Casting a Wider Net: Student Research in the IR

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Introduction

Student research is an untapped commodity. A survey of 238 Institutional Repositories in 2013 indicated that only 38% collect student research other than theses and dissertations. We think student research is a potential goldmine. Do other librarians agree? What about stakeholders outside of the library? And, what are the obstacles preventing more robust collection of student research?

Methods

A survey was developed for Undergraduate Research Program Directors (URPD) and distributed via the Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR) URPD list-serv. Of the 566 members subscribed to the list, responses were received from 65.

A second survey was developed for Institutional Repository Librarians (IRL). The survey link was emailed directly to 272 individuals in this, or a similar, position in academic libraries. A total of 77 responses were received.

URPD Awareness of IRs and IR Administration on Campus

- Not aware of IR: 6.45%
- IR administered by Library: 58.04%
- IR administered by Undergraduate Research Office: 37.10%
- IR administered by Other Office: 6.64%

Repositories by Platform

- bepress: 63%
- DSpace: 31%
- Other: 6%

Produced vs. Collected

URPDs reporting research presented at state or broader venues: 93%

IR Librarians reporting capturing: 35%

A Missed Opportunity?

Undergraduate researchers are presenting their work at venues beyond the campus, yet IR Librarians are not capturing this scholarship.

Top Three Perceived Benefits of Including Student Research in IR:

IR Librarians and URPDs

- IR Librarians report their libraries engaging students early in their academic careers.
- URPDs report their libraries supporting undergraduate research by:
  - Offering information literacy training for students (100%)
  - Providing facilities for research activities and events (97%)
  - Managing student research in the IR (89%)

Barriers to Including Research in IR:

- Not enough staff time: 70%
- Difficult to know when students present at off campus venues: 87%
- Difficult to know when students publish papers with faculty: 78%
- Difficult to obtain scholarship from students: 85%
- Difficult to identify student producing scholarship: 82%
- Student scholarship is not valued by my institution: 93%

Future Work

- Surveying faculty and undergraduate students, both scheduled for distribution at USU in Fall 2015
- Further engaging subject librarians in this process
- Developing best practices
- Researching additional stakeholder views of student research