

# Building a Culture of Research and Innovative Practice through the L R I P F



## An idea to support library faculty research

Library faculty at the University of Maryland are required to engage in research, scholarship and/or creativity to attain promotion and/or permanent status. In 2013, a suggestion was posted to the Libraries' "Idea Board" for a way to encourage and support these endeavors:

"To support all the library faculty and staff to have a better understanding of the research and scholarship being pursued by their colleagues, we could hold a "Research/Scholarship/Creativity Forum" to be held say, twice a year - in Spring for sure, and maybe again in Fall. ... The program of the Scholarship/Creativity Forum would be presented by any library staff members who are engaged in research/scholarship, most especially library faculty who are pursuing promotion and/or permanent status."

## From idea to reality – the people who made it happen

The Library Management Group and the Advisory Council of the Library Assembly (the Libraries' governance body composed of voting representatives from all sectors of the library community) approved the idea for what came to be called the Library Research and Innovative Practice Forum. Planning for the inaugural forum was tasked to three standing committees of the Library Assembly:

- Library Research Fund Committee
- Faculty Mentoring Committee
- Appointment, Promotion, and Permanent Status Committee

The inaugural Forum was scheduled for June 4, 2015, 1:00-4:30 pm.

## Call for participation

The call for proposals was issued via email and on Libi, the library staff blog, concisely describing the purpose of the Forum and the kinds of content being sought:

"Are you currently working on a research project? Have you tested a new tool or workflow? Are you preparing a presentation for an upcoming conference? Come share your work with your colleagues at the 1st Library Research and Innovative Practice Forum on June 4, 2015 ... to highlight ongoing research and practice by University of Maryland Libraries faculty, staff, and students.

We welcome proposals for several presentation formats, with an emphasis on posters and lightning talks, and only a few longer-form presentations. The structure of the event will be based on the proposals received, but everyone interested in sharing their work will have the opportunity to do so. We want to reflect the wide range of research and initiatives happening across the Libraries."

## The L R I P F becomes a UMD Libraries annual event since 2015 with program innovations every year

After starting as a half-day event in 2015, the Forum expanded to a full day in 2016. Each Forum included a keynote speaker to begin the day's program. Over the years, the Forum Planning Committee updated the format and offerings to improve the experience for the participants. In 2020, the Forum expanded to 2 days with no concurrent sessions.

- June 4, 2015 – 1:00-4:30 pm
- June 8, 2016 – 9:30 am-4:45 pm. The first full-day forum included lunch time discussion tables on mentoring and research & publishing.
- June 8, 2017 – 9:00 am-3:00 pm. Poster sessions scheduled over the lunch period, and through the generosity of the Dean's Office, lunch is now provided! Also added this year: Coffee Lounge, Quiet Room
- June 14, 2018 – 9:00 am-4:00 pm
- June 11, 2019 – 9:00 am-3:30 pm. New this year: Battle Decks!
- June 9 and 26, 2020 – 10:00 am-4:00 pm. With staff working from home, the Forum is presented online using Zoom.

year	lightning talk	presentation	panel	workshop	poster	total
2015	13	1	1	0	7	22
2016	4	6	1	1	15	27
2017	6	13	0	0	12	31
2018	4	15	2	0	10	31
2019	2	10	0	1	10	23
2020	3	8	4	0	5	20

## If you build it, they will come

Some facts and figures:

- Total sessions presented 2015-2020: 154, for an average of around 25 sessions per year.
- Number of presentations available in the Library Research & Innovative Practice Forum collection (<http://hdl.handle.net/1903/16362>) in DRUM, the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland: 80
- Number of downloads of the Forum presentations in DRUM: ever increasing

More research is needed to assess in what ways the L R I P F has achieved the purpose of nurturing the culture of scholarship in the UMD Libraries. One aspect will be to examine whether presentations made at the Forum led to additional presentations outside the Libraries and to published research or creative work. Another will be to gather input from the presenters on their perceptions of any benefit gained from participation in the Forum. Analysis of the evaluations collected by the Forum Planning Committee each year will provide insight into the attendees' assessment of the value of the programs.

Through the work of the Forum planners and the sustained engagement of the many library faculty and staff willing to contribute their presentations, the Library Research and Innovative Practice Forum has succeeded in growing from a suggestion on the Idea Board to a well-established annual event. After six years, we can begin to assess the impact of the L R I P F on the culture of scholarship and innovation in the Libraries, and consider whether it can be a model for similar programs in other libraries.

