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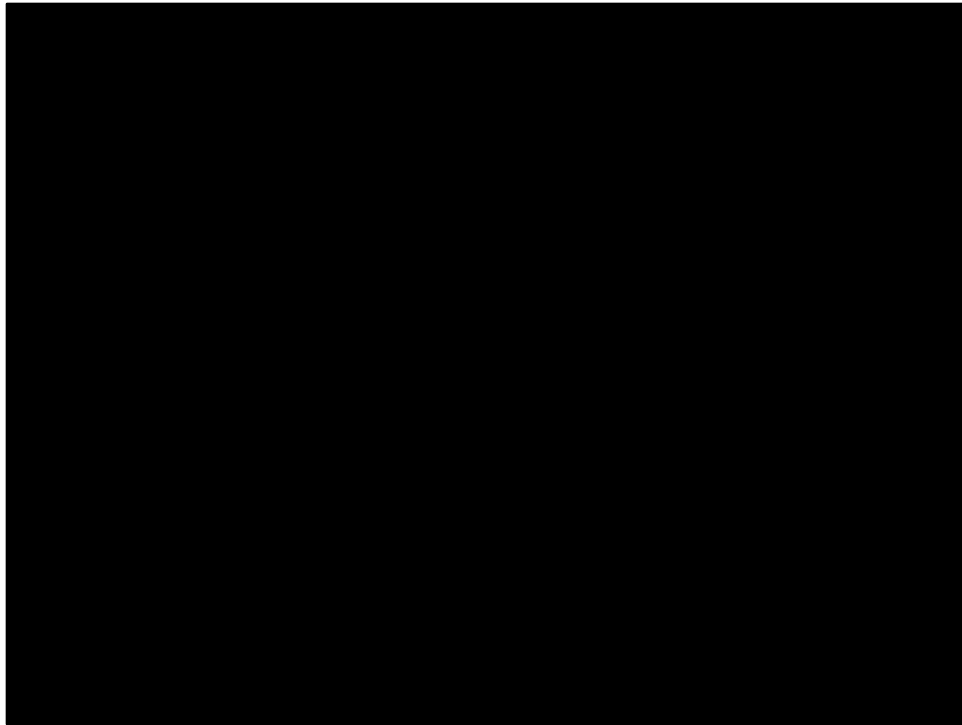
# Publishing Undergraduate Scholarship: Should You Be Afraid?

Emily Stenberg, Washington University in St Louis

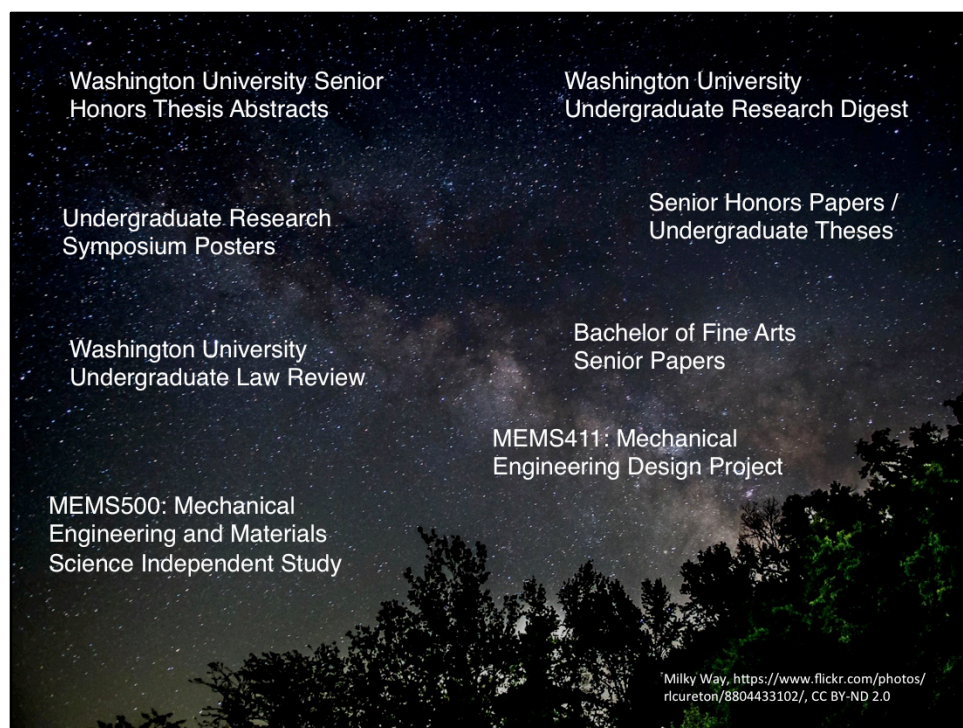
Jeff Rubin, Tulane University

Allegra Swift, The Claremont Colleges

Library Publishing Forum  
May 17-19, 2016



The question is Should You Be Afraid? The answer, like many answers in this field, is It depends. Even if it is scary, we should figure out why and learn how to address it. As you enter this world, be cautious and aware of your surroundings. First, you see darkness. You feel alone and can't see anything around you. Is there anything here?



Then slowly, you notice lights—the stars in the sky. Or in this case, these are the established undergraduate collections in our repository Open Scholarship, which is the platform we use for publishing (or presenting) undergraduate work.

There are more than 3000 undergraduate items in our repository (out of a total of 14,500 items)

Downloaded more than 41,183 times (out of 2million plus downloads)

This is in a repository that also contains all graduate ETDS since 2009 and 6 very popular law school publications.

In 2015, we added the back issues of two print publications from the Office of Undergraduate Research: The Wash U Senior Honors Thesis Abstracts (6 volumes -- Spring 2009-Spring 2014) and 15 issues) of the Wash U Undergraduate Research Digests. There are a few complete research papers in these collections but they are primarily abstracts of the work done by seniors writing a thesis or undergraduates working with faculty on research.

Related to these publications are two collections in our repository: Undergraduate Theses and Research Symposium Posters. Ideally, these collections would link together: a summary in the publication from the Office of Undergraduate Research; a poster presented by the student at the Research Symposium, also sponsored by the



We do have some undergraduate collections that are less welcoming. They are sparsely populated, abandoned some might say, although I hope that is not the case. These collections were created with a lot of enthusiasm and support. Their creation involved subject librarians and faculty. However, an issue is maintaining the collections and continuing that initial momentum. One of the more successful course collections, Design Project, has submission to the repository as a requirement of the course. Before the Open Scholarship collection, students were already required to “share” their final project online somehow. What this collection does is provide a single location for that requirement. For the less successful collections, submission is optional. We’ve found that when it’s an option, students tend not to submit. They might not feel invested in it; or it’s the end of the semester and it just feels like an additional task. For one collection, the materials are curated by the faculty who leads the course, which adds another layer of effort and coordination.



Rainbow Woods, Happy Aspens in the Eastern Sierras, Ca. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/pacheco/6303961691/>, CC BY-ND 2.0

Washington University has had a successful run recently of student-initiated and student-published journals and magazines. *They include*  
*Issues Magazine – focusing on social implication of design (Fall 2012) print and online*  
*Frontiers: Washington University Review of Health (February 2014)*  
*Armour Magazine: fashion, art, and style (November 2015)*

What is a very positive thing is that the students at our university are go-getters and high achievers. It's amazing to read profiles about what they've already accomplished or hear them talking about their summer internships. They have an idea, and they put it together, and next thing you know they have a print and digital publication. And when they're putting their plan together, they don't think of the library as a partner.



That can be an issue. Often we don't know about publications until they already exist and the group has already established a process. This is partly because of the university structure, I believe, where the library is seen as a separate place and is not integrated into the students' departments and programs. A colleague and I met with an editor of one of these magazines shortly after it started and talked about ways the Libraries could provide support. When we spoke with an editor at the beginning stages of a magazine, one area she was interested in was marketing help from the Libraries – being able to display ads on the tv monitors. She wasn't thinking about editorial or publishing support or preservation plans.

Student Union organizations receive

- A wustl.edu website
- Access to SU funding
- Web archiving (offered through Libraries Archive-It)

University Libraries/Scholarly Publishing offer

- Platform on bepress/Digital Commons
- Copyright assistance
- Editorial and design services
- Digital preservation
- DOIs and ISSNs
- Education & training

Options AREN'T mutually exclusive

These publications are self-published and have found a home through the Student Union.

Student Union vs. Library

These options are not mutually exclusive.

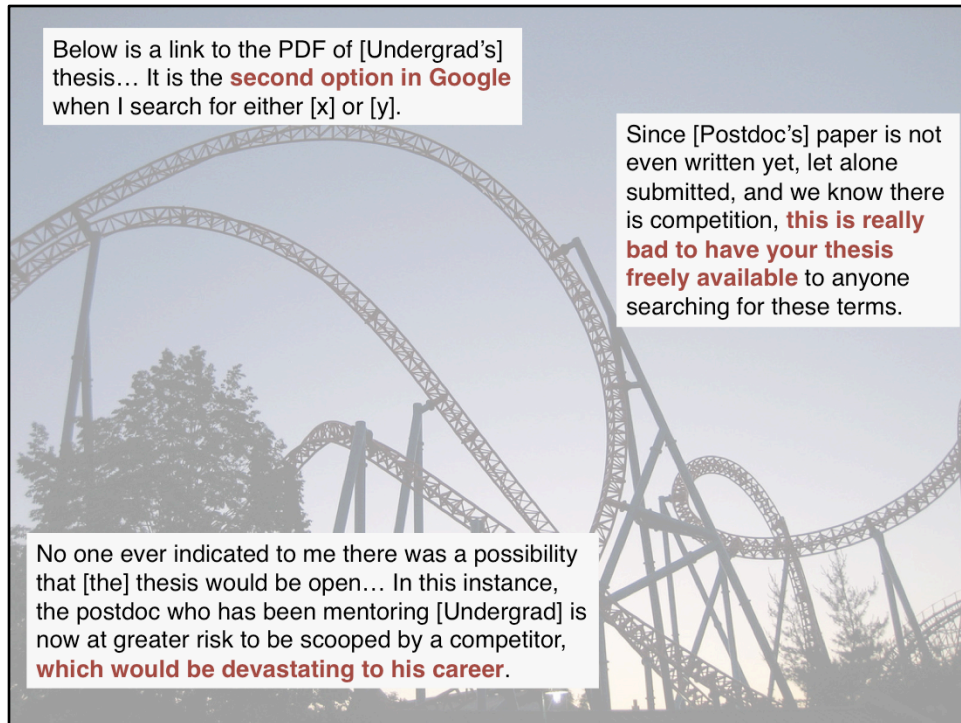
Sometimes we hear from people when there's a problem





Which brings me back to the undergraduate research posters and senior papers from earlier.

In May 2015 I was added to an email chain already in progress about an undergraduate paper being found through an online search. Here are some excerpts from the emails that had already been sent.



The basic issue was the faculty member (PI) had approved the content of the student's paper but did not know that online posting to Open Scholarship was an option. My unit manages the repository. I'm the person who approves the papers when they're submitted to either an unrestricted or on-campus-access only collection.

If you want scary, check your email on your phone one last time after you've gotten home from work and see a message like this, knowing that you're the person who clicked Post and Update. I immediately hid the paper and condensed the abstract so that it didn't include any information about the results. And The Libraries and my unit –Scholarly Publishing –reacted and responded to the concerns.



We met with the PI, two other people in the department, and the Office of Undergraduate Research. There is a university emphasis on undergraduate research. And many faculty support that; this professor had undergraduates working in her lab. But faculty were (and are) less aware of the repository collections and the fact that students were submitting their research in a way that it could be easily found through a Google search.

It was clear a new process was needed. We could not assume faculty knew students were submitting to the repository or that students were talking to their mentors about it.

But we also weren't able to build a review process that directly involved the Office of Undergraduate Research, the faculty mentors, and the library. What we do now is not ideal but meets the current needs of the faculty: we added more explicit language in the submission form for students to get permission from their mentors. When students submit a poster or thesis, I email them and CC their mentors. One department sends me a list of students who have written papers and whether their mentor has approved online submission. This addresses some of the concerns with making undergraduate work available in the repository but does not address the question of helping students be more aware of the publishing process and potential issues.

## There is no I in Research: Scholarship lessons for undergraduates

You're already involved in research and participating in scholarship. You're probably considering graduate school. You are going to publish, if not now with a senior honors thesis, a poster for the Undergraduate Research Symposium, or through other undergraduate conferences or journals, then later as a graduate student. You might even be a publisher, running a student-led journal or magazine on campus.

What are your rights and responsibilities? What are the risks? The Libraries can help answer these questions and more. We can schedule a class presentation on any or all of the topics discussed here, including owning, sharing, and distributing research; copyright and intellectual property; and establishing a professional presence online.

\* Student Online

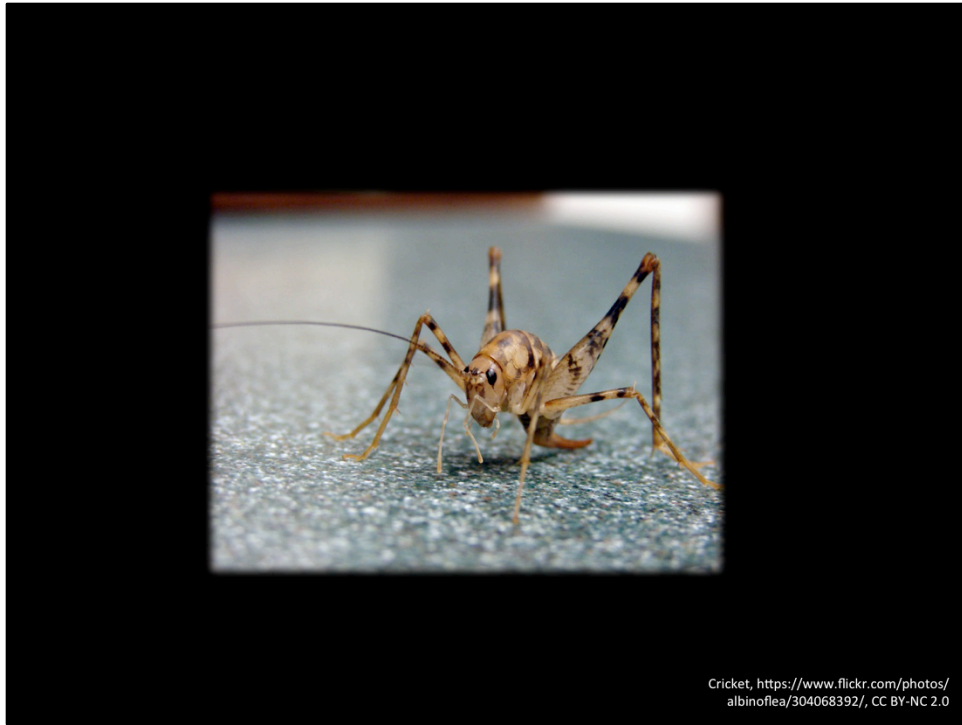
\* Student as Author

\* Student as Researcher

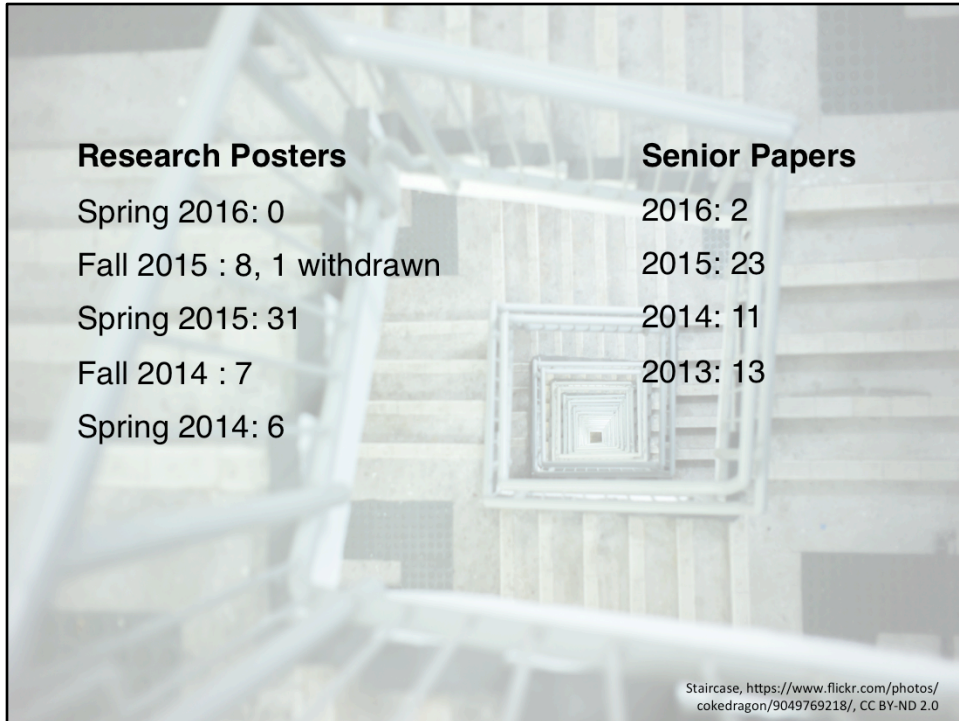
\* Student as Publisher/Editor

<http://libguides.wustl.edu/iresearch>

We also initiated an education and training program, a campus roadshow for undergraduate students and organizations. A colleague initiated contact with an undergraduate group about presenting at one of their meetings, and three of us started working on a presentation. We put together a libguide based on resources from other libraries including Claremont Colleges guide, and I shared the description with Undergraduate Research, who responded favorably. We describe it a modular program where we can discuss one or more topics depending on the target audience. We're pretty proud of what we've put together. We're flexible and agile and responding to the needs of our campus community. The response has been...



Once winter break hit, we never heard from the student group again. There has been interest expressed in us talking with students over the summer, but currently we have a program without an audience.



<b>Research Posters</b>	<b>Senior Papers</b>
Spring 2016: 0	2016: 2
Fall 2015 : 8, 1 withdrawn	2015: 23
Spring 2015: 31	2014: 11
Fall 2014 : 7	2013: 13
Spring 2014: 6	

Staircase, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cokedragon/9049769218/>, CC BY-ND 2.0

At this point, I'm less scared of inadvertently contributing to the ruin of someone's academic career and publishing sensitive data online. We have built more of an approval process into the submission of undergraduate theses and research posters. Since last year, submissions of undergraduate theses and posters have declined.

Spring 2016: 0 posters

Fall 2015: 8 posters submitted (one was withdrawn after email)

Spring 2015: 31 posters submitted (two librarians at that symposium – heavy promotion)

Fall 2014: 7 posters

Spring 2014: 6 posters

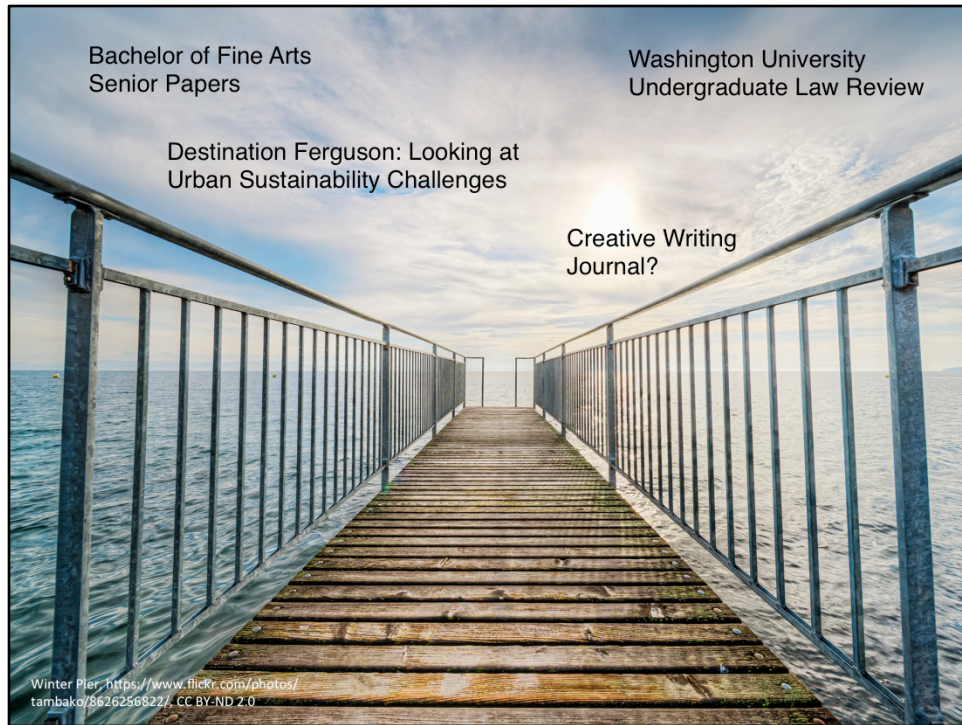
Undergraduate theses:

2016: 2

2015: 23 (includes BFAs which will now be in a new collection)

2014: 11

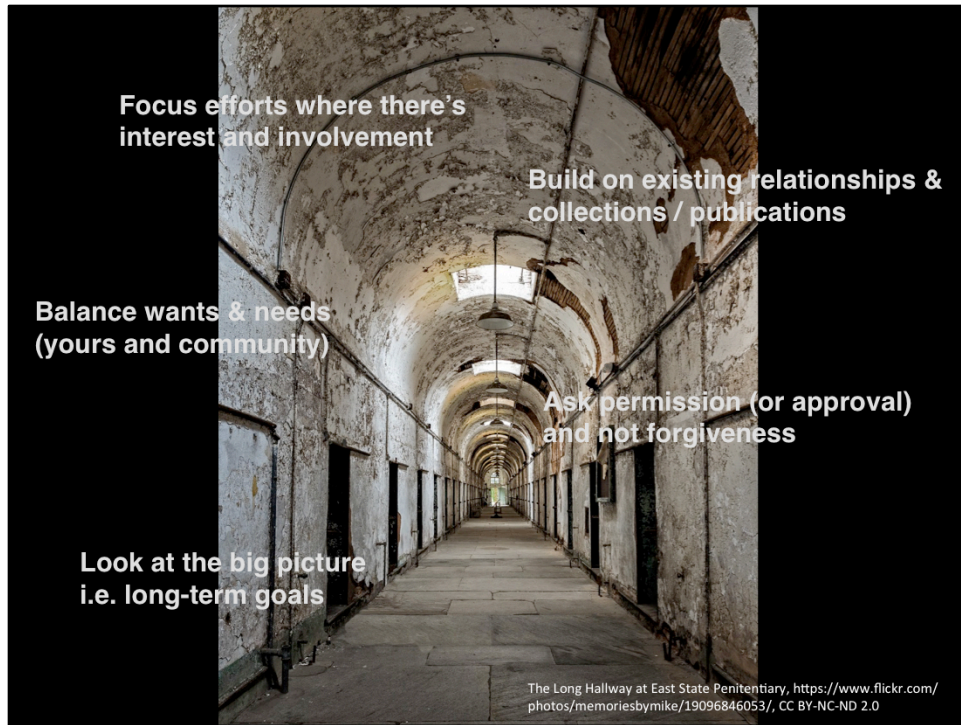
2013: 13



However, at the same time, the Bachelor of Fine Arts program started requiring submission of senior papers to the repository. And we are developing collections for upper-level courses.

The undergraduate law review should publish its first issue soon. We've talked with faculty about a potential creative writing publication.

But I'm concerned about the sustainability of publishing undergraduate work and becoming part of the Undergraduate Research conversation at our university.



How to find our way going forward:

Focus efforts where there's interest and involvement

Build on existing relationships

-- Try to work with librarians and faculty already actively involved in the repository as a start

-- Next year, try to arrange to visit the class one day to discuss issues.

Balance wants and needs

-- We might want to be the publisher of record, but they might want or need something else from the library – fill in preservation gap?

Ask permission (or approval) and not forgiveness.

-- It's not worth high submission numbers if you alienate faculty by sharing undergraduate work too widely. Set up an approval process.

Look at the big picture i.e. long term goals

-- Similar to above. Is the purpose to post/publish a lot of work or to build awareness and understanding of publishing issues into the undergraduate world?

Regardless of whether undergraduate work is being published or presented through the Libraries, students are still doing research, publishing, and presenting. We have



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More Discussion –  
Birds of a Feather: Negotiating  
Prospects and Perils of Publishing  
Undergraduate Research  
Thursday, May 19, 1:15-2:15 pm  
Room 250J

Credits:

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