Research Grant Support: What’s It Like to be a Librarian on a Research Grant?

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Grant specifics

• Data-Enabled Science and Engineering of Atomic Structure (SEAS)
  • 5 year NSF Research Traineeship grant (NRT) at North Carolina State University, North Carolina Central University
  • Training graduate students to apply advanced statistical methods to physical data generated from analytical and computational experiments
    • Students primarily from Materials Science & Engineering, Statistics
  • Principal Investigator (PI)-Program Director: NC State Materials Science & Engineering faculty member
  • Grant award period: September 2016 - August 2021
How the Libraries got involved

• Parallel discussions at grant proposal stage (January 2016):
  • Grant proposers met with members of Libraries’ Research Data Committee
  • Conversation with PI about research group support
  • Librarians also provided feedback on proposal’s Data Management Plan (DMP)

• Letter of support provided by the NCSU Libraries committing to:
  • Support and training of faculty and students in areas of research and data management; use of library resources and spaces
  • Inclusion of engineering subject specialist to work with SEAS directors

• Grant awarded September 2016
Roles and activities

• Facilitator
  • Use of the Hunt Library’s high-tech spaces for SEAS meetings
  • Testing of molecular visualization software in Teaching & Visualization Lab
  • Displaying SEAS research images in high-tech spaces for photo shoot
Roles and activities

- Connector to other librarians and staff
  - Director of Data Visualization
  - IT Academic Technologists
  - Visualization staff
  - Research data management support

- Internal Advisory Board member
Roles and activities

• User studies
  • Survey of crystallographic databases and libraries databases usage
  • Data management and data publishing needs assessment

• Develop training and processes for research data management
  • Small working group being formed with SEAS faculty and students, and librarians
Lessons learned at the 2 year point:

• Grant support activities similar to liaison support activities, with:
  • Greater opportunity for continuity of support
  • Greater opportunity for deeper level of engagement
  • More opportunities to engage at different points of the research lifecycle

• Areas to work on
  • Think and plan more intentionally for support
  • Consider support as long-term activities instead of one-off items
  • Communication
Benefits for the Libraries

• Aligns with the Libraries’ increasing commitment to supporting campus researchers
• Extends value of the library where subject librarians are core to the research lifecycle
• Provides opportunity to learn about research needs
• Provides interaction with an interdisciplinary program
• Provides opportunity to develop and test outreach and support models that can be propagated to other campus researchers
Working with campus researchers

• An outgrowth of liaison work and faculty relationships that are established along the way

• Engagement with the library’s researcher support services also opens opportunities