University even developed a survey for liaison librarians to assess their knowledge, skills, and abilities related to scholarly communication (Radom et al., 2012).

Our *Scholarly Conversations* program sought to address both a need for internal education within the library and our desire to provide educational outreach to our campus while building on suggestions from the literature. As a small institution, we felt that our communities deserved a deeper engagement on the scholarly communication issues affecting their ability to access, use, and publish information. Simultaneously, we knew that the libraries had much to learn on these topics. We believed that bringing experts to campus, rather than having presentations given solely by our own librarians, would meet both of these needs. By holding the events throughout the year, we would capitalize on both the start of the academic year and Open Access Week while extending the conversations above and beyond those few days.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Topics and Speakers

There are three important and overlapping scholarly communication issues that we believed would be most useful for our campus to engage with: open access publishing, copyright for academic authors, and publication metrics. These topics were selected to provide both introductory material and in-depth coverage of areas that directly affect faculty and are regularly in the news. We hoped that choosing a variety of issues would help us reach a wide audience across departments and disciplines. Using the literature, blogs, and presentation listings on scholarly communication, experts on these different issues were identified and were then sent an email briefly describing the program and inquiring after their interest and availability. Responses were overwhelmingly supportive. While a few were unable to participate because of busy schedules, most were agreeable to present at some time during the year. Some respondents even suggested other possible speakers for the series. From those responses, the following slate of events was prepared for the inaugural *Scholarly Conversations*:

An Introduction to Scholarly Communication
Lisa Spiro

Dr. Spiro provided an overview and contextualization of the various scholarly communication issues. She discussed the purpose of traditional scholarly publishing, open access, emerging publishing models, sustainability, and related issues. In addition to setting an excellent foundation for scholarly communication changes, Dr. Spiro created excellent entries for future events that would delve more deeply into these areas.

Dr. Spiro is Director of the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE) Labs and program manager for Anvil Academic Publishing, a new digital publisher focused on the humanities. Dr. Spiro is a member of the Executive Council for the Association for Computers and the Humanities, the DH Commons

Board, and the Program Committee for the Joint Conference on Digital Libraries.

Open Access: Blazing Trails through the Scholarly Communication Landscape
Molly Keener

As a part of Open Access Week, Ms. Keener presented an examination of the open access movement as it enters its second decade. In addition to clarifying the terminology and intricacies of open access, she also provided a discussion of the various routes scholars follow to open access; how institutions, funding agencies and professional organizations are responding to calls for broader access; and, opportunities for open access participation in the liberal arts.

Ms. Keener is the Scholarly Communication Librarian at Wake Forest University. She educates and supports students, faculty, and staff on issues related to copyright and author rights, publishing options such as open access, and creating electronic collections of their scholarly record.

Moving Beyond the Article, Beyond the Impact Factor: Alternative Metrics in Theory and Practice
Jason Priem

As scholarship is increasingly moving online, scholarly impacts once invisible are beginning to leave traces--things like conversations on twitter, saves in reference managers, discussion on blogs, citations on Wikipedia, and more. Observing these traces may inform alternative metrics, or "altmetrics," of scholarly impact. These altmetrics could help us track the influence of scholarship with unprecedented speed, breadth, and resolution. Mr. Priem discussed the current research and practice around altmetrics, described a framework to better understand what these metrics mean, and reviewed extant tools that let scholars and evaluators gather their own altmetrics today.

Mr. Priem is a doctoral student and Royster Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, studying how the Web is revolutionizing scholarly communication. He has been a leader in the altmetrics movement, investigating new measures of scholarly impact on the social Web, and also helps to lead the open-source total-impact project and ImpactStory.

Image vs. Impact: Copyright, Publishing, and Professional Reputation
Kevin Smith

Mr. Smith presented information about how various choices about publication involve different approaches to rights management and also have different impacts on professional reputation and evaluations such as tenure. Details on new and developing publication venues, pros and cons, and managing author rights in any venue were discussed.

Mr. Smith is the Director of Copyright and Scholarly Communication at Duke University. He holds a Masters of Library Science from Kent State University and has worked as an academic librarian in both liberal arts colleges and specialized libraries. His strong interest in copyright law began in library school, and he received a law degree from Capital University in 2005. Mr. Smith writes extensively for the highly-regarded Scholarly Communications @ Duke blog.

Formats

The decision to use on-campus speakers as the format for this outreach program served several purposes. First, it added authority and credibility to the program by presenting experts in the various fields. It also demonstrated the importance of scholarly communication beyond the library and even beyond our own campus. Finally, in-person events tend to encourage better engagement and discussion with the speaker while also enabling additional informational encounters with small groups at meals and separate meetings.

While there are real benefits to live sessions, with current technology, we found no reason to limit the audience to the people who are available at that specific place and time. For three of the four sessions, the presentations were streamed live online via Adobe Connect. Particularly, this broadcast allowed us to reach an audience beyond our own campus. As an additional benefit, Adobe Connect sessions were recorded and shared for future viewings. (Recordings are available here: http://libguides.furman.edu/scholarlyconversations).

To minimize conflicts with *Scholarly Conversations*, events were scheduled on varying days of the week and times. One challenge was to fit the events within the

timing of the class schedule. Every attempt was made to start and end events in such a way as to not overlap with more than two classes. Hopefully this enabled more faculty members to attend, even if just for part of a session. Midday times were selected for all events, and two included lunch for participants.

Budget

The majority of the series' costs were supported through a Faculty Advancement Grant from the Associated Colleges of the South (ACS). *Scholarly Conversations* fit extremely well with the aims and priorities of the Faculty Advancement Program as the project was designed to engage faculty across campus. The online aspect of the series allowed it to reach beyond our campus from the very start. Further, as other campuses begin or expand their own dialogues on scholarly communication issues, this project could serve as a model for similar programs hosted by other schools, another goal of the Faculty Advancement Program.

The remaining costs for *Scholarly Conversations* were covered by the Furman University Libraries. Library administration was aware of the growing involvement of other libraries with scholarly communication and had sought to increase our own activities since a library restructuring a year prior. When approached with this project, they were very encouraging and were particularly supportive once the ACS grant was approved. This collaboration enabled both groups to engage with more speakers and cover more topics than each would have funded individually.

The budget was built around speaker fees, travel costs, food, and marketing. There was notable variety in these costs (Table 1). Speaker fees ranged from $1,500 to zero. Some travel required flights into town while other speakers lived close enough to drive. Also, having lunch for attendees at two events increased the food costs for those sessions. In the end, total costs for each session ranged from $1,130.86 to $2,157.88.

Table 1. Cost by category

Budget Category	Total Cost
Speaker Fees	3000.00
Travel	2195.30
Food	924.33
Marketing	379.00
Total	*6498.63*

Marketing

Since the primary audience for this series was faculty at a small institution, but with possible interest from outside groups, it was marketed with a mixed medium approach. Paper flyers—half-sheets of cardstock printed at the university copy shop—were mailed to each faculty member two weeks before each event. Email announcements were sent to departments by their library liaison approximately one week before each event. Announcements were made at campus-wide faculty meetings and at the Chairs and Department Heads meetings, and details were also posted to internal electronic announcement boards and a variety of external listservs.

To support the marketing of the event, as well as any online components and additional resources, an online guide was created for the series. The guide included pages for each event with a speak biography, event details, calendar or registration functions, links to related resources, and access to the online broadcast.

Assessment

The most obvious form of assessment for such a program is attendance. The number of attendees was tracked for each event, both in-person and online (see Table 2, following page). The audiences for the in-person sessions were quite a mix. A few faculty attended several events. Events attracted new faculty, established faculty, and occasionally administrators. Each event was also attend by some of our librarians. The online attendance was based on the number of unique "Guests" logged into the live broadcast. In at least one known case, several people watched a live broadcast together through a single sign-on, so it is possible that the numbers of viewers for each event is higher than recorded. Based on feedback from some of those online guests and name recognition, most of these guests were library professionals from other institutions. While the attendance was a mix of faculty, administrators, and librarians for each event, Jason Priem's talk on altmetrics had a distinctly higher attendance by librarians than other programs in the series, evidenced by the high online access as well as high librarian turnout in-person.

Table 2. Event attendance

Event	In-Person Attendance	Online Attendance	Total Attendance
Spiro	16	n/a	16
Keener	10	9	19
Priem	7	16	23
Smith	8	5	13

There was no formal evaluation of the program by participants. The stated goal of the series was "to spark informed and meaningful conversations and actions across departments, divisions, and campuses." This type of culture awareness can be difficult to measure, but there was been an increase in dialogue between the Libraries and faculty regarding key scholarly communication issues. Since the start of the program, several faculty members have initiated conversations with the Libraries on publication venues and understanding their rights in publishing contracts. These are precisely the kinds of discussions we want to happen between the faculty, the Libraries, and the larger campus. Thanks to this heightened awareness brought by the program, as different disciplines tackle these issues and as faculty find themselves in varying publishing and access situations, they will know that the Libraries are a source of knowledge and assistance for them.

DISCUSSION

Scholarly Conversations met its goal of increasing awareness and knowledge of key scholarly communication issues and sparking dialogues about these topics. One key to this success was the variety of attendees. Some faculty members attended multiple sessions, but each session drew new participants. The variety of topics and speakers appealed to the interests of researchers in different disciplines as well as faculty at different stages of their careers. Since the entire program was centered on scholarly communication issues and many of its general themes appeared in all of the programs, we reached a large audience with the core concerns.

The format of the program also helped faculty connect with the issues in a way that focused on their goals rather than the Libraries' needs. As different disciplines tackle scholarly communication issues, and as faculty within those disciplines find themselves in varying publishing and access situations, faculty members have reached out to the library as a source of knowledge and assistance. We hope to see organic, positive, and sustainable increases in scholarly communication knowledge and action on our campus into the future.

One unexpected success of the program was the outreach to librarians at other institutions. Most of the online participants were not from our university community, but other libraries. Like us, these libraries are realizing the need to learn more about open access, authors' rights, and alternative metrics. These sessions offered a convenient, cost-effective means of professional development for both our internal librarians and librarians at other colleges. This highlights a potential audience for scholarly communication programming beyond teaching and research faculty.

When comparing the quality of the presentations, the benefits to our campus, and the sharing with other institutions to the cost of the program, the *Scholarly Conversations* model is quite cost effective. The outside speakers do not need to be the biggest names in the field because expertise arises at diverse locations. Other institutions can take advantage of more regional experts, as we did, to keep travel costs down. The project was also flexible enough to include more expensive activities (e.g., meals for all participants) alongside cost-effective moves (e.g., online marketing) to achieve a strong balance of coverage, appeal, and cost. All of this suggests that *Scholarly Conversations* was also successful in its secondary goal of modeling a scholarly communication speaker program for any size institution.

NEXT STEPS

Although we are pleased with the success of *Scholarly Conversations*, there is still more work to do. The issues the programs addressed continue to evolve and the impact of those issues continues to grow, which necessitates ongoing dialogue and outreach. As we look to future events, there

are a number of lessons and areas for improvement we can take from the initial launch.

Because of the time and financial resources involved in the original program, the number of *Scholarly Conversations* will likely be fewer in future years. The ACS Faculty Development Grant was integral in getting the program off the ground, but the costs of the expansive first year are not sustainable without external funding. In exchange for decreasing the number of programs, we hope to increase the impact of each *Scholarly Conversation*. This can be accomplished by expanding the opportunities for different types of engagement with the experts, such as more small-group discussions, class meetings, and shared meals.

One of the most important untapped development opportunities for the program is outreach to students. By including scholarly communication issues and approaches that appeal more to student concerns, we will be able to create events for students by the same experts speaking to faculty. Our institution requires students to attend Cultural Life Program (CLP) events to extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Getting CLP-approval for a student-centered speaker would increase the marketing and incentivize attendance for students. The Libraries can also try to develop opportunities for guest speakers to visit classes and help students identify connections between their coursework and scholarly communication issues. These interactions would increase our contact with students as well as with the faculty members teaching the courses. Undergraduates remain an elusive population for many scholarly communication programs, but using the curriculum as a gateway may prove successful.

Another development opportunity identified by the inaugural *Scholarly Conversations* was programming for other librarians. Librarians are at the epicenter of scholarly communication changes, and many institutions are recognizing the need to cultivate our own knowledge and skills. For this reason, it is important to keep the program as open as possible, so that librarians at other institutions can learn from these experts as well. There is also the chance to increase the program's impact on librarianship by creating events aimed specifically at librarians. Scholarly communication is becoming a common track or sub-theme at library conferences and seminars, but this area is important enough and robust enough to deserve devoted conferences, journals, and personnel positions in libraries. Creating more robust programming for more librarians now will help us continue to be on the forefront of this field and to carve out our place as major stakeholders in these conversations.

As with many programs, one of the greatest challenges *Scholarly Conversations* faces in the future is assessment. The questions "What do we value?" and "What can we measure?" are not necessarily one and the same. Articulating measureable goals for the program and creating appropriate tools will be one of the most difficult—and rewarding—requirements as the program continues. More refined attendance demographics could help us identify departments or groups expressing the most interest, as well as those we might need to reach out to more strongly. Not only do we want our community members to be more aware of the changes in scholarly communication, we want them to become informed participants in these changes. Tracking faculty publication choices by access and license options might uncover changes in behavior or attitude toward open access. The same could hold true for new services such as ImpactStory, PeerJ, Dryad, and Plum Analytics. And, of course, surveys could also help glean attitudes and awareness issues that may not have manifested explicitly into action.

Last year, *Scholarly Conversations* was simply a catchy title for an optimistic idea for scholarly communication outreach. Now—after surprises, obstacles, rewards, and many discussions along the way—it has been realized as an important initiative that supports multiple needs and multiple groups. Our success at Furman demonstrates that any library can provide meaningful education related to the scholarly communication issues facing its academic community—you don't have to be a large, research library with a multi-person task-force to engage your campus. Whether a library follows the *Scholarly Conversations* model (see Figure 1 for ideas, following page) or develops its own outreach strategy, the most important lesson to take from our experience is that your inspiration and commitment *can* positively impact your campus, if you just start the conversations.

Figure 1. Scholarly Conversations Quick Start Guide

Topics & Speakers

- Identify which scholarly communication issues would be of most interest to your campus. These could include open access, author's rights, altmetrics, tenure criteria, and more.
- Use scholarly communication resources such as SPARC, ACRL, and blogs to identify potential speakers. Experts can range from specialized librarians to lawyers to faculty advocates from other institutions.
- When contacting potential speakers, explain-very briefly-the goals of your program and inquire about availability and speaker fees. Many experts will have an established fee, but these may range from $500 to over $2,000 depending on the extent of the programming they will present. If a specific speaker is outside your range, you can always use that information for developing different ideas in the future.
- Don't be afraid to "cold call" experts via email. Most of these experts are very nice people who are invested in educating campuses on these issues, just like you. While emails from library administrators may appear to carry more weight than other librarians, you want the contacter to be able to answer questions on the program quickly and correctly.

Funding

- Consider groups on campus, like Administration, Intellectual Property Offices, and Faculty Development Offices, who might want to partner on the events.
- Explore grant opportunities. These could be external, such as foundations and consortia, or internal to the campus. If librarians are faculty on your campus, consider funding aimed at faculty research or development.
- To strengthen funding proposals, identify connections between potential topics and strategic priorities for the library, the campus, and consortia.
- Determine if other libraries nearby would like to co-sponsor a series that shared hosting and financial requirements.

Logistics

- Don't limit yourself to a library location. Look for spaces with appropriate size and technology.
- Try to work within class times and avoid other major campus events.
- Food and beverages are always appreciated, especially near meal times.
- Market your program early, often, and through as many channels as you can.
  - Utilize liaison librarians to email departments directly.
  - Small flyers mailed directly to faculty on campus can help cut through the avalanche of electronic announcements.
  - Reminders at faculty and administrator meetings or events can help spread word from the top down.
  - Investigate the various event announcement forums on campus, including digital displays in public areas, online boards, and print flyers in public spaces.
- Decide on assessment goals and implement measures that can be reported back to funders and supporters.

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