Scholarly communications for librarians: Developing a mentoring program to support tenure-track library faculty

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HELLO!

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Does your library offer formal mentoring opportunities for library personnel?
Does your library offer formal mentoring opportunities for library personnel?

If so, what area(s) does your program focus on?

A. Helping new hires understand and become part of the institution and/or profession?

B. Promoting skill development - teaching, research, librarianship?

C. Assisting new hires in working toward tenure and/or promotion?

D. Other?
What are the scholarly communication education needs of graduate students?
Scholarly communication education needs of graduate students

- Recognizing predatory journals
- Institutional repositories
- Finding funding for APCs
- Identifying publication venues
- Copyright
- (And more!)
- Open access
- Researcher identity management
- Scholarship metrics
- Research data management
- Understanding peer review models
What are the scholarly communication education needs of academic librarians, particularly those who work with graduate students?
Scholarly communication education needs of librarians who support graduate students

Recognizing predatory journals
Institutional repositories
Finding funding for APCs
Identifying publication venues
Copyright
(And more!)

Open access
Researcher identity management
Scholarship metrics
Research data management
Understanding peer review models
Librarians also have their own scholarly communication needs, which can include career development in preparation for promotion and tenure.
Overview

- Scholarly communications training for grad students
- Library faculty peer mentoring at UNCG

Connections, challenges, lessons learned
First, let’s talk about scholarly communications training and education
Scholarly communications support in the UNCG University Libraries is a team effort

- Each campus department has an assigned liaison librarian; many scholarly communication requests are handled directly through liaisons
- Coordinator of Scholarly Communications serves as resource for liaisons and for other personnel in the libraries and on campus
- Many other library personnel have expertise in various areas (copyright, OER, etc) and become part of projects and conversations as needed
One focus area for scholarly communications work is education and outreach on campus.
Prior to the pandemic, UNCG had a workshop series for graduate students, called “Digital Methodologies”.

These workshops included sessions that addressed scholarly communication topics.
Digital Methodologies planning group:

Included representation from:

- UNCG University Libraries
  - Subject liaisons
  - Scholarly communications
  - Digital Media Commons
- UNCG Graduate School
- UNCG Digital ACT (Action, Consultation, and Training) Studio
Digital Methodologies research track sessions, 2019:

1. Zotero Citation Management
2. Open Access: Sharing Your Scholarship
3. Research Identity: Managing and Raising the Visibility of Your Scholarship
4. Scholarship Metrics
We also offer scholarly communications education for campus audiences (including but not limited to graduate students)
Recent scholarly communications education focus areas:

- NC DOCKS (UNCG institutional repository)
- Open access
- Selecting a quality journal (and avoiding predatory journals)
- Funding support for OA publishing
- Researcher identity management tools
How do these programs get delivered?

- **Research & Applications** Webinar series
- Library professional development series programming
- Sessions for academic departments, courses, and other campus groups, by request
- Campus professional development conferences and other events
How do we decide what programs to offer?

- Direct requests from instructors, departments, etc
- Consultation with partners (the Graduate School)
- Opportunities to highlight new/developing initiatives
- Areas of need that we’ve identified
Many of the scholarly communication session requests and needs for campus audiences align with requests and areas of interest expressed by librarians in our mentoring program.
Library faculty peer mentoring in the UNCG University Libraries
Faculty peer mentoring in the libraries

- Mentoring program initiated in 2008, pairing untenured librarians with tenured mentors. Lunch ‘n’ Learn programming offered as time/availability allowed.
- Program re-worked in 2016 to create a rotating Mentoring Coordinator position. The coordinator is a tenured faculty member and is appointed to serve in this role for a two-year term.
- The Mentoring Coordinator takes on the role on top of their existing job responsibilities.
Mentoring Coordinator responsibilities:

- Ensure that untenured librarians are offered the opportunity to select a mentor from among the tenured librarians.
- Provide (in conjunction with the Promotion & Tenure Committee) annual workshop on the process, paperwork, & schedules for the reappointment, promotion, & tenure processes.
- Coordinate other programming as needed or desired by the mentees.
- Encourage other forms of mentoring and peer-mentoring.
- Communicate ideas and concerns regarding the program to the UL faculty, P&T committee, and UL Administration as needed.
Mentoring programs, 2016 – early 2020

- In-person sessions
- Some workshop & discussion topics drawn from mentee / mentor suggestions; others designed to support annual review, promotion & tenure (P&T) and related faculty processes
- Occasional social hours and informal open discussion sessions for mentees and/or mentors
- Highly variable programming frequency
- Sessions generally open to all library faculty
Mentoring programming examples, 2016 – early 2020

- Professional conferences: the good, the bad, and the money
- Discussion: UNCG & UL Faculty Governance
- Discussion: our service roles in professional associations
- Workshop on conducting your own research
- Best practices for writing annual review documentation
- Faculty discussion: how to write useful peer reviews
- Tips & tricks for going through reappointment and tenure
I took on the Mentoring Coordinator role in July of 2020

- Three months into the COVID-19 pandemic
- Many library personnel working remotely; no in-person meetings
- New-ish faculty activity tracking system, also used for managing faculty review, tenure, and promotion processes that had previously had physical (paper) components
- Scholarly communications responsibilities were a growing area of my work
Getting started as Mentoring Coordinator: First, a survey of participants!
Survey of library faculty, 2020

I’m potentially interested in discussing or learning more about these topics:
13 responses

- Annual review process: 9 (69.2%)
- Conferences & professional dev.: 8 (61.5%)
- DMAI (faculty activity tracking system): 5 (38.5%)
- Imposter feelings (& coping with them): 10 (76.9%)
- Productivity & organization (tools/tips): 8 (61.5%)
- Developing professional networks: 8 (61.5%)
- Getting involved in scholarship: 11 (84.6%)
- Getting involved in professional service: 7 (53.8%)
- Reappointment process: 6 (46.2%)
- Research projects (design/conducting): 10 (76.9%)
- Tenure process & documentation: 8 (61.5%)
- UNCG faculty governance: 6 (46.2%)
- Work-life balance: 8 (61.5%)
Programming for the 2020–2022 cohort

- All sessions conducted virtually via Zoom
- ~10-11 sessions offered per year (approximately once a month)
- Social programming not offered due to pandemic restrictions
- Some sessions open to all library faculty, others specific for certain groups due to topical needs (example: reappointment session invitees included only current candidates, their mentors and supervisors, and the dean)
What informed program topic selection?

- Survey responses
- Requests from program participants
- Availability of speakers/expertise
- Promotion and tenure process needs
- Opportunities for alignment with other professional development programming (including programs for graduate students)
Some programs have been library–specific

- Reappointment: A Great Deal of Information
- Category 1 Service: Getting There From Here
- DMAI and ALFAs: Open Office Hour
- Writing and Peer-Reviewing ALFAs in the Time of COVID-19
- External Review: How Does It Work?
- Promotion Process: Lessons Learned
Other programs have addressed scholarly communication topics that impact librarians, as well as faculty, students, and other researchers outside of the library.
Recent scholarly communications–focused sessions for librarians

- Designing and conducting research projects
- Demonstrating impact for librarians and archivists
- Closed vs open publishing?: What are the options? How do I choose? What support is there?
- Lightning rounds about recent, in-progress, or planned research projects
- Tools for organizing and sharing research output
Creating content for these mentoring sessions has been a great way for me to develop and learn in my position, and to build scholarly communications content that can be adjusted for other audiences.
Connections, challenges, lessons learned
What’s different about scholarly communications programming for these different groups?
What's different?

- For graduate students and campus audiences, the focus is on the support we provide and making connections to the liaisons and the library in terms of how to get that support.
- For librarians, there are two components:
  - Support for individual promotion and tenure needs
  - Sharing information with liaisons (and others) who have relationships with campus constituencies
What's the same?

- Collaboration
- Delivery
- Challenges
Collaboration is critical: mentoring

The mentoring coordinator doesn’t have to be an expert on all programming needs/areas. Collaborators might include:

- Promotion & Tenure Committee members
- Department heads and other faculty supervisors
- Faculty activity tracking system liaison
- Individual faculty members with expertise in areas of need
- Colleagues in external departments or other institutions
Collaboration is critical: scholarly communications training for grad students

- Liaison librarians are often a source of programming requests and a bridge toward making connections with departments and courses
- Co-teaching opportunities
- Collaboration with partner groups (Grad School, others) can reduce duplication of effort and provide coordination opportunities
Delivery

Face-to-Face (pre-COVID)
- Computer lab, interactive

Modules
- Google Slides, LibGuides, online tutorials

Virtual Meeting
- Webinars, Zoom, Recorded and hosted on YouTube
Challenges

● Time

● Expertise (finding / building it)

● Determining content focus areas
  ○ What topics are needed, and by whom?
  ○ How to identify these needs?

● Sustainability in times of change

● How to assess these areas?
Assessment?

- Assessment surveys sent to participants in library professional development programs
- Direct feedback and requests from attendees
- Repeat requests for sessions
- (This is an area where I’m looking for ideas!)
Assessment example: “Rate the following statements:”

- The content of the workshop will be useful for me as a graduate student or...
- I feel more confident about organizing my research using Zotero.
- I learned new concepts about sharing scholarship in academia.
- I feel more confident about managing my research identity online.
- I feel more confident about finding and using citation metrics and altmetrics...
- The content of the workshop was presented in an effective manner.
- The presenters engaged the audience effectively.
- The presenters were knowledgeable about the subject matter.
Future directions

- Identify appropriate partnerships
- Determine content needs
- Build skills in needed areas, or make connections with people who already have those skills
- Consider succession planning for mentoring role changeover
- Explore assessment options
Share your thoughts and questions:

Does your institution have scholarly communication training challenges or successes - for grad students, librarians, or others - that you want to share?
Thanks!

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