Building Cross-campus Relationships in Research Support Services

“Examining Campus Research Services”
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Social Interoperability in Research Support: Cross-campus partnerships and the university research enterprise
Rebecca Bryant, Annette Dortmund, and Brian Lavoie

oc.lc/social-interoperability
WHY
Research support

Services that enhance researcher productivity, facilitate analysis of research activity, and/or make research outputs visible and accessible across the scholarly community and beyond.

For example ...
- Research Data Management (RDM)
- Research Information Management (RIM)
- Research analytics
- ORCID adoption
Libraries are increasingly working with other campus units

Job posting: Library Chief Data Strategist, University of Rhode Island

This position will work with the Office of Institutional Research and DataSpark (Library-based data analytics unit) to identify avenues to increase faculty and researcher success. Working with internal (e.g. MakerspaceURI, Launch Lab, Think Lab, and the AI Lab) and external (e.g. the Office of Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the Office of Community, Equity and Diversity, Division of Research and Economic Development and IT) partners, the incumbent will plan and implement experimental and innovative activities to cultivate and expand synergistic relationships.
Research support is an enterprise task
"Well up front, I would say I can't get anything done without partnerships. I mean it's just absolutely essential to partner, whether it's with centers, institutes, department chairs, academic deans, research deans, all the above."

Research support is an enterprise task
Working across campus can be HARD
Working across campus can be HARD

“It all takes longer and has more dependencies than you think.”
Social interoperability

Creation and maintenance of working relationships across individuals and organizational units that promote collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding.

While “technical interoperability”—different technical systems working smoothly together—may be a more familiar concept, social interoperability is of growing importance in a landscape where cross-campus partnerships are becoming both more prevalent and more necessary.
Why is this so hard?
because universities are “complex adaptive systems”

1. Non-linear, dynamic behavior
2. Independent agents
3. Goals and behaviors that differ or conflict
4. Intelligent and learning agents
5. Self-organization
6. No single point(s) of control

Implementing a campus RIM system is like “herding flaming cats.”

Photo courtesy of Rebecca Bryant
Project overview and team

**Scope**
US research universities  
Non-library stakeholders  
Focusing on research support activities (not T&L)  
Administrative units, NOT researchers

**Methodology**
22 semi-structured interviews  
Convenience sample  
Discussions with RLP partners

**Outputs**
OCLC Research report  
RLP webinar series  
Blogs & discussions

Rebecca Bryant, PhD  
Annette Dortmund, PhD  
Brian Lavoie, PhD
WHO
A Conceptual Model of Campus Research Support Stakeholders

THE UNIVERSITY

- Communications
- Academic Affairs
- Research Administration
- Faculty Affairs & Governance
- Information & Communications Technology (ICT)
- The Library
A Conceptual Model of Campus Research Support Stakeholders

"Nobody knows what the %*@# a provost does. “
—Provost
"... we do whatever we can to keep our researchers focused on doing their research so that they’re not doing other things that they shouldn’t have to do."
"Because so often, librarians are forgotten. Our expertise is completely forgotten, and we’re the last people [to be considered]. So faculty are shocked when they realize, “oh, you can help me with my data? Oh, you can help me think through this . . . publishing considerations, whatever it might be.”
“What we hope for is the things that make sense to be run from a central point kind of gravitate and migrate towards the central unit.”

“We stay out of that. There are local division level and department level system administrators that have some systems that they spin up and we might guide people to them but it’s those folks who have the role of supporting them.”
“... the human touch and coordination behind the scenes to make sure that all the units are working together in the way that they should, that all the efforts are strategically aligned.”
“that kind of connecting, communicating, developing of networks . . . is probably the most vital thing that I do.”
WHAT
Examples of cross-institutional collaboration in research support

• Research Data Management (RDM)
• Research Information Management (RIM)
• Research analytics
• ORCID adoption

“Research development has worked hand in glove with the library on the public profiles on our campus.”
Research Data Management

Significant investment in RDM services, resources, and infrastructure distributed across campus

Most relevant to:
• Research Administration
• Library
• ICT
• Academic Affairs

What we heard:
• Data librarian embedded in Research Office
• RDM training by Research Development through library commons
• RDM services housed in the Library, funded by Office of Research

“I don’t think that either the [research data management services or campus RIM system] would have been successful as library only. It’s been absolutely critical that they were backed by the [office of research] because I think that’s also helped keep it to be more of a campus-wide perspective.”
Role of the Library

• Central campus unit and trusted, “agnostic” partner for sustainable projects
• Recognized expert in
  • Metadata
  • Licensing
  • Vendor support/negotiations
  • Research impact/bibliometrics

“We CAN broker relationships, and that’s underrated.”
But. . .

- **Overemphasis on values** to the neglect of others’ needs & interests
- **Services/value proposition can be diluted** by desire to “be everything to everyone.”
- **Slow-moving**, less urgency that other parts of campus. Need to move at same pace as researchers.
- **Lack of confidence** among librarians can hinder effectiveness.
- **Discomfort with finances**: “unrealistic” desire for everything to be “free”

“Maybe . . . we are a bit brutal to [researchers] when we come with our mission and we want to skill them, that can be a bit frightening. It’s about soft and political skills here.

“The library can be a neutral actor. We can be seen as being helpful, rather than saying you *have* to do Open Science.”
HOW
Key Takeaways about Successful Intra-campus Social Interoperability

- Secure buy-in
- Know your audience
- Speak their language
- Offer solutions to problems
- Timing is essential
- Find opportunities to connect
- Leverage shared staff
- Find “connectors”
- Manage personalities
- Be confident in your value
- Manage resistance
- Invest the energy
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“Open Science is a good example – in the UK they call it open research so that Humanities scholars and Social Scientists don’t find it off-putting - too sciencey.”

“We have librarians who are funded by [the research office].”
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td>August 26</td>
<td>Cross-campus partnerships, the library, and the university research enterprise</td>
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<td>September 10</td>
<td><em>Case study:</em> Embedding librarians on interdisciplinary research teams at the University of Miami</td>
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<td>September 23</td>
<td><em>Case study:</em> Implementing a shared GIS position at Rutgers University through cross-campus collaboration</td>
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<td>October 14</td>
<td><em>Stakeholder spotlight:</em> Research development and synergies with the library</td>
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<td>October 27</td>
<td><em>Stakeholder spotlight:</em> Campus communications and synergies with the library</td>
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<td>November 17</td>
<td><em>Case study:</em> Providing Robust Research Support Services at Syracuse through Cross-Campus Partnerships</td>
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<td>December 3</td>
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<td>February 9</td>
<td><em>Case study:</em> Developing &amp; Sustaining RDM Services at Arizona and Illinois through Partnership with the Office of Research</td>
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All available at [oc.lc/social-interoperability-project](http://oc.lc/social-interoperability-project)
Thank you!

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