Data in the Sciences at Colby College, a Case Study

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Colby College

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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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics &amp; Statistics</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics &amp; Astronomy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support Staff</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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

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