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Data in the Sciences at Colby College, a Case Study

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Data in the Sciences at Colby College, a Case Study

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Objectives
1. Identify data needs of Colby science faculty.
2. What data management support scales to small liberal arts colleges?
3. What support can Colby Libraries provide?

Methods
1. Population: all tenure track science and environmental studies faculty (n=51)
2. Analysis of faculty publications 2011-2014
   • Tally of grants by agency per faculty
   • Existence of supplemental data
   • Existence of metrics for data downloads
3. 25 faculty interviews conducted based on results from analysis

Interview Basics
• What data are you producing?
• What are you doing with your data?
• What research needs do you have?
• How do you use student research assistants?

Interviews Conducted September – November, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number Interviewed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Physics &amp; Astronomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Challenges Discovered
Support needs broader than the Library

College Level
• Coordination college research support units
• Expanded grant support
• IT infrastructure challenges

Student Research Assistants
• No uniformity in training basics
• High risk data loss

Faculty
• Wide spectrum data management knowledge
• Unfamiliar with college repository options

Libraries
• Untapped potential of Digital Commons
• Staffing will not permit dedicated data services unit

Recommendations

College Level
• Formation campus data oversight group
• Campus policy on data ownership, PII
• Consider altmetrics in faculty impact
• Align grants office, academic IT with Provost’s office; establish office of research support
• Upgrade grant support (personnel, collegial advice, discoverable info, proposal notification to SRS)
• Promote & expand existing data management support
• More support from IT (personnel, discoverable info, infrastructure, policies)

Student Research Assistants
• Coordinate basic student research assistant training

Libraries
• Increase data training for all liaison librarians
• Promote Digital Commons for appropriate data

Outcomes
• Report to Provost on infrastructure needs
• Data Management: DMPs & Archiving (new LibGuide)
• Video tutorials for student research assistants
• Librarians embedded with pilot data group
• New Digital Commons content
  • Student data (statistics classes)
  • Local geophysical data
  • Data from honors theses (forthcoming)

Conclusions
• Growth in faculty research
• Value of librarian interviews before planning services
  • Understand faculty’s research habits and needs
  • Facilitate solutions for previously unknown issues
• What support is possible for individual institutions
• Faculty view library / liaisons in new role