OBERLIN DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP 2016 LEADERSHIP IN COLLABORATIONS

Collaboration across disciplines and work units often brings together people with markedly different skill sets, ways of seeing, and individual stakes in project outcomes. How do we determine who takes on a leadership role within the group, and what do those roles look like? To what degree ought we make leadership roles explicit? When are consensus models preferable?

Challenges:
- timing -- takes too long to sometimes get people together;
- waiting for things to get done
- No infrastructure
- Not wanting to add to someone's plate
- Upper administration / administrators are the same people over and over
- People are over-extended
- Not feeling like your contribution on a committee is valued or trusted as much
- Major scheduling conflicts / challenges when having mixed-rank / inter-unit / inter-disciplinary meetings

Desire to work more closely with IT/ITS

Challenge to actually make things happen

Strategies / ideas
Getting students involved (in writing documentation, working with ITS staff members, etc.)

A collegially managed library offers other kinds of challenges -- hard to know who to go to to get something done

Some people do consensus; some people talk consensus but do it alone

DS as a library-driven directive, led by librarians with some faculty members,
Trying to diversify experience within the committee

Visiting other centers, learning technologies, going to workshops -- as a team rather than individually

Course releases & a stipend & paired with a librarian or instructional technologist to redevelop or develop a course or how to incorporate technology into their courses

OBERLIN DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP 2016 COLLABORATION VS SERVICE MODELS

Some institutions supporting digital scholarship have developed a service model, where technically trained staff provide services such as video editing, data analysis, etc, to faculty; other institutions work from a collaborative model, where staff provide training, consultations, and project management assistance to faculty, who work on project themselves or with research assistants. What are the advantages and disadvantages to each of these models for our institutions? What are situations where this balance may shift?

Various institutions have different levels of collab vs service model
Some have dedicated dig schol librarians, some don't

"Collaboration and service inform each other"
More collaboration in places with Mellon funding
Questions about sustainability of this model?

Takeaways
- Range of models at different institutions
  - More established models, grant-funded are pushing towards collaboration
  - Expertise and the ability to push back as collaborators (expertise vs technical skills)
- People are in favor of collaborative model rather than service models
- Are models imposed or self-determined?
- Grants force institutions to form a group, but these groups can still be grassroots movements
  - Then groups can become more formalized

INSTITUTIONAL & STRUCTURAL STRATEGIES

What institutional and structural changes might be required to better facilitate support of digital scholarship? How might libraries (and other units) combat the "academic caste system" through digital scholarship? What role should research & development time play in DS positions?

Relationships between instructional technologist and librarians within and among various models of merged and unmerged.   Status of merged/unmerged does not guarantee relationships

How to build capacity for R&D with other roles outside DS, but connected to DS? How to find time for all of this?

KG => Importance of juggling and partnerships

EWB => Analysis of meetings and the role of meetings; can there be a time savings that can allow for R&D.

Tricky to judge efficiency through lens of meetings. Sometimes meetings and time spent in meetings is not efficient. Making meetings more efficient.

Organizational culture seems key here.

Flexibility in meetings may be required

Efficiency does not equal effectiveness

Working with centers for teaching and learning to reach out to people who to which may not have had access or

Academic caste system: interdisciplinary, academic rank, academic professionals, librarians, within library (public v. tech services),

Connect with people across groups; focus on relationships

Roundtables and communities of practice on campus can facilitate

Takeaways
- What is the role of meetings? How do we make them effective so that people are informed or connected, but still have time to do the r&d they need to?
- Take advantage of relationships and centers on campus (CTLR, communities of practices, brown bag lunches)
  - As an antidote to the academic caste system
- What about the caste system in academic libraries themselves?
  - Recognizing the contributions of all departments
  - Digital scholarship exposes this sometimes

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STRATEGIES FOR INITIATING AND MAINTAINING COLLABORATIONS

How can you find collaborators at your institution? What makes for a "good" collaborator? What ground rules should be set? How can institutions incentivize collaborations?

Takeaways
- How formal should structures and positions/centers be established?
  - Rely on informal relationships and networks?
- Cross the aisle to make things happen
- Move across the institutional designations (R1 to liberal arts, etc)

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIONS

At smaller institutions, we are increasingly faced with the challenges of having enough staff to support faculty demand for digital scholarship projects, as well as having a staff with enough diversity in technical skills and training to support the projects that come to us. How can we leverage inter-institutional connections to support each other's programs, develop training and technical skills, and build communities of practice?

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What to do when institutions in a consortium have differing levels of
resources to contribute?

Leadership turnover/new directors can make it difficult to get
going/keep things going.

Collaborative committees might help sustain the work despite
challenges.

Different types of collaboration:
    - technical/infrastructure
    - content/resources
    - student-to-student communication

Establish a relationship before the urgent need arises. Draw on the
history of those relationships for new projects.

Relationship of Library and IT can influence how each institution is
able to collaborate.

How can we support faculty to share their vulnerabilities across
institutions? They need enough mastery of a tool in order to share
their knowledge. They need support (from us, from the institution) to
do good, experimental work. Does Tenure/Promotion process formally
encourage risk-taking?

Takeaways
    ● Structural, content-related consortial collaborations important?
    ● How to balance resource levels and staffing levels?
    ● Develop communities across the consortium?
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- Develop relationships **before** the need arises
- Talk to faculty about what they need so that we can seek it out from our colleagues

OBERLIN DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP 2016 ON FAILED COLLABORATIONS

Despite our aspirations, all of us eventually become involved in a collaborative group that never quite comes together, falls short of its goals, or becomes mired in some setback or another. How do we deal with failed collaborations? Perhaps more importantly, how do we identify points of failure and salvage work that takes place in spite of less-than- stellar outcomes? How important is contingency planning in collaborative projects, and what sorts of models could we employ?

Why did we pick this topic?
- Perception of failure is negative, but it isn't necessarily.
- People don't talk about failure; we're so invested in success that we don't want to admit failure
- Starts projects by acknowledging it's a work in progress, we don't know everything, we'll learn as we go, be prepared to change horses midstream if we need to

Identifying points of failure
- If you are clear about your goals & then don't meet them

Talking about failure, challenges: how?
- It's too bad people feel like they need safe spaces to talk about failure.
- Mac has a "reflective practice cohort." Reflection as you practice is important, sometimes that means reflecting on failure.
- Maybe we need a better word than "failure."
  - "Perpetual beta"
  - Isn't that the point of agile development, to learn as you go?

Takeaways
- Repackage failure - don't make it a dirty word
- Create safe spaces to talk about and reflect on failure
- Learning to adjust to things and re-work plans as a project moves along

Faculty Fellows program - where faculty develop digital projects during their sabbatical leave

Takeaways
- Some institutions intentionally have dismantled leadership model, while others are collaborations that still have (at least) nominal leadership
- Consensus was for consensus models, and for giving others chance to lead
- Challenges include bringing together groups, the amount of time and infrastructure projects require - how are we avoid being overextending?
- What units are leading projects? The library? The CTLR? Faculty?
- Challenge of inserting yourself as a leader for projects