Designing OERs To Prepare the Next Generation of Scholarly Communication Librarians

Executive Summary

The NCSU Libraries, University of Kansas Libraries, and Illinois School of Information Sciences request a Planning Grant for **$49,937** to explore the need for and ideal components of an open educational resource (OER) for teaching LIS students and professionals about scholarly communication. In consultation with stakeholders such as the ARL, ACRL Roadshow, SPARC, and Open Textbook Network, this group will design and conduct a nationwide survey and a series of targeted focus groups interviewing faculty and professional librarians working in scholarly communication about the topics, skills, and tools needed to prepare librarians to work in this area. It will also identify a list of contributors for the final OER and coordinate their participation in developing an OER of Scholarly Communication.

Statement of Need

Scholarly communication has moved from a niche issue to the heart of librarianship as a profession. Scholars such as Finlay, Tsou, & Sugimoto have identified it as a "core concept" for librarianship generally, (http://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1236) and an increasing number of librarians are taking dedicated roles as scholarly communication librarians focused on topics like copyright, publishing, and support for open access and culture.

Because scholarly communication is a core competency, librarians need to understand these issues, but there is no unified educational resource available for training and continuing education. Scholarly communication is interdisciplinary and quickly-evolving, which makes it difficult to create a standard commercial textbook that will prepare librarians to be leaders in the field. Instead, we propose a collaborative OER that gathers contributions from librarians as well as experts in areas such as law, economics, and publishing. The intent of this project is to gather information about the practices and needs of instructors and learners in this space. The project will also develop a clear set of topics, contributors, and case studies for an OER.

This research addresses the IMLS project category of a National Digital Platform by focusing on the foundational work needed to improve our understanding of user needs in scholarly communication education and the value of an OER as a tool to meet those needs. These activities will identify the extent to which such an OER is needed, the components of the OER, the potential obstacles to its adoption, and the partnerships and promotional activities that would accelerate its use. The outcomes of this planning project include a final report and open research data, as well as the materials and relationships for creating an OER that can meet those needs. The project findings and this data will help a broad range of scholars, students, librarians, and publishers better understand what supports are needed and meet a pressing need for new librarians to engage in scholarly communication work.

Budget

The proposed budget for the planning project includes salaries and fringe benefits for William Cross, Lead Principal Investigator for 5% of his time over the course of the project year (total of **$6,983**). Also included is travel funding for the PI to conduct focus groups at two scholarly communication-focused events such as SPARC and OpenCon and two LIS and open education events such as OpenEd17 and ALISE. Each trip is budgeted for airfare, hotel, meal per diem, conference registrations when necessary, and local transportation. PI travel is budgeted at **$4,833** for 12 trips in total. The University of Kansas and the University of Illinois are proposed sub-awardees with the identical plans of work as NCSU, which include 5% of co-PI time, travel to conduct four focus groups and respective indirect cost rates. The indirect costs of NCSU are assessed against the total direct costs of the project at 33.6% and equal to **$12,370**. The total requested budget from IMLS for this planning project is **$49,937**.

Proposed Work Plan

The PI's will collaborate with the stakeholders identified above on this planning grant to conduct a needs assessment and gap analysis of need for educational materials to prepare librarians to work in scholarly communication. They will gather this information from instructors and professionals through a national survey and through focus groups at four scholarly communication conferences in diverse locations across North America.

Evaluation and Dissemination Plan

The success of this planning project will be defined by LIS instructors, researchers, and scholarly communication communities' engagement with the results of the proposed research and eventual adoption and use of the OER. Findings of the project will be distributed at LIS and open culture conferences and published in peer-reviewed journals. The generated datasets will be anonymized, deposited with an open data repository, and distributed freely so that interested researchers and practitioners could replicate the study, evaluate the validity of the project's outcomes, and/or use them in the development of guides and policies.

Follow-up and Future Research

The intended outcomes of the proposed project are (1) a detailed report on the needs of LIS instructors and learners engaging with scholarly communication as a discipline and practice; (2) further coordinated and strengthened working relationships between the project's partners and across communities of practice, including potential contributors to the OER; (3) transferrable information about faculty instruction around scholarly communication; (4) methodology that is scalable to other domains and disciplines in LIS; and (5) the foundation for a collaboration between the NCSU Libraries, KU Libraries, and Dr. Maria Bonn, who will begin preparing an OER with the identified partners based on the recommendations from the data.