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Professional Development as a Piece of Cake: How to Host a Scholarly Communication Mini-Conference

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

The University of Maine is a land, sea, and space grant university in the middle of rural Maine. It is the flagship campus of a seven-campus system, and its library is the largest in the state. The library supports the research and creative endeavors of its faculty, staff, and students and works in myriad ways to help the campus community stay abreast of trends in scholarly communication. Since there is no dedicated scholarly communication position within the library, subject librarians typically provide distributed services and support as part of their liaison roles and responsibilities. However, in the winter of 2018, the library hosted a free university-wide scholarly communication mini-conference that featured a slate of workshops aimed at building awareness and interest in open access publishing, scholarly impact, and online identity building.

LEARNING OUTCOMES/PROJECT OUTCOMES

The mini-conference had several learning outcomes primarily aimed at faculty and graduate students. However, we found that they were also applicable to interested staff who work in research centers on campus.

- Identify emerging trends in scholarly communication.
- Connect emerging trends in scholarly communication to one's own creative and scholarly practice.
- Describe and implement ways to enhance one's research impact.

NUMBER SERVED

The number of participants can be as small or as large as the space(s) provided, as long as there is sufficient staff to circulate and assist attendees during the interactive parts of each workshop. We had 40 attendees for each of the four sessions, and all of the sessions were held in the library. Although this was an in-person event, we would include remote access in future events in order to open the possibility for additional participation.

Note: With this type of expansion (i.e., remote access), consider asking a colleague to assist with real-time online conference moderation.

COOKING TIME

This mini-conference took place during winter break over the course of 4 hours, with catered snacks and lunch. However, planning took several months.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

This recipe serves as a professional development opportunity for faculty, graduate students, and interested staff around topics in scholarly communication. Specifically, the mini-conference introduces participants to key tools in academic publishing as well as approaches to tracking the impact of research and creative outputs.

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

We carried out this event on a shoestring budget (paring the budget is a piece of cake!), given that the space, instruction, and publicity were all produced in-house and on work time. The one external expense was food for snacks and lunch. Ingredients include:

- Instructional space
- Workshop facilitator(s)
- Workshop topics, descriptions, content, and activities; interactive sessions, in particular, add unique flavor to this recipe
- Snacks and lunch for participants and presenters
- Publicity
- Online evaluation

PREPARATION

This type of professional development has many moving parts, so ample preparation is key.

- Identify and confirm the use of instructional space.

- Identify and confirm participation of facilitators.
- Develop curricular materials, activities, and descriptions for publicity. Remember that there are amazing cooks already in the kitchen—borrow and adapt existing materials, lesson plans, and activities where appropriate.
- Locate affordable, healthful option(s) for feeding and fueling participants.
- Create publicity for the event, in conjunction with public relations experts whenever possible and with insight from campus partners (e.g., the graduate student government and liaison faculty).
- Assemble a welcome packet for attendees.
- Create an online evaluation to gather post-event feedback to help shape future initiatives.

COOKING METHOD

An integration of topics relevant to the current needs of one's campus is essential. For instance, it was after our library provided several standalone workshops on topics like open access publishing and altmetrics that a need for additional educational opportunities related to scholarly communication emerged. Specifically, faculty and students shared interests in building their knowledge and experience with the breadth of tools available for increasing the visibility of their work. They also requested opportunities to discuss the dynamic nature of scholarly publishing and its relationship to a range of research agendas at UMaine.

Note: As participants arrive, make snacks and drinks available as well as a welcome packet. Possible items to include in the packet are the agenda, the "10 Things to Know about Scholarly Communication" handout, information about Creative Commons, information about ORCID, and any activity materials that will be useful during the interactive segments of the conference.

Our mini-conference included four workshops:

1. Open access publishing: what is it, why consider it, how one might publish open access, and what open access looks like in UMaine's research environment. (15 minutes)
   - Active learning 1: This workshop began with a true/false polling activity to generate discussion and included statements like "Open access is the same thing as the public domain" and "Open access images are free to use in publications and presentations." (10 minutes)
   - Activity learning 2: This workshop also included a publisher agreement exercise borrowed from the Association of College and Research Libraries' Scholarly Communication Roadshow, providing for a lively and thought-provoking discussion of author's rights, copyright, and information access. (35 minutes)
2. An introduction to alternative methods of tracking and conveying scholarly impact (in addition to conventional bibliometrics), with examples drawn from library re-

sources and driven by audience interests. (35 minutes)
   - Active learning: This session included small group discussions of ways people promote their work, if/how they consider issues of scholarly impact, and how they might imagine altmetrics adding value to their work, if at all. (25 minutes)
3. Enhancing one's online identity via Google Scholar and ORCID. We adapted the Google Scholar talk from Jill Cirasella and Amanda Palmer's excellent presentation. (20 minutes)
   - Active learning: This session included hands-on time creating and/or enhancing one's profiles. (40 minutes)
4. How to increase access to and visibility of one's work via the university's institutional repository. (15 minutes)
   - Active learning: This session included hands-on time uploading a piece of work to the repository. Attendees were contacted prior to the conference and encouraged to have a digital object ready to upload. (45 minutes)

Note: We tied content in each workshop to local research or creative activities to help attendees more easily see the relevance for their own work. There was a 30-minute networking lunch in between workshops #3 and #4.

CHEF'S NOTES

The following insights are icing on the cake:
- We had 40 attendees; approximately

half were faculty members and half were graduate students. Graduate students received a certificate of completion, which they found valuable for their CVs. Working with the graduate student government to publicize this event and identify ways to connect the workshops to students' current or future academic identities helped to boost participation.

- This event benefits from wide participation to ensure the event's applicability to a range of campus constituents and to assist with the myriad moving parts. This is especially relevant for a rural campus like ours that has a small staff but big ideas.
- The mini-conference took place during winter break, when people were gaining momentum for the new semester and feeling refreshed and ready to refocus after time away. Hosting an event like this when the campus community has had some downtime is encouraged.

Feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive (or in baking terms, a cakewalk!) and demonstrated an ongoing hunger for professional growth in scholarly communication.

TIP OF THE CHEF'S HAT
When building successful professional development opportunities, it takes a range of talent and expertise to turn half-baked ideas into culinary delights. Nancy Curtis, Kimberly Sawtelle, and Bradley Beauregard helped design and implement various pieces of this program and were instrumental to the event's success. Marisa Méndez-Brady was key to conceptualizing the mini-conference while at UMaine (now at California Institute of the Arts).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Association of College and Research Libraries. (2017). Scholarly communication: From understanding to engagement [Roadshow Workshop]. http://libguides.wpi.edu/acrlscholcomm

Cirasella, J., & Palmer, A. (2017). Your Google Scholar profile: Why to create it and how to use it. https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1T82BBUZgSKkD22o FjMGQIgzh8imX8CtbNhwhuOL9JPY/present?ueb=true&slide=id.p

Keener, M., Kirchner, J., Shreeves, S., & Van Orsdel, L. (2015). 10 things you should know about…scholarly communication. http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/scholcom/47

The University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library. Altmetrics. (2019). https://libguides.library.umaine.edu/altmetrics

The University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library. Open access. (2019). https://libguides.library.umaine.edu/oa

The University of Maine Raymond H. Fogler Library. Self archiving in Digital Commons. (2019). https://libguides.library.umaine.edu/DCself_archive