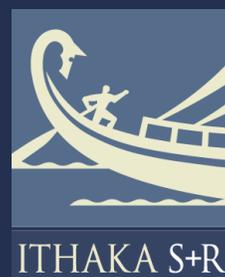


University of Nevada, Las Vegas Faculty Survey: Executive Summary

January 28, 2016



Overview

The following executive summary provides a high-level overview of findings from the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey, which was administered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The survey instrument covers many scholarly research and teaching-related topics, overlapping with the 2015 Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey, and in part overlapping with other previous iterations of the Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey.¹ Since 2000, Ithaka S+R has fielded the US Faculty Survey, which tracks the evolution of faculty members' research and teaching practices against the backdrop of increasing digital resources and other systemic changes in higher education, on a triennial basis.

During Fall 2015, 1,666 UNLV faculty members received an email invitation to participate in a survey about faculty research habits. One Apple Watch Sport, five \$20 Rebel Cash transfers, and five UNLV Library swag bags were offered as incentives for participation. Three email reminders were sent before the close of the survey.

In total, 551 respondents clicked the survey link (about 33% of those who received the email invitation), with 533 of those starting the survey (about 32%) and 356 of those respondents completing the survey, for an overall response rate of about 21%. Due to the survey flow and skip patterns, not all UNLV faculty respondents received every question in the survey.

The UNLV faculty survey was comprised of a core questionnaire with 36 questions on discovery and access, scholarly communications, research practices, student research skills, and the role of the library, followed by thematic modules with additional questions on data preservation and management (2 questions), scholarly communication (8 questions), and market research (8 questions). The survey concluded with a set of 10 demographic questions.

¹ Ross Housewright, Roger C. Schonfeld, and Kate Wulfson, Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey 2012, (New York: Ithaka S+R, 2013), available at <http://www.sr.ithaka.org/research-publications/us-faculty-survey-2012>

Discovery and access

Faculty members were first asked a set of questions on how they search for known items and the value of mechanisms for gaining access to research literature. The following findings highlight some of the most noteworthy results on these topics, including how faculty begin their research and the ease of utilizing resources in print or digital format.

When conducting research, a nearly even share of faculty members at UNLV indicated that they begin locating information using a general purpose search engine on the internet or world wide web (30%, n=354), as begin using the online library website or catalog (32%, n=354) or a specific electronic research resource / computer database (36%, n=354). When faculty were asked specifically about how they find new journal articles and monographs relevant to their research interests, the highest share of faculty members indicated that they search on a specific scholarly database (38%, n=355), followed by visiting the university library's website or online catalog (23%, n=355) and searching on Google Scholar (23%, n=355). Very few faculty members reported that they would ask a colleague (1%, n=355) or ask a librarian (4%, n=355) in beginning this process.

In utilizing scholarly monographs in print and digital format for various research activities, 43% (n=349) of faculty indicated that searching for a particular topic was much easier in digital format than in print, whereas 52% (n=348) found that reading cover to cover in depth was much easier in print format than digital.

Research practices

Faculty who indicated that performing academic research was among their professional responsibilities (80%, 354) were queried on their research topics, activities, and collaborations. Especially noteworthy findings emerge when viewing responses to questions on digital research activities, the ways in which faculty share findings of their scholarly research and make decisions on where to publish these findings, and the audiences that their research reaches.

Faculty members identified the analysis of quantitative (65%, n=278)² and qualitative (58%, n=277) data generated in the course of their research and the analysis of pre-existing quantitative (46%, n=279) and qualitative (41%, n=276)

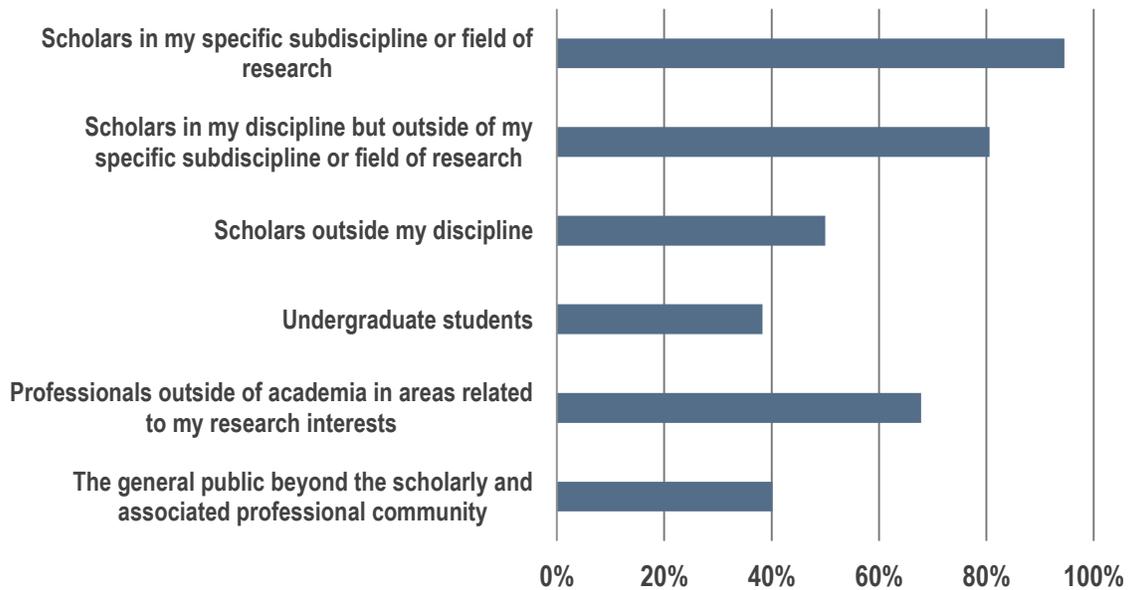
² Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale, where 10 equals extremely important and 1 equals not at all important.

data not generated in the course of their research as the most important digital research activities for conducting their research.

Faculty members most frequently share findings of their scholarly research in peer-reviewed journals (with 80% selecting “often”, n=278) in comparison to other formats. In selecting an academic journal in which to publish an article, faculty rated the following characteristics as most important: the journal has a high impact factor or an excellent academic reputation (91%, n=278)³, the journal’s area of coverage is very close to their immediate area of research (89%, n=276), and the current issues of the journal are circulated widely and are well read by scholars in their field (88%, n=277).

As illustrated in Figure 1 below, faculty are most interested in their research reaching scholars in their specific subdiscipline or field of research (95%, n=274)⁴, scholars in their discipline but outside of their specific subdiscipline or field of research (81%, n=273), and professionals outside of academia in areas related to their research interests (68%, n=274).

Figure 1: How important is it to you that your research reaches each of the following possible audiences?*



*Percent of respondents selecting 8-10, where 10 equals “extremely important” and 1 equals “not at all important”

³ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale, where 10 equals extremely important and 1 equals not at all important.

⁴ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale, where 10 equals extremely important and 1 equals not at all important.

Data preservation and management

Questions throughout the survey focused on collections of research and quantitative data, image and media data, and other primary sources accumulated, created, or managed by faculty members. Some of the most interesting results centered on the management and organization of data, including the following two findings.

A large share of faculty organize their own data, media, or images for their research on their own computer or computers (87%, n=262)⁵ as opposed to organizing them on a cloud storage service (51%, n=261) or having the university library manage or organize these data on their behalf (9%, n=258). When faculty were asked how valuable they do or would find various possible sources of support for managing or preserving research data, media, or images, their university library and freely available software (both 56%, n=257)⁶ were rated as most valuable.

Scholarly communications

Faculty were queried on the value of various publishing services, including issues of copyright and article deposit. The following findings highlight some of the most interesting results from questions on these topics.

In assessing the value of various publishing services offered by the university, faculty are most interested in assistance with obtaining permission(s) to use copyrighted works for instructional purposes (81%, n=317)⁷ and advice about intellectual property or author's rights issues (76%, n=319).

The vast majority of faculty have never negotiated with a publisher to modify the copyright terms of their author agreements (87%, n=334), most frequently citing that they do not have the sufficient knowledge or expertise about copyright terms to negotiate with publishers (27%, n=276), that they are not aware about the option to negotiate with publishers over copyright terms (24%, n=276), and that they have to agree to publishers' copyright terms in order to contribute to the scholarly literature in their field or subdiscipline (21%, n=276). Faculty who have negotiated with a publisher most frequently have turned to their publisher

⁵ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale when asked how well various statements describe their point of view, where 10 equals extremely well and 1 equals not at all well.

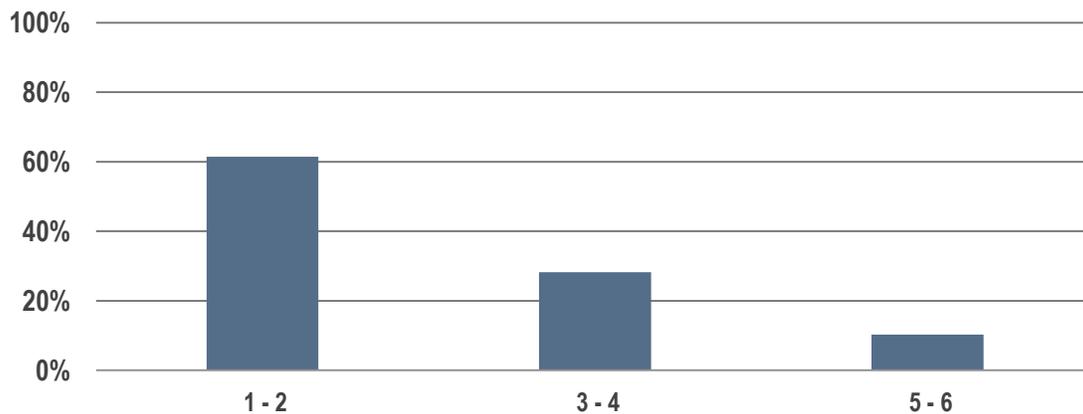
⁶ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale, where 10 equals extremely valuable and 1 equals not at all valuable.

⁷ Percent that selected very useful or somewhat useful.

directly (75%, n=44) or a colleague or colleagues in their department (70%, n=44) for assistance.

As Figure 2 below illustrates, faculty frequently rated their own understanding of the university's policy or stance on publishing journal articles via a freely available repository as poor, with only 10% (n=322) of faculty indicating that they have a good understanding.

Figure 2: How would you rate your personal understanding of your institution's policy or stance on publishing journal articles via a freely available repository?*



*Six point scale where 6 equals "have a very good understanding" and 1 equals "do not understand at all"

Student research skills

Faculty who identified teaching undergraduate or postgraduate courses among their professional responsibilities (80%, n=348) were asked a series of questions on their perceptions of the research skills of their students. The findings below cover a handful of the most meaningful results on these perceptions.

53%⁸ (n=217) of faculty strongly identified that their undergraduate students have poor skills related to locating and evaluating scholarly information and 66% (n=219) that improving their undergraduate students' research skills is an important educational goal for the courses they teach.

Approximately half of the respondents identified strongly that they expect the lower division undergraduate students they teach to locate and use secondary

⁸ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale when asked how well various statements describe their point of view, where 10 equals extremely well and 1 equals not at all well.

(52%, n=135)⁹ and primary (53%, n=135) scholarly sources in their coursework and student research projects beyond the readings they directly assign the students. A larger share of faculty indicated that they expect their upper division undergraduate students to locate and use secondary (77%, n=193)¹⁰ and primary (66%, n=193) scholarly sources.

⁹ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale when asked how well various statements describe their point of view, where 10 equals extremely well and 1 equals not at all well.

¹⁰ Percent that selected 8-10 on a 10-1 scale when asked how well various statements describe their point of view, where 10 equals extremely well and 1 equals not at all well.