Panel 1 - Voices from the field: How we (accidentally or on purpose) got into scholarly communications

- Moderator: Cassandra Larose, COPPUL Scholarly Communication Working Group member
- Panelists:
  - Thane Chambers, University of Alberta
  - DeDe Dawson, University of Saskatchewan
  - Keshav Mukunda, Simon Fraser University
  - Janet Rothney, University of Manitoba

Summary

The conversation revolved around navigating challenges in scholarly communication within higher education. Speakers shared their experiences and insights on establishing credibility and authority, balancing confidence with humility, and recognizing the emotional labor and burnout associated with advocacy efforts. They also discussed the importance of finding a support network, building connections with others in the field, and implementing cultural change in academic libraries. Additionally, speakers shared their experiences and strategies for overcoming obstacles in scholarly communication, including setting boundaries, building informal networks, and seeking institutional support.

Chat Summary

'*The eternal lament of the [schol] comm librarian - one person tasked with responsibility for a huge institutional culture and global political economy*'

- Specific challenges of role visibility, unrecognized/challenged authority/expertise, and working across organizational silos resonated with chat participants
- Role visibility/non-recognition of expertise may come from within the library unit which contributes to burn-out and people leaving positions/profession; participant contributed paper
- The approach of institutional/library unit hiring/regarding 1 role to address multi-factoral processes and issues seen as contributory to burnout
- Dependency on one individual to advance institutional/system goals in an area v. organizational structures that support awareness of role function and its relationships contributes to invisibility of contribution and instability of future support

Discussion Details

- 2 panelists are librarians as second careers
- All held prior librarian positions (either at the same institution or elsewhere) where projects and experiences contributed to their current positions
- All positions had evolved from organizational change within the library; some to respond to open scholarship and research data management mandates
- All identified that there was no formal education available to prepare for these roles beyond the occasional course; all indicated that this was likely a reflection of when they graduated and the dynamism of the field in these areas at this time
- All stated that continuing education in their areas of support is absolutely essential
- Challenges encountered in their roles include:
  - Organizational siloes in the university structure – not conducive to collaboration or information exchange across support units such as Office of Research Services, Information Technology, Ethics, Legal etc.

- o Visibility of the scholarly communication role – not necessarily recognized within the institution as providing the services and skills in scholarship that they do; cross-unit relationships are dependent on the person, not the role
  - o Unrecognized authority of 'librarian' as scholarly communication expert – not identified by academic community as peers and/or experts in research knowledge production process
  - o Ambiguity and uncertainty due to rapid pace in these areas – constant shifting mandates and technological change contribute to uncertain service approaches and role definition, scope
  - o Demands of staying current and tracking all interconnected areas of scholarly communication – information sources are not 'obvious' or easy (ie. white papers, informal reports, peer information sharing)
  - o Emotional labour expended (and consequential burnout) in the attempt to support and advocate for researchers navigating complex, dynamic and overlapping systems
- Recommended supports for their roles include:
  - o To address the visibility and silo issue, 3 panelists recommended an institutional central committee with all relevant stakeholders/experts in order to streamline information exchange and collaboration
  - o Institution/library to recognize that several of these areas demand a culture change (i.e. responsible data management, responsible use of research impact metrics, data sharing and reuse etc.) and for library leadership to constantly advocate on these issues arising from these changes to university administration; applying organizational change theory to internal processes
  - o Better clarity between role positions, scope, cross-unit dependencies and institutional demands/goals; more human resources are required
- Advice for early career/entrants into scholarly communication:
  - o Develop relationships and ask questions to build a support network
  - o Learn by doing
  - o Keep current with professional development opportunities: participate in the free webinars and volunteer to support initiatives like Open Access Week, Love Data Week etc.
  - o Keep an open mind on researcher's decisions on open access
  - o Learn how your organization works, where your role can align with others and strive for cross-unit collaboration and communication whenever possible
  - o Don't be afraid to bring your prior academic experience/research background into your advocacy
- Resources:
  - o [COPPUL Scholarly Communication Skillshare](#)
  - o [Canada Mattermost](#)
  - o [CARL e-alert](#) (subscribe at bottom of page)
  - o Email mailing groups: [CanLib_Data](#), [lis-bibliometrics (international)](#)
  - o [FORCE11 Scholarly Communication Institute](#); [self-directed OER version](#)