The Hurdles and Highlights of Institutionalized Strategies for Disseminating Undergraduate Research

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In 2015, the researchers surveyed URPDs and librarians nationally and faculty at USU about their thoughts on the role of student research in institutional repositories (IRs). All three groups recognize the benefits of making undergraduate research available in IRs. Yet, while the benefits to students, departments, and institutions as a whole are widely recognized, survey respondents also noted concerns about making this work openly available. Survey results also indicated the need for better communication and collaboration among these various campus entities.

**Quality of the work students produce**
- Content of work is slated for publication; including it in Digital Commons may prevent publication
- Data are undergoing additional analysis and will be included in future publications or presentations
- Content may be “scooped” by others
- Copyright concerns (abiding by copyright law, securing copyright, etc.)
- Content may contain information to be included in future patent applications

**Enhancing reputation of institution/college/department**

**Highlighting diversity of research/creative opportunities across all disciplines**

**Providing examples of completed research projects**

**Showcasing student accomplishments**

**What are the benefits of capturing student scholarship in the IR?**

- URPD
- Faculty

**When including student work in Digital Commons, to what degree do the following concern you?**

**Faculty quotes**
- Not all undergrad research is of equal quality. Putting the bad in with the good might not advance scholarship in the field.
- Students citing themselves as “published researchers” when all they did was write something and put it in Digital Commons. Students need to be trained extensively on what peer-reviewed research products are.
- Work that appears in digital commons is “surveyed” by search engines. When this occurs, the work is considered to be “previously published” and high end journals and other similar outlets will not then publish it. Yes, this has happened!!!
- I cannot afford to be scooped!

**Hurdles**
- Faculty want
  - the option to approve students’ work before it is added to the repository
  - a mechanism to request removal of their students’ work
- But
  - not all faculty are responsive to approving work
  - policies would be needed to guide the removal of student work

**Conclusion**
- Faculty have significant concerns about exposing student research in institutional repositories.
- Both faculty and URPDs recognize several benefits to exposing student research.
- Librarians are in a position to mitigate faculty fears and concerns while capitalizing on the benefits that both faculty and URPDs recognize.