You’re in Good Company: Developing a Research Conference for Advanced Graduate Students in the Humanities

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You’re in Good Company

Developing a Research Conference for Advanced Graduate Students in the Humanities

Daria Carson-Dussán
Brian Vetruba
Melissa Vetter
Inspiration

- Gap between librarian and graduate student interactions between first-years and dissertation stage
- Cornell University Library’s four-day long workshop for graduate students
- “Darn! I wish I had known that when I was writing my dissertation.”
Conversations with Stakeholders

- Faculty strongly supported conference idea
- University Writing Center involvement
- Week or two right before fall term
- Research refresher and writing tips
- Faculty involvement in sessions favored
- Fight against, “You feel like you have to do everything yourself. It feels like cheating to get help.”
- “You’re not alone” became “You’re in Good Company”
Conference, 2014

- Writing and Researching the Dissertation: Blueprint for Success
- Managing Your Stuff in the Humanities
- Become an Expert Library Researcher
- Tap into Archives and Special Collections: Learn the Ins and Outs of Finding and Accessing Archival Materials, Manuscripts, and Rare Books
- Cameras, iPads, and Apps, Oh My: Using Technology for Research and Archival Work

Faculty and Writing Center Staff Co-Led Sessions
2014 Attendees Area of Study
21 TOTAL
Feedback, 2014

• Highly valued hearing from faculty members!

• Top-rated session: “Writing and Researching the Dissertation”

• “I think this was a great thing to do for students. I wish I had had this kind of support when I was writing my dissertation!”

• “I had some questions answered and was introduced to new databases that will become crucial (as it turns out) for my subsequent research process.”
Takeaways, 2014

• Double time for logistics
• Need logistic support on day of conference
• Students need more time to talk about own research
• Provide smaller segments of technology
• Need for an ice-breaker

Survey, 2015

• Rate possible session topics
• Rate interest about specific tools
• Advertise 2015 conference
• “Early Bird Registration”
CHANGES FROM 2014

- Increased faculty participation
- Session on publishing
- Technology Sessions
- Recorded Sessions

Conference, 2015

- Going from ABD to PhD: Writing and Finishing the Diss.
- Tips and Tricks for Getting Published and Funded
- Ready-Set-Go—and Research!
- Don’t Lose Your Sh*t: Apps and Managing Your Research Data
- Tech Break Out Session
  - Scrivener
  - Zotero and Mendeley
  - Evernote and OneNote
2015 Attendees Area of Study
19 TOTAL
Library Grant to Record Sessions

- Record sessions not technology related so they would not become outdated
- Record faculty and librarians
- Post on YouTube and guide for people who could not attend
- Provide video/footage for campus partners of their sessions

*Entire conference playlist available*
Teaser Technology Videos

- Technology related topics were condensed to three-minute infomercials
- Could then be shared and used to market other library workshops
- Workshops offered in fall and spring semesters have similar offerings to this conference

Entire conference playlist available
Feedback, 2015

• *Going from ABD to PhD* session most highly rated

• Students thought publishing session was not relevant for them at this point

• Tech sessions were a great success

• More hands-on time with apps

• Too much break time
2016

• Funding approved from library administration. Yeah!
• Location challenge due to library renovation
• Graduate student on Planning Committee
• 1-day conference with more concurrent sessions
• Un-conference session (tables with different topics)
• Additional campus partners: Career Center
Recommendations

• Start planning six months ahead
• Look at campus calendars to schedule conference date(s)
• Teams for planning
  ➢ Promotion
  ➢ Food, room
  ➢ Sessions
• One digital hub for attendee info (Google Docs, LibCal as a registration system)
• Hire students for logistics (e.g., nametags, lunches, etc.)
• Prevent cabin fever and vary room locations (morning and afternoon sessions in 2 separate spots)
• Informal gatherings for attendees and librarians
• Hand out paper surveys, for higher return rate
Additional Resources

2015 conference guide:
libguides.wustl.edu/goodcompany2

2014 conference guide:
libguides.wustl.edu/humresearchstudio

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