Implementing a Scholarly Impact Program for Faculty and Graduate Students

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Introduction

Today, faculty experience greater obstacles towards the achievement of promotion and tenure than in years past (Gardner and Velia, 2014). Grants have become a major funding source and institutional viability, and publication criteria require substantial evidence of scholarly impact in order to present a stronger case. It has also become increasingly essential for institutions of higher education to provide meaningful data in regards to such benchmarks as enrollment and retention, and academic departments need to demonstrate the value of their programs, which often includes indicators of research output and grant awards. Graduate students are increasingly seeking high-quality research with notable impact to effectively support their dissertation-level projects. Students pursuing the professional route need to develop knowledge about establishing themselves in their respective field in order to show scholarly impact at the time of promotion and tenure review.

Implementing a scholarly impact program holds many advantages for faculty, graduate students, and in turn, the library. For faculty, application of the scholarly impact tools presented within the program offers a substantial case for faculty promotion and tenure, stronger evidence for demonstrating library value. Librarians have the opportunity to participate in the scholarly impact conversation as true partners in research beyond the traditional role. Graduates students will benefit from this content by more easily identifying articles that contribute cases for faculty promotion and tenure, stronger evidence for demonstrating library value. Librarians will benefit from this content by more easily identifying top journals, authors, and articles, as well as awareness of tools as they prepare for eventual tenure-track faculty position and promotion.

Scholarly Impact Program Development and Implementation

The academic library is in a prime position to offer services including workshops, individual assistance, marketing, and online research guides such as LibGuides which formed the Scholarly Impact Program.

The Scholarly Impact Tools LibGuide is organized by type of metric:

- Article citation counts (e.g. PsycINFO, PubMed, Google Scholar), which give a basic number of how many times an article has been cited and the ability to click and view those citations.
- Article-level metrics (e.g. Social Science Research Network (SSRN), Public Library of Science (PLoS), and BioMed Central), which provide citation counts and other information, such as highly accessed/downloaded, or cited.
- Author-level metrics (e.g. Web of Science, Publish or Perish), which offers a few clicks a comprehensive report of an author’s work, such as the h-index (a formula based on author works with the most citations) and much more. It is ideal for promotion & tenure review.
- Journal-level metrics (e.g. Journal Citation Reports, Google Scholar Metrics), which offer data by journal and provide an h-index (a measure of journal impact). This is the best way for library support.
- Visualization tools (e.g. CINAHL, EDS/Discover, Academia.edu, Figshare, social media), which are an emerging form of data focusing on impact from online sources.

Suggested Readings


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Scholarly Impact Activity for 2016-2017

- Subject librarians working individually with faculty and graduate students
- Subject librarians opting to engage in scholarly impact for their Research Engagement annual goal
- Conducting workshops in Spring 2017: LibGuides for Faculty, Metrics for Graduate Students
- Posting news on scholarly impact topics to the University Library blog
- Partnering with faculty offices on campus
- Collecting qualitative feedback from those who have actively applied scholarly impact tools after library workshops or consultations

References
