Widespread Academic Efforts to Address the Spiraling Costs of Scholarly Journals

Randall Ward, David Michaelis, Robert Murdoch, Brian Roberts, Julia Blixrud
Rocket Science?
Approach

• Events?
• Data will be gathered sequentially.
• Survey intended as a “benchmark”. We’re at the beginning of processes that will play out over time, perhaps decades.
• Only “scratch the surface”
Methods

- 200 SPARC member institutions
- 170 phone interviews (85%)
  - 92 ARL
  - 78 non-ARL
- 84 Yes (49%)
- 86 No (51%)
Methods ... Questionnaire

• 21 questions – “flow chart”

• Typical questions (most scored 1-7)
  – Which group was the sponsor of the event?
  – Did you get assistance from SPARC?
  – How extensive was follow-up?
  – What would you do differently?
  – Four questions assessing “success”.

Results

Q15 What would you do differently?

- Have more events (13)
- More personal contact (9)
- Nothing (9)
- Better follow-up (8)
- Go to departments (7)
- Contact SPARC (6)
- More formal invitations (5)
Results

Q15 What would you do differently?

– Get admin. more involved (4)
– Read/prep more (4)
– Encourage alternative publishing (4)
– Better advertise (3)
– Change time/location (2)
– Focus more on the issue (2)
– Get fac involved in planning (2)

(responses by only one school omitted)
Results

Q16 What was extent of changes in faculty publishing habits?

(1-7, 1 being very little or none)

Mean 2.09
Median 2
Mode 1
St Dev 1.09
N 75
Results

Q17 To what extent were there changes in tenure-granting process?
(1-7, 1 being very little or none)

Mean 1.50
Median 1
Mode 1
St Dev 0.94
N 74
Results

Q18 To what extent did event have affect up or down on library serials budget?

(-3 to 3, 0 being no affect)

Mean 0.67
Median 1
Mode 0
St Dev 1.26
N 78
Results

Q19  To what extent did event increase faculty awareness/understanding of issue

(1-7, 1 being very little or none)

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<th>Statistic</th>
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Results

Questions 16-19 = “Effectiveness Factor”

– 68 institutions

– (0-24 scale)
  • 7 >12 (“more effective”)
  • 61 <12 (“less effective”)

– Tough hurdles
Results

Correlation of attributes with “effectiveness factor”

– Q11 - SPARC assistance?
  • Yes 9.9
  • No 7.8

– No other statistically significant correlations
Results

ARL vs. non-ARL institutions

• Only statistical difference was that ARL schools were more likely to have held an event.

• No statistically significant difference between attributes and “eff. factors”.

Results (Anecdotal)

• Top five responses (categorized)
  – Institutional repositories are being pursued as solutions (23)
  – Having or building library/faculty relationships is crucial (18)
  – Sending out specific or personal invitations is recommended (17)
  – One large event is not enough (15)
  – Focus more on departments/individuals (12)
Results . . . . . Observation

• Though not quantified, we repeatedly heard a strong sentiment that those who held events felt they had accomplished their goals. These “goals” they set out to accomplish were along the lines of starting a dialogue with, and educating the faculty.

• One evidence is that 94% recommended that others hold similar events.
Discussion

• Planning Events
  – Identify a goal
  – Have a prominent individual present overview
  – External speakers often helpful
  – Panel
  – Include faculty already attuned to issues
  – Can be of varying lengths
Discussion

• Encouraging attendance
  – Support and involvement from high-ranking administrators from the start is important.
  – Involve prominent faculty
    • Editors
    • Those on tenure/promotion board
    • “Tuned in” faculty as panelists
Discussion

• Advertising
  – Website, emails, flyers, newsletters, etc.
  – Personal invitations
    • To: particularly important faculty
    • From: senior administration and library (jointly?)

• Follow-up
  • Send out “reports” after meeting.
Discussion

• Post-Campus Events
  – Handouts, website shown at the end, giving additional readings & resources.
  – Mechanism for follow-up on action items
  – Educate library staff so they are conversant.
  – Plan for future events
    • Annual?
    • Additional campus-wide events?
    • Departmental events?
Conclusion

- Increased awareness among faculty
- Less impact on
  - Faculty publishing habits
  - Tenure-granting processes
  - Increasing serials budgets
- Benchmarking - repeat survey in future?
- Best practices & suggestions
- Full paper will likely be posted on SPARC website
For more information

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• Preliminary paper - Randall Ward, David Michaelis, Robert Murdoch, Brian Roberts, Julia Blixrud, *Widespread academic efforts address the scholarly communications crisis: The results of a survey of academic institutions*, C&RL News, June 2003, 64(6), 382-83,89.