Encouraging Research and Publication among Academic Librarians

Catherine Sassen, M.L.S., Ph.D.
University of North Texas Libraries
Outline

- Why Support is Needed
- Survey Methodology
- Respondents
- Library Research Committees
Why is administrative support for research and publication needed?
Why does career development matter for academic librarians?

“Publication can account for up to 80 percent of a tenure evaluation, and an insufficient publication record is the most frequent reason for librarians being denied tenure.”


Publication Requirements Over Time – For Promotion in ARL Libraries

Sassen, Catherine, and Diane Wahl. 2013. “Fostering research and publication in academic libraries.” Manuscript accepted for publication in *College & Research Libraries.*
“Among the 49 American Library Association (ALA)-accredited LIS degree programs with online information about degree requirements as of February 2010, 61% list research methods as a required course in the curriculum.”

Graduate Library Education

Only 26 percent of 815 respondents believed that their master’s degree programs in library and information science “adequately prepared them to conduct original research,” according to a 2010 study of academic librarians.

Time Management

“... Most library faculty work a relatively inflexible daily schedule. Using the terms of faculty in other departments, this might be stated as “Library faculty carry a heavy class and advising load every term, including summers.”

Teaching Faculty are Supported

Support for Teaching Faculty


Justification for Support

• Publication expectations
• Lack of adequate preparation for research and publication in many cases
• Time management concerns
• Precedent of support for teaching faculty
Survey

“USA Today has come out with a new survey - apparently, three out of every four people make up 75% of the population.”  – David Letterman

Quotation: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/d/davidlette102678.html
Survey of Academic Library Research Committees

- Academic Writing Group
- Career Development Group
- Peer Mentoring Group
- Professional Advancement Group
- Research Work Group
- Tenure Support Group
Literature review

Reading glasses resting on an open book,
00409038|mt:0|
Methodology

- Online survey
- Fall 2012
- 68 usable responses
Limitations

- Exploratory study
- Nature of the sample

Academic library respondents

“A university is just a group of buildings gathered around a library.” –Shelby Foote.

Quote: http://www.searchquotes.com/quotation/A_university_is_just_a_group_of_buildings_gathered_around_a_library./335669/
Public or Private Institution?

88% Public
12% Private

N=59
Location?

- Southern States: 40%
- Northeast Atlantic: 23%
- North Central: 11%
- New Southwest: 11%
- Canada: 11%
- Pacific Northwest: 4%

N=47
How are your librarians classified?

- Faculty: 68%
- Professional/academic staff: 17%
- Mix of faculty and professional staff: 10%
- Other: 5%

N=59
How many full-time librarians are employed in your library?

- 1-19 librarians: 13%
- 20-39 librarians: 37%
- 40-59 librarians: 27%
- 60 or more: 23%

N = 52
What are your employment agreements?

- Tenure (defined as a permanent employment contract): 44%
- Mix of tenure and continuing contract: 29%
- Continuing contract (defined as a contract that is reviewed periodically for renewal): 17%
- Other: 10%

N=59
"I think I did pretty well, considering I started out with nothing but a bunch of blank paper."

--Steve Martin
Is publication required at your library?

- For promotion and tenure or continuing contract: 53%
- Not required but strongly encouraged: 21%
- For tenure or continuing contract: 12%
- Not required: 9%
- For promotion: 5%
What counts as a publication?

- Article in a refereed pub. in LIS: 91%
- Book chapter in LIS: 88%
- Book in LIS: 86%
- Article in any library pub.: 74%
- Article in any refereed pub.: 72%
- Book in any discipline: 72%
- Book chapter in any discipline: 71%
- Book review: 69%

N=58
Which conference activities count?

Paper presentation: 86%
Poster presentation: 83%
Workshop presentation: 83%
Panel member/moderator: 76%

$N=58$

What else counts?

Music/dramatic performance if related to librarian's specialty: 52%

Exhibition of art if related to librarian's specialty: 53%

N=58
“There are no passengers on spaceship earth. We are all crew.”

--Marshall McLuhan


Quote: [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marshallmc100969.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marshallmc100969.html)
When did your group begin meeting?

- 2010s: 41%
- Unknown: 30%
- 2000s: 20%
- 1990s: 5%
- 1980s: 3%
- 1970s: 2%

N=61
What is your intended audience?

- Librarians: 63%
- Librarians & paraprofessionals: 15%
- Librarians without tenure or continuing contract: 7%
- Other: 15%

*N=68*
How many attend your meetings?

Average: 7.6
Median: 6.3
Mode: 5
Range: 3-20

N=62

How often are your meetings held?

- Once a month: 45%
- Once every other month: 15%
- No set schedule/meet as needed: 12%
- Other: 28%

N=67
How do you meet?

Face to face: 86%
Face to face and videoconferences: 6%
Other: 8%

N=66

Leadership

“The question, 'Who ought to be boss?','
is like asking,
'Who ought to be the tenor in the quartet?'
Obviously, the man who can sing tenor.”
--Henry Ford

Quote: http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/42149.html
Who leads your group?

One librarian: 61%
Multiple librarians: 29%
Library administrator: 6%
Other: 3%

$N=62$
How are leaders selected?

- Volunteers are recruited: 48%
- Leaders are elected: 21%
- Volunteers offer their services: 13%
- Leaders are appointed by the library administration: 10%
- Other: 8%

N=62
How long is a leader’s term?

Indefinite: 55%
Two years: 19%
One year: 13%
Other: 13%

N=62
What are the leaders’ responsibilities? (pt. 1)

- Scheduling meetings: 80%
- Organizing committee activities: 73%
- Making reports to the library administration: 33%
- Assessing the effectiveness of the committee’s activities: 25%
- Maintaining online presence (e.g., wiki) to share information: 25%

N=60
What are the leaders’ responsibilities? (pt. 2)

- Assisting participants in making career development plans: 17%
- Assessing career development needs of participants: 12%
- Moderating online discussion list for committee participants: 7%
- Other: 18%

N=60
Activities

“Like most meaningful activities, campaigns are team games.”
--Alastair Campbell

Quote: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/alastairca462019.html
What are your group’s activities? (pt. 1)

- Sharing information about publication/presentation opportunities: 64%
- Sharing updates on research projects: 57%
- Brainstorming about research study ideas: 56%
- Discussing how to balance research with other obligations: 46%

N=61
What are your group’s activities? (pt. 2)

- Giving feedback on drafts of articles: 43%
- Discussing readings about research/scholarly writing: 41%
- Rehearsing conference presentations: 36%
- Sharing info. about continuing education: 31%

N=61
What are your group’s activities? (pt. 3)

- Finding collaborators: 25%
- Sharing information about grant funding opportunities: 25%
- Giving feedback on grant application drafts: 15%
- Other: 18%

N=61
What are your instructional topics? (pt. 1)

- Academic publishing: 47%
- Finding topics for research: 46%
- Research methods: 46%
- Scholarly writing: 44%
- Institutional Review Board: 36%

N=59
What are your instructional topics? (pt. 2)

- Statistical analysis: 24%
- Grants: 19%
- Presentation methods: 19%
- Other: 15%

N=59
How are group activities chosen?

- Selected by participants: 52%
- Selected by library research committee leaders: 37%
- Other: 12%

N=60
What are the challenges?

- Getting participants engaged: 66%
- Finding times for meetings: 55%
- Finding qualified leaders: 18%
- Getting support from lib. admin.: 18%
- Finding time for activities/research: 9%
- No challenges identified: 5%
- Other: 27%

N=56
How are activities assessed?

- No assessment: 38%
- Surveys on committee effectiveness: 36%
- Informal assessment: 10%
- Other: 24%

N=50
What are the benefits? (pt. 1)

- Uncertain: 29%
- More peer-reviewed publications: 16%
- More collaboration: 10%
- More national/international publications: 8%

N=49
What are the benefits? (pt. 2)

- Better presentations/papers: 6%
- Individuals feel supported: 6%
- None: 6%
- Other: 33%

N=49
Characteristics of Effective Peer Mentoring Programs

Characteristics of Effective Peer Mentoring Programs (cont.)

1. Clearly stated purpose and goals
2. Support from the administration
3. Clearly stated administrative structure
4. Regular meetings
5. Assessment
Why Career Development Matters

• Librarians
• Libraries
• Profession

Topics for Further Research

• Library research committees with longevity
• Different models of library research committees
• Librarians’ involvement in research support groups at the university level
Bibliography

http://tinyurl.com/bsfm9se

Questions?

Catherine Sassen, M.L.S., Ph.D.
catherine.sassen@unt.edu