Scholarly Publishing across the Disciplines:  
*Interviews with Geneseo Faculty*

**Part I: Faculty publication and co-authorship with students**

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**Overview**

In recent years, Geneseo has placed an increasing focus on high impact practices. Undergraduate research is one of the most common high impact practices, and librarians asked faculty about their involvement in these activities. Our questions focused on the publication aspects of this work, but revealed interesting insights into the disciplinary differences regarding undergraduate research and scholarly collaboration in general.

Of the 87 faculty members interviewed for this report (between 2011 and 2012), 64% reported incorporating undergraduates into their research and 37% reported co-authoring with students. There were sharp differences between disciplines, however. Faculty in the sciences and social sciences were much more likely to report co-authoring with students or including them in their research, while faculty in the humanities reported that the disciplinary norm is solitary writing and research. This reflects larger patterns regarding collaboration in the disciplines (Real, 2012) and co-authorship traditions (Greene, 2007).
Many scholars in the humanities view their research as independent work, “When I write, it encompasses only myself and the text I am commenting on.” They also occasionally describe barriers to entry level work, such as the ability to speak one (or more) foreign languages. For faculty members in the sciences, collaboration is the norm, “It is rarely just me. Students are involved in everything.” For these researchers, little could be accomplished without student help, “Undergraduates are my lab.”

Of course, even when faculty aren’t collaborating with students, they are often mentoring them in their own independent research projects. Faculty are often impressed with these independent efforts and encourage students to present at national conferences [38].

Challenges
Some faculty see challenges in using students in research projects and publishing with students. Faculty across all disciplines (11.5%) reported that in general, students are not prepared to help them with research and writing, either because of lack of knowledge and sophistication, unfamiliarity with theoretical work, or because the students do not have the foreign language expertise needed. In addition, six faculty members indicated that they are deterred from collaborating with students because of students’ inability to travel to do fieldwork or visit research institutions around the country and world. Presumably, availability of more grant money would help that happen, and 6.9% of our responders reported that directly. Some faculty felt that their long-term projects made it difficult to involve students, since many students are ready to tackle such research only in their senior, and occasionally, junior, year, and then graduation interrupts the collaboration. Finally, many faculty (almost all in the humanities, 10.3% of respondents) commented that in their discipline, published scholarly output is almost never co-authored. They rarely co-author with other scholars, so their exclusion of students in this endeavor is not surprising.

Further Support
Our conversations with faculty revealed some of the most important ways that the college supports undergraduate research, and suggests several ways that Milne Library and college can further support undergraduate research.

Ongoing financial support for student travel is a vital part of student research across the disciplines. This may include travel for conferences, travel to research locations or visits to important libraries and archives. Other financial support for faculty may include support for course development, since several faculty reported successfully incorporating research into their courses.

Support for new faculty is important. Faculty across the disciplines indicated that they would like to include students in their research or as co-authors but aren’t quite sure how. The library may
be able to use the Milne Professional Development Series to bring together experienced undergraduate research mentors with new faculty to discuss their experiences.

Milne Library may also be able to assist faculty by working more closely with their research students to develop their information literacy skills. This will allow them to conduct more thorough literature searches and save faculty time. Librarians should explore the best ways to reach out to these students: summer workshops, better advertising of research consultations, etc.

Undergraduate students in the humanities may also benefit from increased library support for their publication efforts. Since they are less likely to be co-authoring with faculty, the library may be able to provide resources regarding publication venues or guidance through the publication process.

Bibliography
