

Amanda Y. Makula

# Celebrating the Scholarly Communication of Our Campus Community

## How Can Today's Academic Library Play an Integral Role in its Parent Institution's Scholarly Output?

Colleges and universities vary in the ways they track, capture, or curate the scholarly output of their faculty members. Some use a centralized platform, such as an institution-wide Research Information Management (RIM) or Faculty Activity Reporting (FAR) system, while others leave this effort in the hands of individual departments, schools, or units. Some pay a vendor for a commercial solution while others develop their own tool in-house. Some require very specific, detailed reporting, while others are more laissez-faire in their approach. And, just as these methods vary, so does the role of the academic library in this effort. At the University of San Diego (USD), Copley Library has aligned itself with other academic administrative units to claim a leading role in identifying, organizing, and celebrating the intellectual output of the university.

USD is a private Catholic institution with just under 10,000 students and classified by Carnegie as a Doctoral University—High Research Activity. For many years, the Office of the Provost (OP), in conjunction with the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP), has led an annual event designed to recognize faculty grant recipients. This event took the form of an afternoon reception, held outdoors in late spring in the Garden of the Sea located behind the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice building. In recent years, the library noticed that the event seemed a natural home for recognition beyond grants, recognition that could extend to faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity of all shapes and sizes. Not only would such an expansion build partnership and foster collaboration with the event's originators (the OP and OSP), it would also help situate the library as a key player in chronicling USD's scholarly production and communicating its impact to the broader campus community and stakeholders.

To establish its new role in the event, the library first proposed a change in venue. Rather than the outdoor garden, the event could be moved inside the library to the illustrious Mother Hill Reading Room, known affectionately on campus as the "Harry Potter Room." Alongside the relocation, the library also envisioned new contributions to the content of the event. The 2023 event, titled the Research and Scholarship Recognition Reception, would feature faculty scholarship published the previous year (2022), showcased by a comprehensive bibliography, displays of faculty-authored books, and posters of the first page of scholarly or research articles. It would be a visual representation of the scholarly record coming out of USD, a tangible monument of the intellectual labor of the university's faculty.

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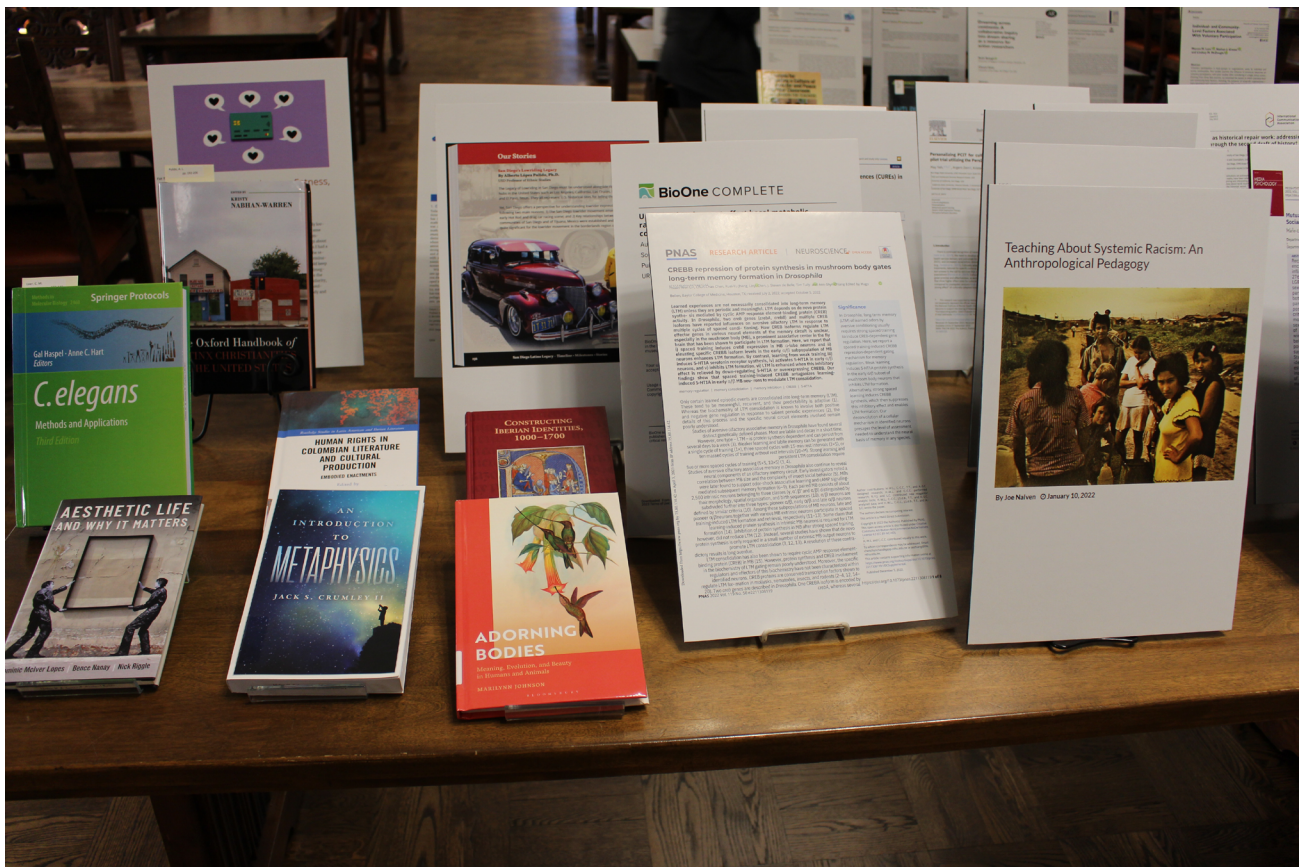


Image 1. A selection of scholarship displayed at the 2024 event. Photo credit: Jordan Kobayashi.

This ambitious re-envisioning of the event was no small feat. Because USD does not have a subscription to a proprietary RIM or FAR product, we had to instead develop a grassroots plan to build and refine the bibliography, requiring months of advance planning, teamwork, and collaboration.

The Digital Initiatives unit, which I head, was charged with leading this initiative. One of our first steps was to cull citations from databases, such as Web of Science and the freely available Lens.org, to establish a preliminary bibliography. While the database results provided this foundation, they certainly did not capture the full record. As Jennifer Bonnet, Barbara Alvarez, and Sigrid Anderson Cordell point out, “comprehensive coverage of faculty publications is extremely difficult. No single method of discovery suffices to ensure capturing a complete set of data”<sup>1</sup> Thus, it was critical that we solicit additional citations from faculty members themselves, and this was accomplished by a variety of means, such as deploying the library’s liaison and embedded librarians to reach out to the faculty in their respective schools and units, explain the project, and encourage them to report their scholarly work; combing the *Faculty Newsnotes* campus publication, in which faculty self-report their scholarly activities; and contacting administrators in each school to request that they pass on to us this information if they receive it from their faculty members.

As we built the bibliography from these cumulative efforts, we ran into several issues that required reflection and creative problem-solving. First, because USD’s name is similar to that of other schools, such as the University of California-San Diego and San Diego State University, the database search results contained several instances of citations authored by faculty at those institutions, despite specifying “University of San Diego” in the Affiliation field. We had to manually compare each citation against a USD employee directory—generated



Image 2. Attendees enjoy mingling at the 2024 event. Photo credit: Jordan Kobayashi.

for us by ITS, another collaborative partner in the effort—to ensure that at least one of the authors was indeed affiliated with USD.

Sara Tabaei et al. articulated well another issue that confronted us, this one broader and more ideological: how to define the parameters of the project, both in terms of eligible authors and content types.<sup>2</sup> For example, who “qualified” as an author for purposes of this project? Did the person need to be tenured or tenure-track faculty member, or should adjunct faculty, visiting fellows, research associates, graduate students, administrators, etc. also be included? And what about the types of scholarship that we would feature—should we limit it to textual research publications such as peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and books? Or should we broaden the scope to include outputs such as conference papers, exhibitions, musical scores, software, theatrical performances, and more? We had to ask ourselves, where, if at all, should we “draw the line?”

We soon saw the need to form a small committee to discuss these and other issues and brainstorm how to address them. To be as inclusive as possible, the committee proposed including anyone employed—in any capacity—by the university as an eligible author. Not only would this generate a larger bibliography representative of the vast array of authors across the institution, it would also foster a sense of community by honoring the scholarly contributions of all employees, regardless of position classification. Everyone would be welcomed and celebrated.

Similarly, we chose a broad, inclusive approach to the types of scholarship the bibliography would comprise. We recognized that different disciplines do scholarship differently, and that this diversity should be respected. Thus, the aforementioned types of content all made the cut, and while we agreed that we would not solicit popular types of content such

as magazine or blog pieces, if an author submitted them to us or to their liaison librarian, we would add them to the bibliography.

As the event drew closer, we printed and assembled several printed copies of the final bibliography, with tabs for each school/unit. Meanwhile, the acquisitions and cataloging librarian pulled print copies of books authored by USD folks from the stacks, ordered any that the library didn't already own, and generated QR codes for e-books. In the case of edited books, we placed bookmarks inside to identify the USD author's contributed chapter. When authors provided other materials, such as CDs, we gathered these as well. To showcase published articles—the predominant form of scholarship in the bibliography—we collected the first page of each and had them printed on legal-sized (8.5" x 14") poster board. Together, all these artifacts were displayed at the event, on tables designated for each of the schools/units. For example, the table for the Hahn School of Nursing and Health Science held all materials created by the faculty and staff affiliated with that school. Finally, because we knew that we would inevitably miss someone's work—no matter how hard we tried to be comprehensive, building the bibliography was an imprecise science—we created small signs asking attendees to contact us if we had omitted their scholarship so that we could add it to the bibliography.

The event itself was a mix of formal remarks by the provost and recognition of grant recipients as well as unstructured time for attendees to enjoy beverages and refreshments, mingle with colleagues, and wander among the tables, perusing the displays. People were eager to find their name in the bibliography and delighted to see their article, book, or other artifact among the displays. In fact, several attendees asked to take their article posters home with them following the event, and a faculty member from the School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) gathered all their e-book posters to mount a display in their building's foyer. The success of the 2023 event made it easy to decide to do it again in 2024. For the second year, we made a few modifications, such as replacing the print binders with electronic tablets and showcasing our institutional repository, Digital USD,<sup>3</sup> on a large-screen monitor to encourage attendees to learn more about it and add their scholarship. For both the 2023 and 2024 events, we deposited the final bibliography in the repository so that there is a permanent record of the university's scholarly output readily viewable for anyone at or beyond USD.

As we look toward the future, we are excited to build on the energy and enthusiasm generated by the first two events while also examining and addressing the challenges that we face, which echo those outlined by Michelle Armstrong and Julia Stringfellow in their analysis of Albertsons Library's Author Recognition events at Boise State University—namely, the all-consuming nature of “finding the publications, verifying the content, and ensuring the consistency of citation format . . . activities [which are] all outside of their regular job duties.”<sup>4</sup> We are pondering how to sustain such a large undertaking each year while simultaneously juggling the many other responsibilities of our department. We must find ways to streamline the workflow, to make it more efficient while keeping an eye on costs. We may be able to incorporate automation to relieve some staff time and reduce errors introduced by manual entry. To that end, the Provost's Office has assembled a working group tasked with exploring a homegrown technical solution for capturing scholarly citations, and I will serve as the library's representative to this group. The goal is to make the process as robust and efficient as possible, and the final product—the annual bibliography—as accurate and

comprehensive as it can be. Finally, we want to learn more about the value of this work to the university administration and to the authors themselves. While attendance at the event has been high, and anecdotal feedback positive, we are considering a formal means of assessment to understand more clearly how this work impacts the institution and how we would characterize its return on investment.<sup>5</sup>

As Edward M. Corrado points out, “While perhaps not a traditional academic library role, highlighting university research fits within the basic mission of libraries to serve as partners for advanced inquiry and learning.”<sup>6</sup> The Research and Scholarship Recognition Reception at USD is a prime example of an academic library enhancing an existing campus initiative by embedding itself in the process and offering its unique services and expertise. ❧

## Notes

1. Jennifer Bonnet, Barbara Alvarez, and Sigrid Anderson Cordell, “Let’s Get This Party Started: Celebrating Faculty Authors in the Library,” *College & Research Libraries News* 75, no. 10 (2014): 550–59, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.75.10.9210>.

2. Sara Tabaei, Yitzchak Schaffer, Gregory McMurray, and Bashe Simon, “Building a Faculty Publications Database: A Case Study,” *Public Services Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (2013): 196–209, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228959.2013.816127>.

3. “Digital USD,” University of San Diego, accessed September 13, 2024, <https://digital.sandiego.edu/>.

4. Michelle Armstrong and Julia Stringfellow, “Promoting Faculty Scholarship through the University Author Recognition Bibliography at Boise State University,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 18, no. 2 (November 2012): 165–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2012.717901>.

5. William Shane Wallace, Greg Hatch, and Catherine Soehner, “Measuring the Impact of a Library-Hosted Showcase Event,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 47, no. 5 (2021): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2021.102428>.

6. Edward M. Corrado, “The Library’s Role in Highlighting Faculty Scholarship,” *Technical Services Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2021): 150–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0731713.2021.1892344>.