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University of Windsor Faculty Survey: Analytical Memo

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**University of
Windsor:
Analytical Memo**



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Overview

Ithaka S+R's faculty surveys have been fielded in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand to analyze research, teaching, and information usage practices. Individual institutions and consortia use the survey to assess the needs of the academic community in order to develop appropriate strategies and services. Ten members of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) consortium participated in a Canadian version of the Ithaka S+R faculty survey in the 2014-2015 academic year, hoping that it might expand over time to serve as a tracking tool for the Canadian higher education community in much the same way that it has done at the country-level elsewhere.

Ithaka S+R worked with the University of Windsor and other CARL institutions to develop a version of the survey instrument for the Canadian context. The Canadian version of the faculty survey covers many scholarly research and teaching-related topics, overlapping with several iterations of the Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey. The questionnaire covers topics in several key areas, including: how faculty members discover materials for research; faculty members' data preservation and management behaviors and needs; their digital research activities and methodologies; practices and attitudes regarding undergraduate students' research skills; the role of the library in supporting faculty members' needs; faculty members' scholarly communications needs and behaviors; and practices and attitudes regarding research dissemination.

The following report provides an analytical narrative of the results of the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey, which was administered at the University of Windsor to 1,073 faculty members. In addition to an analysis of the uWindsor findings, comparisons are also drawn against aggregated findings of all participating CARL institutions.¹ During fall 2014, all 1,073 uWindsor faculty members received an email invitation to participate in a survey about the impact of electronic technologies on their research and teaching. Three reminders were sent before the close of the survey. In total, 335 respondents clicked the survey link (about 31%), with 322 of those starting the survey (about 30%), and 227 of those completing the survey (about 21%). In this analysis, we also report findings at the disciplinary level in addition to the aggregate for further context.²

¹ Participating CARL member institutions include: Memorial University of Newfoundland, University of New Brunswick, Ottawa University, Université de Montréal, Ryerson University, University of Guelph, University of Alberta, McMaster University, and York University. The survey was fielded in French and English at three institutions and solely in French at one institution.

² A total of 26 medical/veterinary/health sciences faculty members completed the survey, compared with 57 arts and humanities faculty members, 67 science respondents, and 70 social scientists. Please note the small sample sizes when interpreting disciplinary-level findings reporting in this document.

Key Insights

A key goal of the uWindsor Local Faculty Survey is to provide evidence-based strategic insights into how faculty members perceive the role of the uWindsor library and identify areas of opportunity for growth. This analysis aims to identify how disciplinary differences drive and shape faculty members' understanding of the role of library-provided content and support services. The results from the survey revealed the following strategically relevant high-level findings:

- uWindsor faculty members' views of the role of the library and the library's services are highly stratified by disciplinary affiliations.
- Arts and humanities faculty members at uWindsor highly value and recognize the library's role in providing student support services related to the development of information literacy skills.
- There is less awareness among faculty members in STEM fields at uWindsor regarding both the library's content-provision and support services roles. In general, scientists at uWindsor are less likely than their colleagues in other disciplines to value the library's role in supporting research activities involving data or in providing support or training to develop undergraduates' research skills. This highlights a growth area for the library to enhance strategic communications or targeted outreach to faculty members in STEM fields specifically.
- A majority of faculty members at uWindsor support an institutional policy requiring that their peer-reviewed journal articles or conference proceedings be made open access or publically available via a repository.
- A majority of respondents across all disciplines value the library's role in providing access to subscription-based online repositories of research data, indicating that uWindsor faculty members value specialized research content and collections in addition to access to traditional literature.
- Across all four major disciplinary categories, faculty members view the library's spending on acquisitions and resources as critical to their ability to conduct research.

Ithaka S+R believes these topics are among those that are valuable to track for change over time.

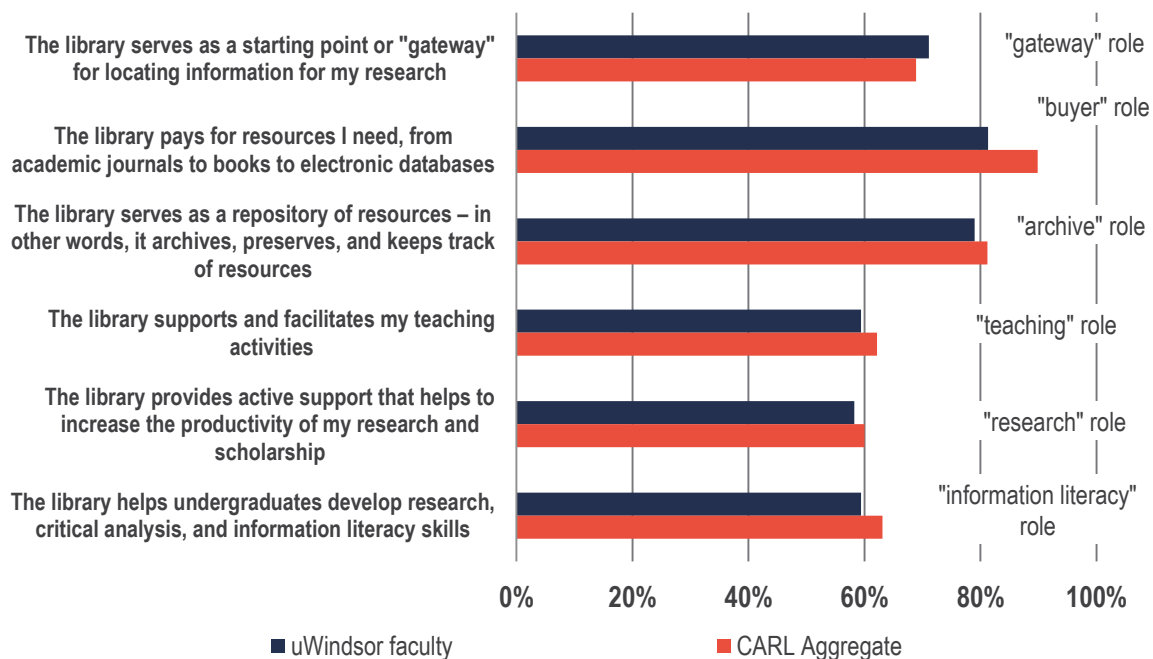
The Role of the Library

The CARL and uWindsor faculty survey included a set of items developed to measure faculty members' views regarding the primary functions of academic libraries in supporting their research and instructional needs. Three of these items cover activities regarding different but inter-related aspects of the content-provision roles of the library, including facilitating the discovery of scholarly content, paying for resources and licensing content, and serving as an archive or repository. The remaining three items cover the library's varying roles in engaging directly with constituent communities, including support services for research, teaching, and information literacy instruction.

In general, the majority of faculty respondents at uWindsor view the library's six content-provision and support roles as important. In particular, faculty members at uWindsor are more likely than faculty members at other CARL institutions to value the library's role in the discovery and access of research-related information resources. However, a smaller share of faculty members at uWindsor find the other five roles of the library as important compared to faculty members at the other participating CARL institutions (see Table 1).

Table 1

How important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity listed below?*



*Percent of respondents rating each item as "extremely important" (5-6 on a 6-point scale)

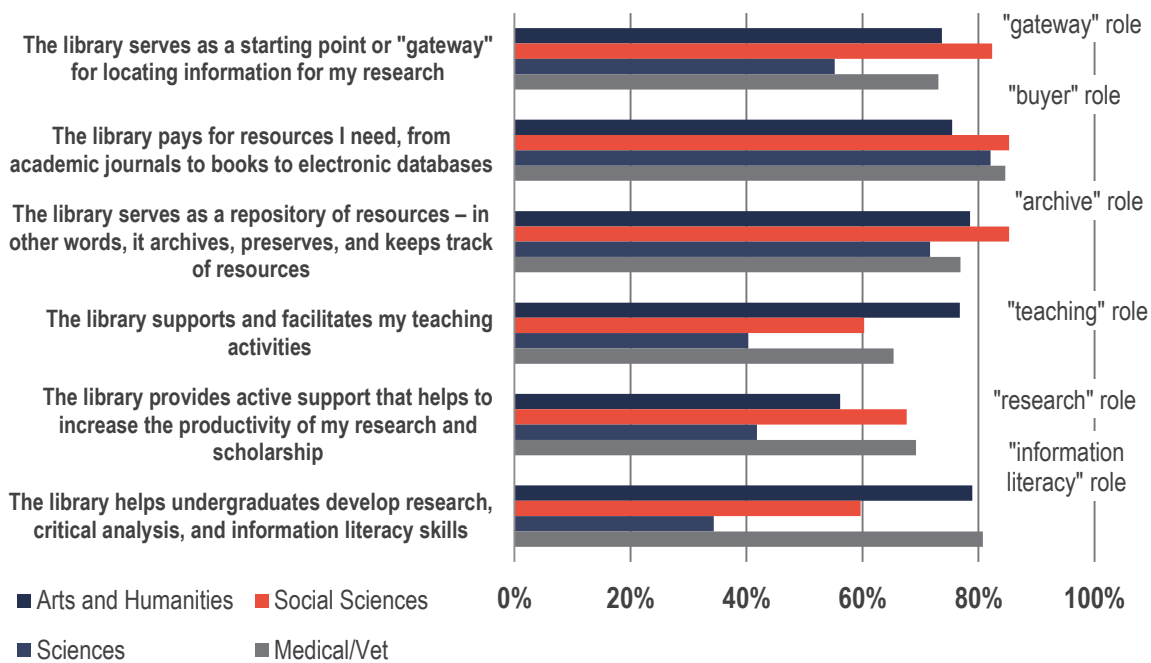
When considering these items at a more granular level of analysis, it is clear that the aggregate results of the uWindsor survey mask substantial disciplinary differences regarding faculty member's perspectives of the importance of the library's roles and services. Notably, a substantially smaller share of science faculty members at uWindsor rate the library's six roles as important compared with faculty members in other disciplines at uWindsor. A majority of uWindsor faculty members across all disciplinary categories rate the library's content-provision roles as important. However, only 55% of scientists at uWindsor rate the library's discovery role as important, compared with 82% of social scientists, 74% of faculty members in arts or humanities disciplines, and 73% of faculty members in medical or veterinary disciplines. A larger share of social scientists view all three of the library's content provision roles as important compared with faculty members in other disciplines.

Regarding the library's role in providing support services, a substantially larger share of medical, veterinary, arts and humanities faculty members view the library's teaching support and information literacy instruction services as important compared with faculty members in other disciplines (see Table 2). Specifically, 77% of uWindsor arts and humanities faculty members, and 65% of medical or veterinary faculty members, rate the library's teaching support services as important, compared with 60% of social scientists and a minority of 40% of science faculty members.

In addition, 81% of medical or veterinary faculty, and 79% of arts and humanities faculty members, value the library's role in providing services and instructions to support students' development of information literacy skills, compared with 60% of social scientists and a concerning 34% of science faculty members. A larger share of medical or veterinary faculty members (69%), and a large share of social scientists (68%), report that they find the library's research support important in contributing to their research productivity, compared with 56% of arts and humanities faculty members and 42% of science faculty members.

Table 2

How important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity listed below?*



*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely important” (5-6 on a 6-point scale)

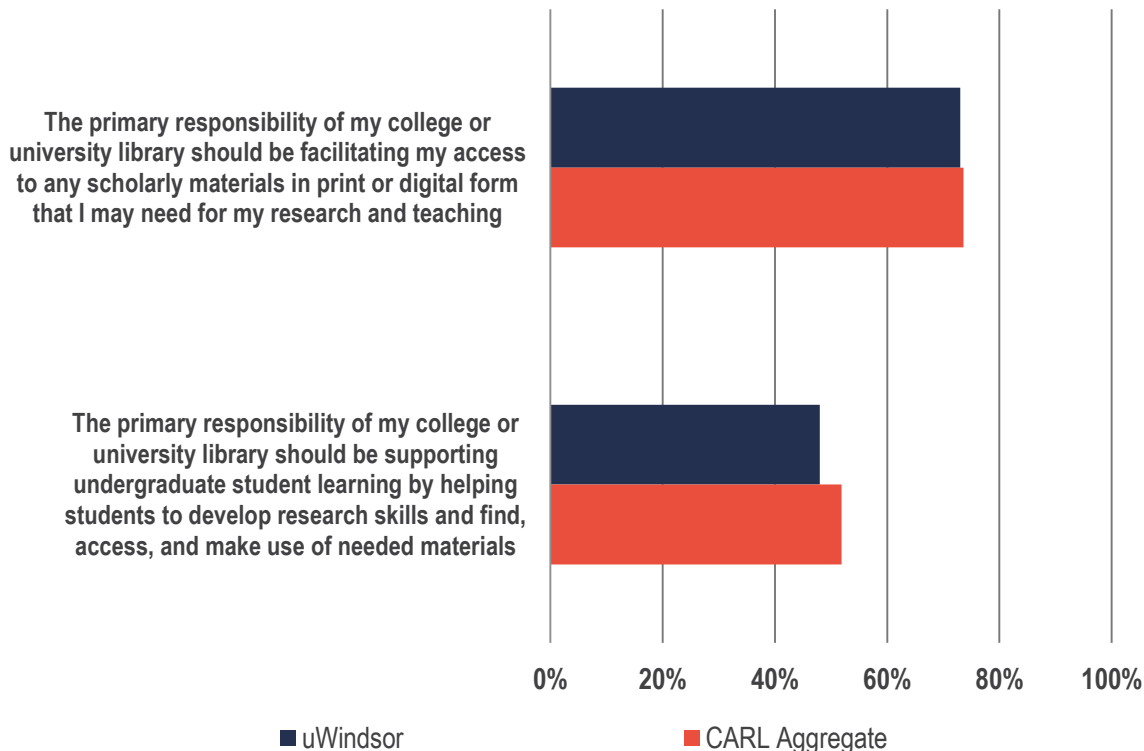
Science faculty members at uWindsor diverge from their colleagues in other disciplines. These results highlight a possible lack of awareness among science faculty members about the breadth of library-provided services that may be available and relevant for their research and teaching. Based on these results, uWindsor science faculty members may benefit from more targeted strategic communications or outreach regarding library-provided support services.

However, similar to their colleagues in other disciplines at uWindsor, science faculty members do place a high degree of value on the library’s role in purchasing and licensing scholarly content. In particular, 82% of science faculty members rate the library’s “buyer” role as important, compared with 85% of social scientists, 85% of medical or veterinary faculty members, and 75% of arts and humanities respondents. This indicates that science faculty members, in addition to faculty members from the other disciplines, view the library’s spending on acquisitions and resources as critical to their ability to produce research. In particular, this indicates that science faculty members at uWindsor appear to be fully aware of the library’s role in facilitating access to needed research resources via collections-related expenditures.

In general, the disciplinary-level findings of the six items measuring faculty members’ attitudes towards the roles of the library indicate a specific opportunity for the library to focus on enhancing engagement among science faculty members at uWindsor regarding library-provided research and instructional support services.

Table 3

Faculty members' views regarding the role of the library and library staff*



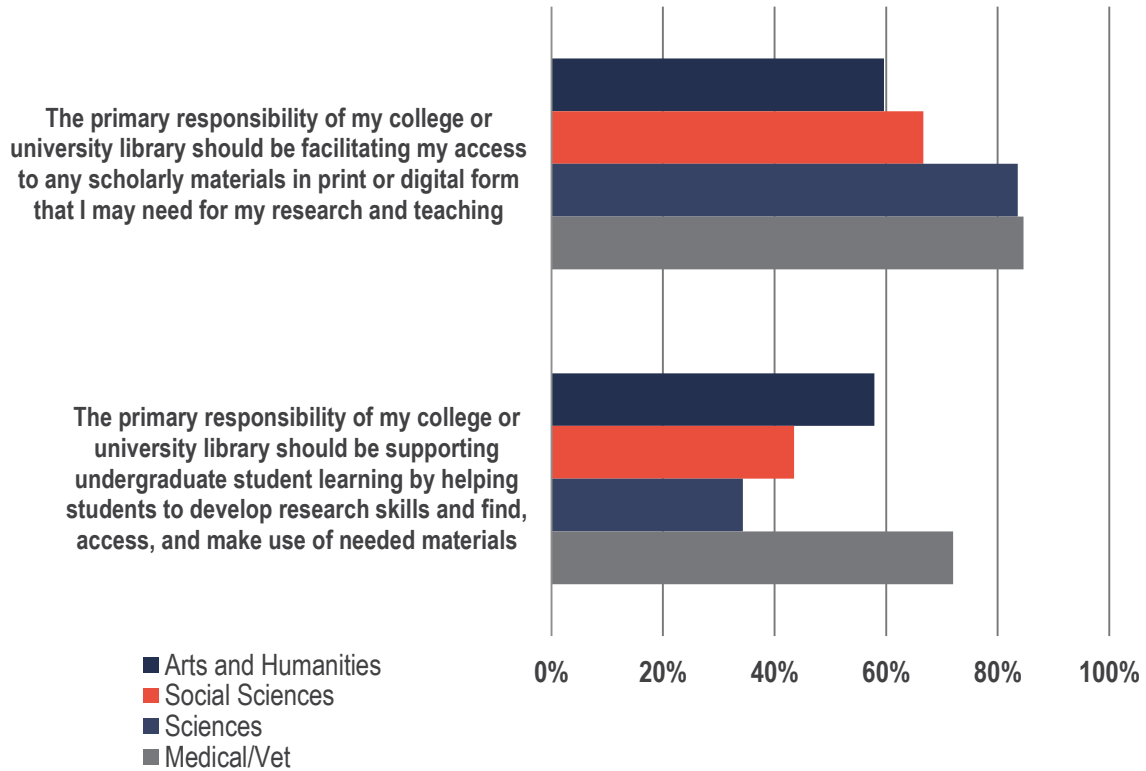
*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint “extremely well” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

As Table 3 indicates, uWindsor faculty members are as likely as faculty members from other CARL institutions to view the library’s role in providing access to scholarly content as fundamental. In addition, faculty members at uWindsor are less likely than faculty members at other Canadian institutions to view undergraduate support services as a primary role of the library. This may indicate that uWindsor faculty members place a high priority on library-provided support to faculty members in particular, and may thus warrant further investigation.

As Table 4 indicates, disciplinary differences exist among faculty members’ perspectives regarding the primary role of the library. Science and medical and veterinary faculty members are more likely to view the library’s role as primarily related to access. Interestingly, medical and veterinary faculty members place a substantially higher level of value on the library’s role in supporting undergraduates when compared with faculty members in other disciplines.

Table 4

Faculty members' views regarding the role of the library and library staff*



*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint “extremely well” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

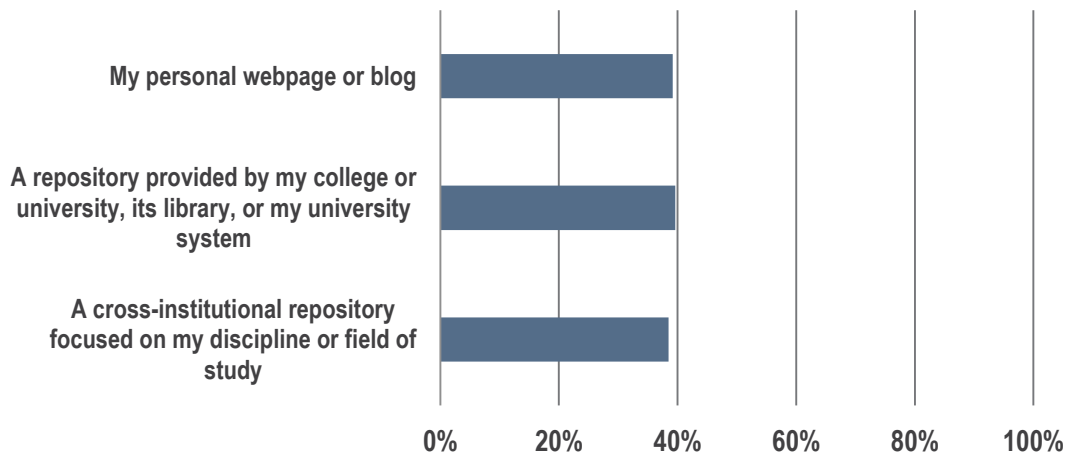
In addition to surveying faculty members directly regarding the role of the library, the CARL survey also included thematic modules on a range of research and teaching related topics relevant to faculty members’ library-related needs and practices. This analytical report focuses on several of these thematic modules, including faculty members’ perceptions of open access, their scholarly communications practices, the sources that faculty members rely on for the management and preservation of their research data, and their views regarding the development of students’ research and information literacy skills. These topics should be interpreted in the broader context of faculty members’ perceptions and awareness regarding the roles of the library.

Scholarly Communications and Open Access

In addition to a set of common questions fielded at all participating CARL institutions, the uWindsor survey included two additional thematic modules related to scholarly communications and research dissemination. In general, faculty members at uWindsor support broad sharing of their scholarly work via a range of mechanisms. However, scientists at uWindsor, while in practice report that they are comfortable sharing their work via open access channels, do not report a consistent level of support or interest in the institutional facilitation of scholarly communication through services offered by uWindsor and/or its library. As Table 5 shows, nearly 40% of faculty members at uWindsor, in the aggregate, share a final or pre-print version of their articles and/or scholarly monographs via open or other non-traditional channels such as their personal webpage or blog, the Scholarship at uWindsor repository, or a cross-institutional disciplinary repository.

Table 5

In addition to publishing your scholarship in a traditional journal or monograph, you may also have the ability to make a final or pre-print version of the article or monograph text available through a variety of other channels.*



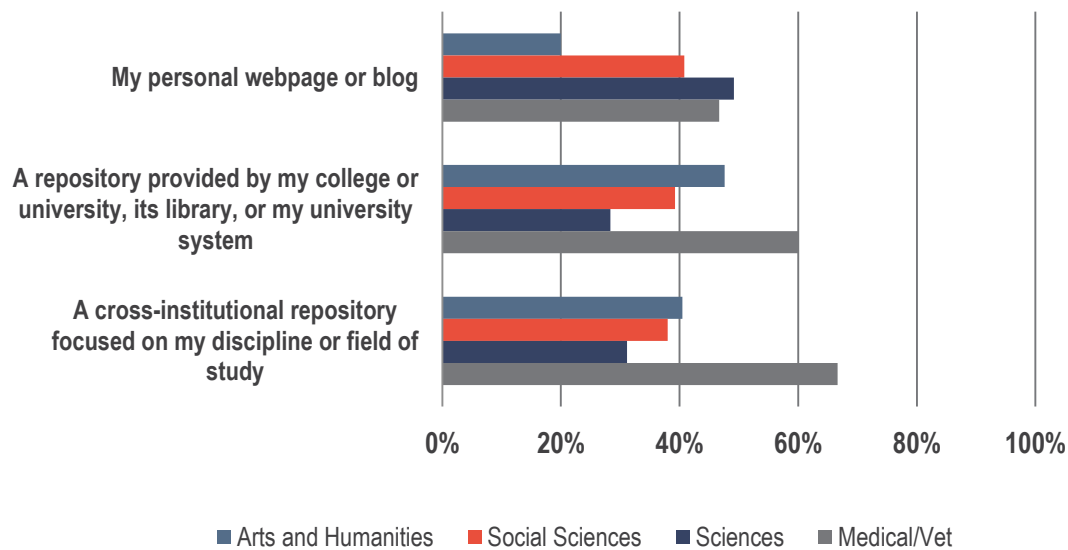
*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely important” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

As with faculty members’ view of the roles of the uWindsor library, disciplines also contribute to faculty members’ practices related to scholarly communications and their views regarding open access. Arts and humanities faculty members are substantially less likely to publish their scholarly work on their personal webpages or blogs when compared with faculty members in all other disciplines. However, a majority of arts and humanities faculty members report that they share the final or pre-print version of their scholarly work via an online repository, and in addition to medical and veterinary faculty

members, are more likely to utilize Scholarship at uWindsor for this purpose when compared with faculty members in the social and hard sciences. A larger share of scientists report that they make their scholarly work available via their personal webpage or blog, when compared with faculty members in all other disciplines. It is particularly noteworthy that uWindsor scientists report that they are less likely than faculty members in all other disciplines to publish their work via online repositories, given the stronger history of open access publishing among the scientific community and the prevalence and prestige of digital repositories serving fields like mathematics, computer science, and physics.

Table 6

In addition to publishing your scholarship in a traditional journal or monograph, you may also have the ability to make a final or pre-print version of the article or monograph text available through a variety of other channels.*

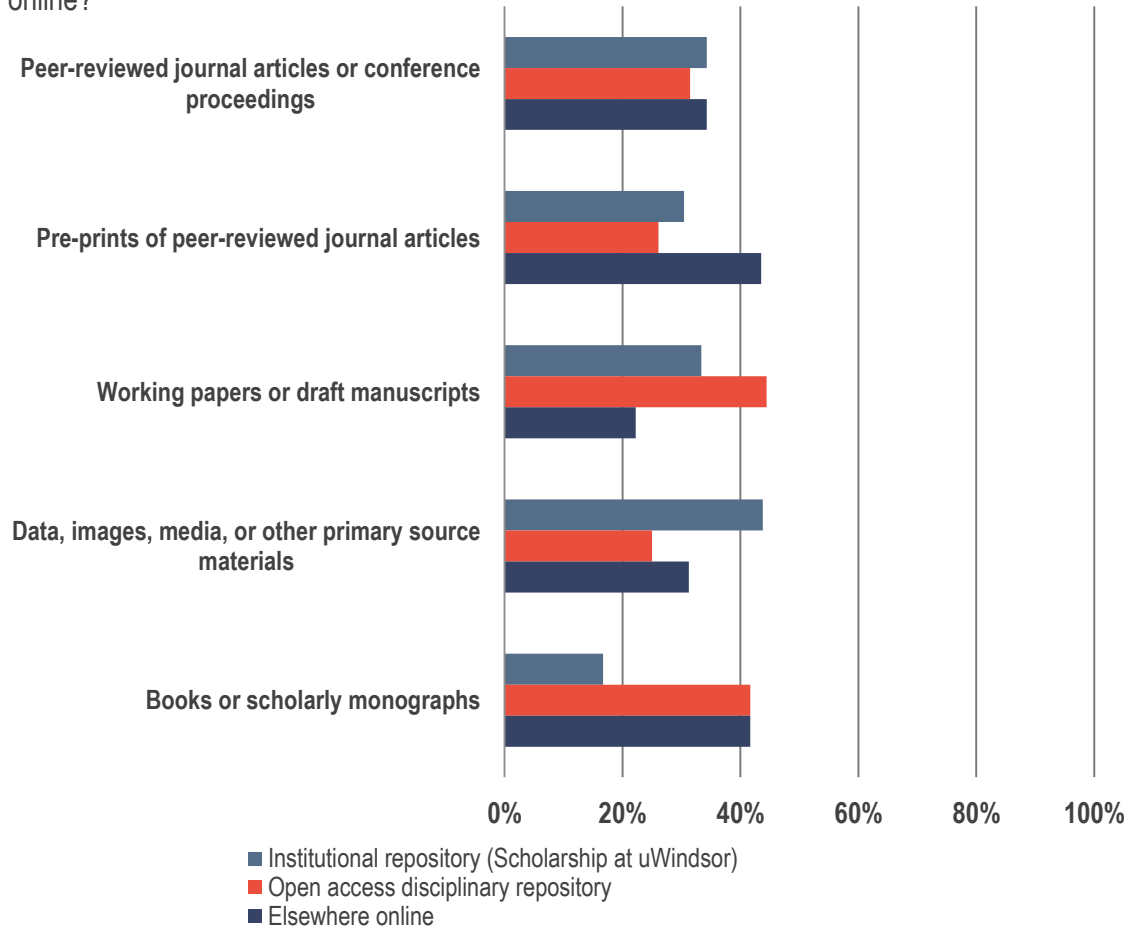


*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely important” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

The uWindsor survey included additional questions that allow for a further investigation of faculty members’ practices and attitudes regarding publishing channels and open access. Faculty members at uWindsor indicate a clear preference for publishing their data or other primary source materials via the Scholarship at uWindsor institutional repository. Faculty members prefer to publish working papers or draft manuscripts in open access disciplinary repositories, and prefer to publish pre-prints of articles elsewhere online such as their personal webpage. In addition, uWindsor faculty members are equally comfortable depositing their peer-reviewed article journals or conference proceedings in any of the three online channels, including the institutional repository. However, faculty members are generally much less comfortable depositing books or scholarly monographs in the uWindsor repository compared with other more explicitly open access online channels.

Table 7

Is your scholarly research hosted online at your institutional repository (Scholarship at uWindsor), an open access disciplinary repository (such as PubMed, SSRN, etc.), or is your scholarly research freely available elsewhere online?



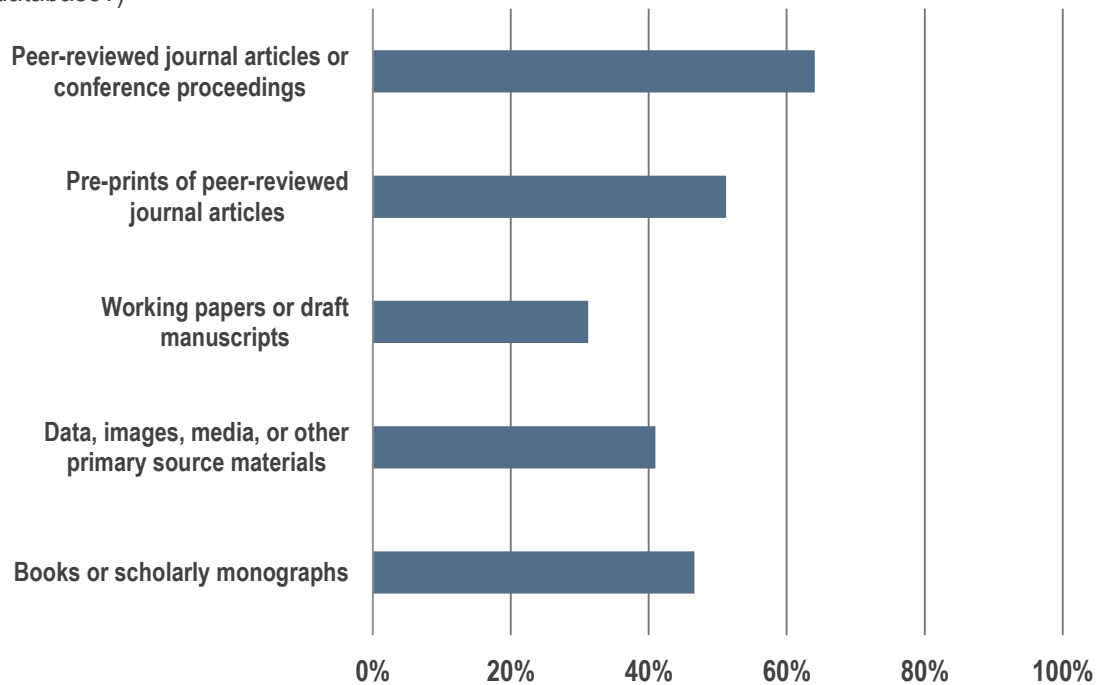
*Percent of respondents selecting each item

When asked to what extent they would support an uWindsor policy “requiring” that their scholarly work be made freely available online, a majority of faculty members reported that they would support such a policy as applied to peer-reviewed journal articles or conference proceedings. Not surprisingly, faculty members are more likely to oppose such a policy if working papers or manuscript drafts would be included in the requirement. Interestingly, faculty members are much less likely to support an open access publishing requirement for their data or primary source research materials. This may reflect disciplinary differences for faculty members’ in social science, science, medical, or veterinary fields regarding restrictions such as those related to confidentiality and anonymity of human research subject, or this may indicate concerns related to the proprietary nature of primary source research data. However, these findings could also highlight an opportunity for the library to promote the open access

publishing of data and primary source materials as a vital component of the publication of corresponding research outputs.

Table 8

To what extent do you support or oppose your institution or university system requiring that each of the following types of scholarly research outputs be made freely available online (i.e. via an open access repository or database?)*

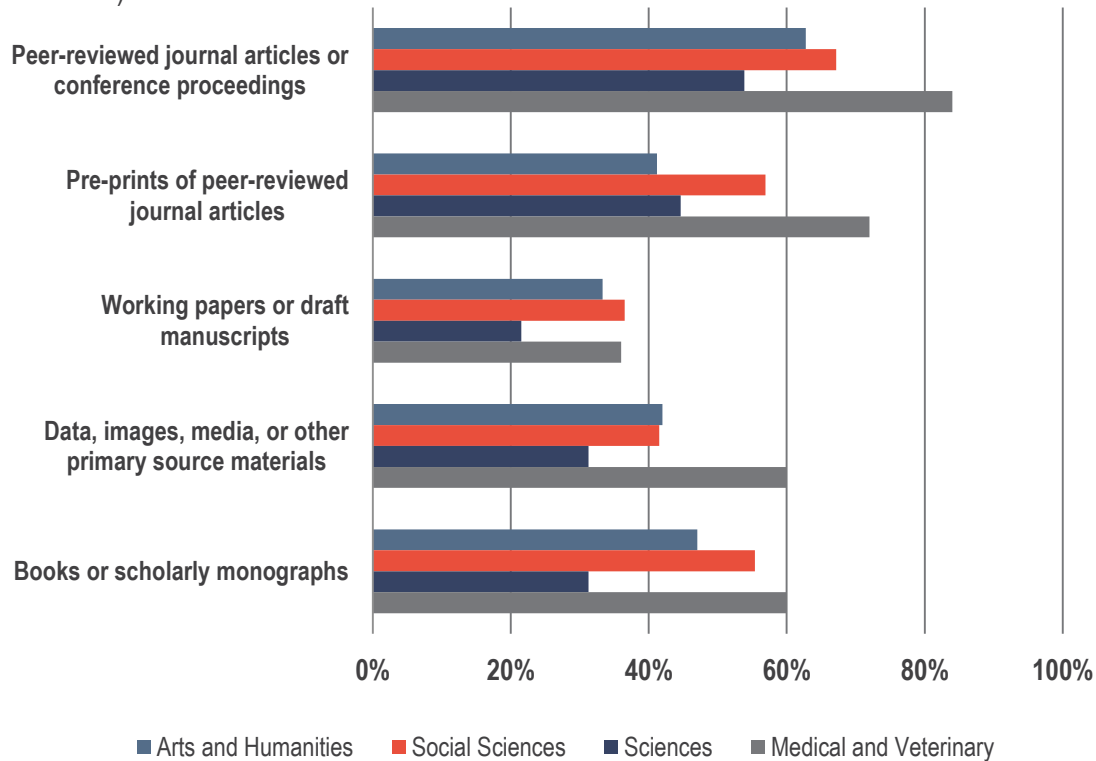


*Percent of respondents indicating they “strongly support” the statement (5-6 on a 6-point scale)

Indeed, as Table 8 shows, disciplinary differences account for faculty members’ support or opposition to an institutionally mandated open access policy. The disciplinary findings are somewhat counterintuitive given current larger scale trends. In particular, it is surprising that a much smaller share of scientists support a mandated open access policy for all types of scholarly outputs compared with faculty members in other disciplines including arts and humanities. On the one hand, this finding could indicate that scientists do not view a formal requirement as necessary since open access publishing is already the norm among science faculty members. On the other hand, it could indicate that uWindsor scientists are less supportive of institutional interventions regarding scholarly communications. It is also noteworthy that large shares of arts, humanities, and social science faculty members support a policy that would require books and scholarly monographs to be made available via an open access channel.

Table 9

To what extent do you support or oppose your institution or university system requiring that each of the following types of scholarly research outputs be made freely available online (i.e. via an open access repository or database?)*



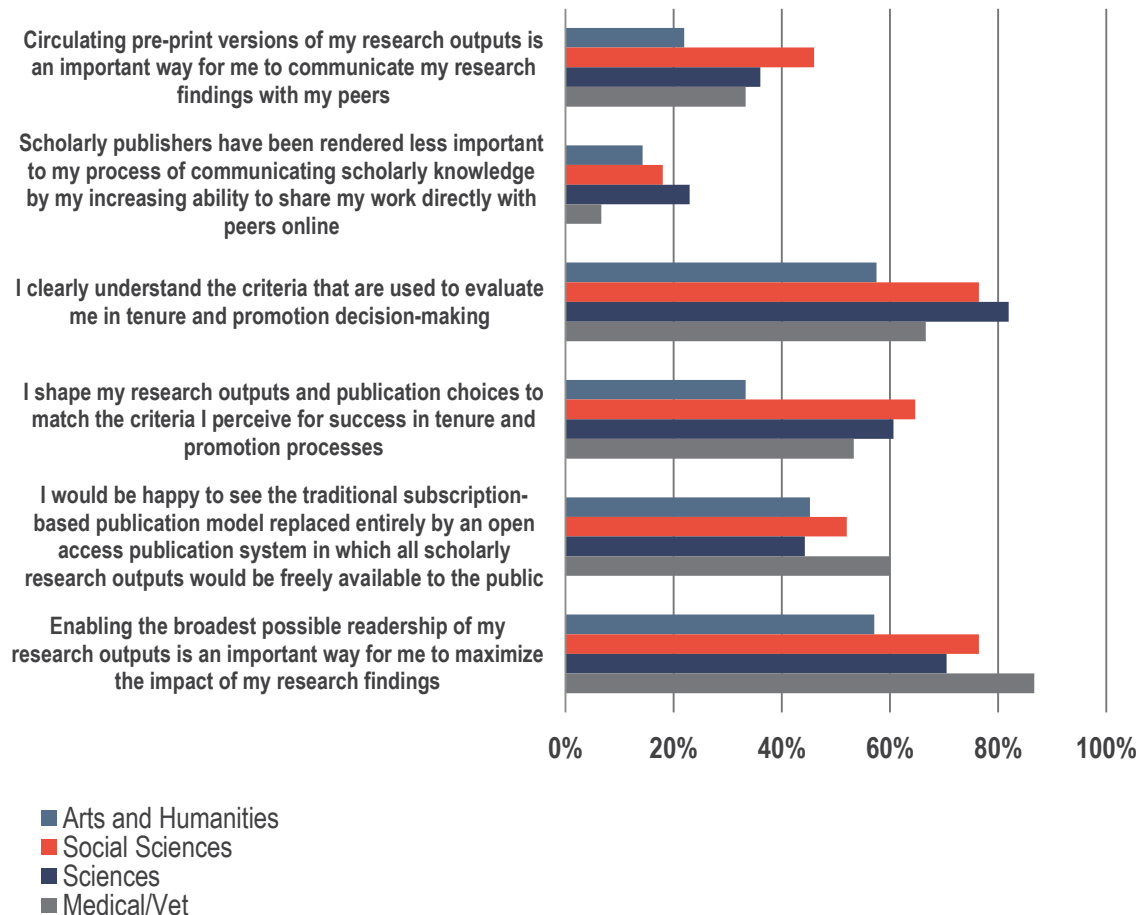
*Percent of respondents indicating they “strongly support” the statement (5-6 on a 6-point scale)

These findings are also especially puzzling given faculty members’ general attitudes regarding open access publishing. A majority of uWindsor faculty members believe, across all disciplines, that it is important to enable “the broadest possible readership” of their scholarly work in order to “maximize the impact” of their findings. In addition, about half of faculty members across all disciplines agree with the statement that they “would be happy to see the traditional subscription-based publication model replaced entirely by an open access publication system in which all scholarly research outputs would be freely available to the public.” It appears as though faculty members at uWindsor are eager to express their support for open access in general, perhaps from their perspective as consumers of information, but are not as overly enthusiastic about the prospect of disseminating all of their own research outputs via open access channels. This indicates that faculty members are highly interested in innovative and open mechanisms for scholarly communications, and that the concept of a shift to open access is well socialized among faculty members at a high level, but faculty members remain traditional in their practices and attitudes related to their own research outputs. An encouraging finding from this set of questions is that arts and humanities faculty members seem nearly as eager and aware about open access as their colleagues in the

sciences, social sciences, and professional disciplines.

Table 10

Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement describes your point of view:



*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint “extremely well” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

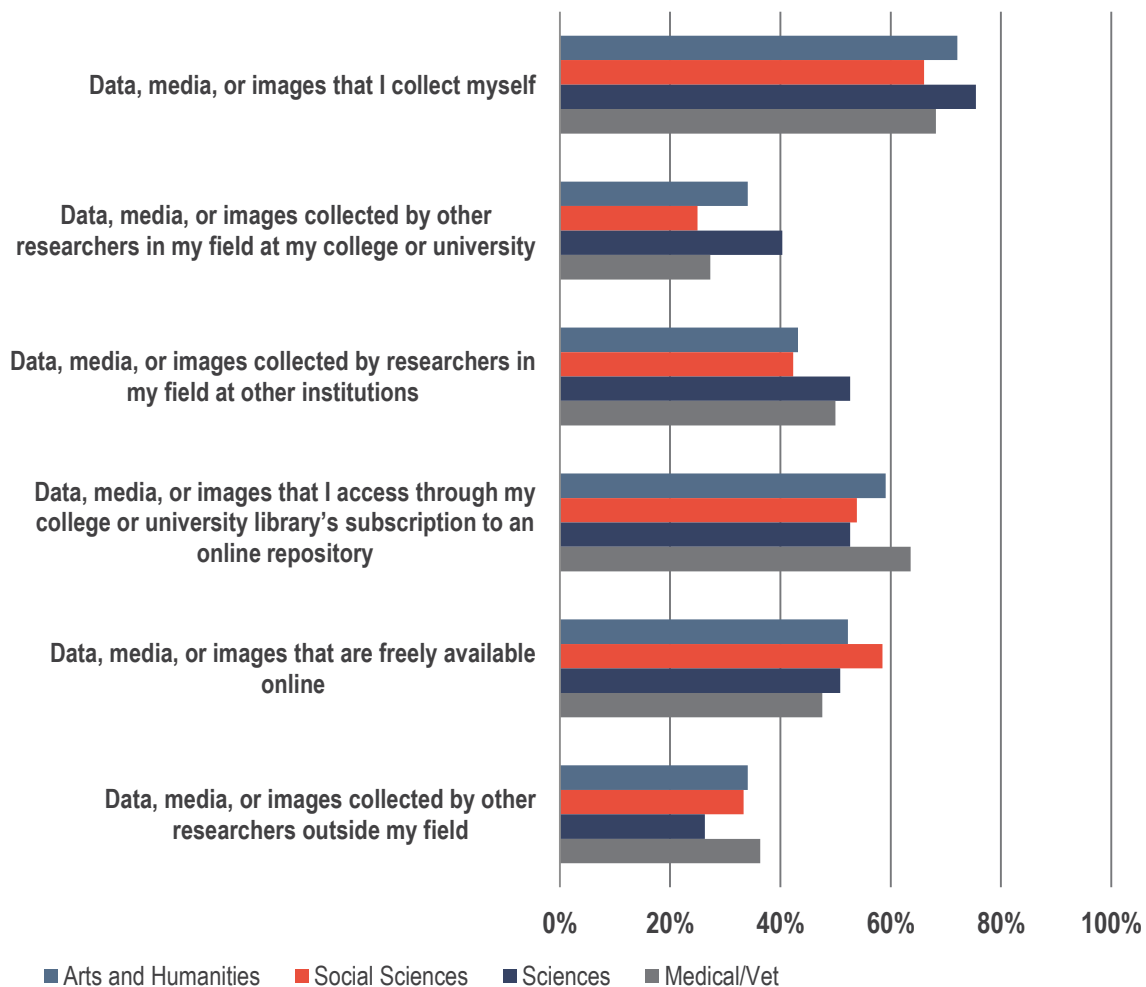
The general level of support and interest in open access, as expressed by uWindsor faculty members across disciplines, indicates that faculty members may not be aware of associated costs of licensing and supporting the publishing and access of openly available research outputs with regard to the library’s role. If supporting access to or the dissemination of open content and research is not a sustainable model, these findings highlight an opportunity for the library to engage in education and outreach about the costs associated with an open access model.

Supporting Data Curation

Across disciplines, there is a strong self-service culture at uWindsor with regard to the method through which faculty members obtain or collect data for their research. However, it is worth noting that at least half of respondents across all disciplines rate the library’s subscriptions to online repositories as an extremely important source of research data. This indicates that uWindsor faculty members are aware of the role that the library plays in facilitating access to needed research data. Except for social scientists, faculty members across disciplines rate the library’s subscriptions to repositories as a more important source of data than freely available data.

Table 10

How important to your research are the following types of data?



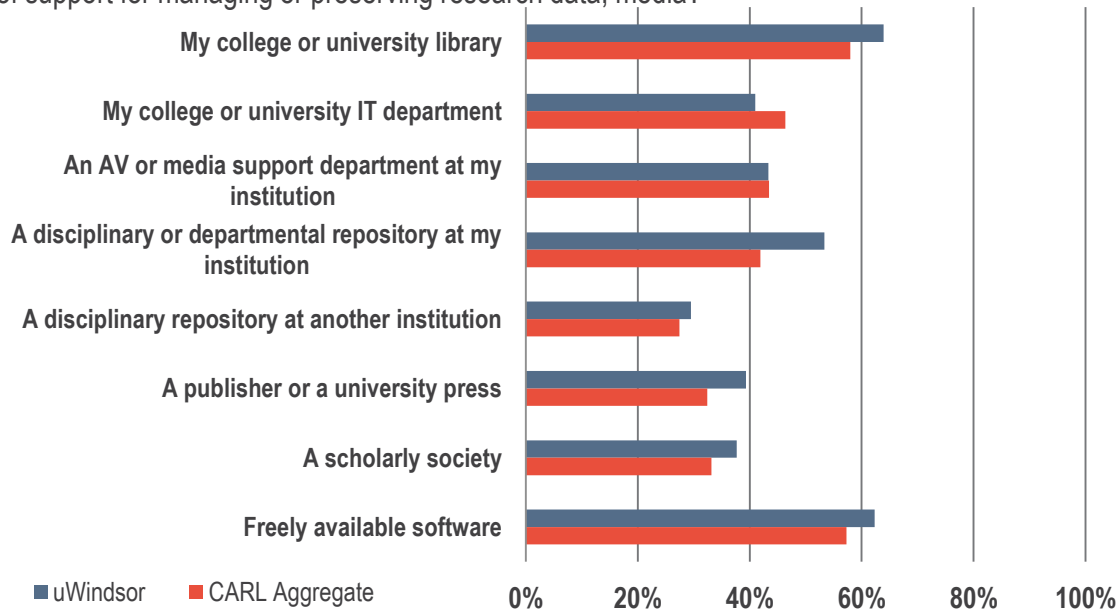
*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely important” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Consistent with the findings regarding faculty members’ use of the library to access datasets for their research, faculty members at uWindsor are more likely than their peers

at other CARL institutions to view the library as a valuable or potentially valuable source of support for managing or preserving research data. In addition, uWindsor faculty members are also more likely to view their institutional repository as a valuable resource for data management. This clearly demonstrates that faculty members value or would value the library's services regarding data management and preservation, although differences at the disciplinary level again highlight a growth opportunity.

Table 11

How valuable do you or would you find each of the following possible sources of support for managing or preserving research data, media?*



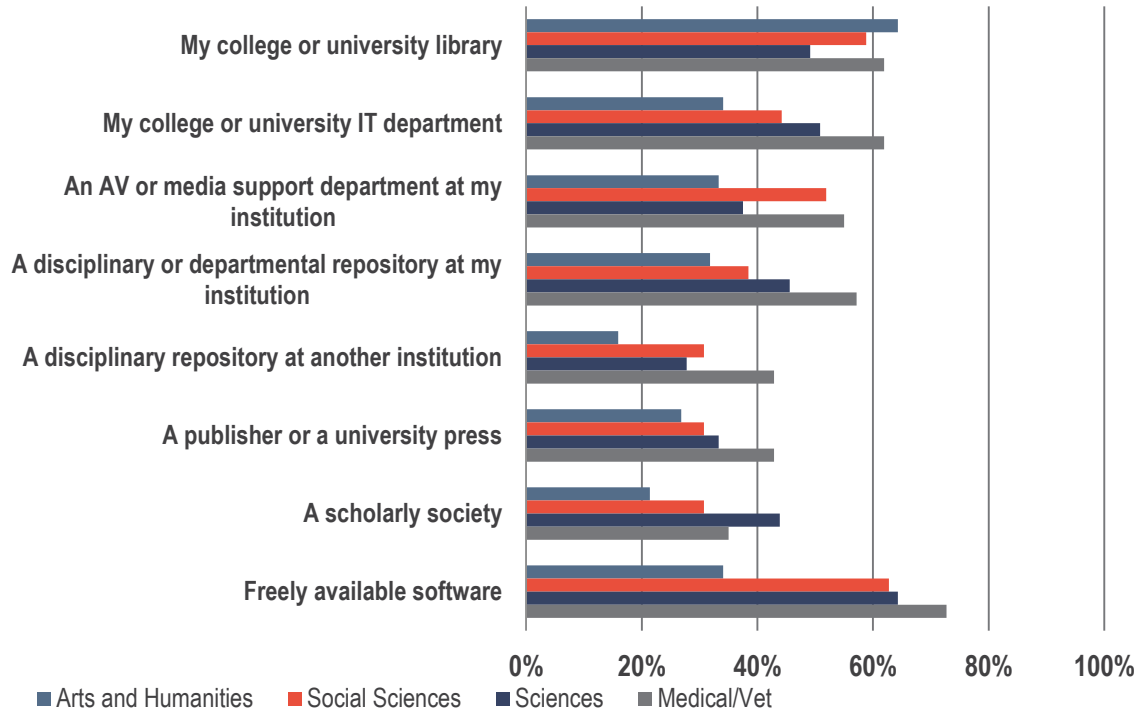
*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely valuable” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Not surprisingly, a larger share of arts and humanities faculty members view the library as a valuable source of support for services related to the management and preservation or data compared with faculty members in other disciplines. Interestingly, social scientists and arts and humanities faculty members are less likely to view the institutional repository as a valuable source of support for data curation, compared with faculty members in other disciplines. Scientists are more likely to view the campus IT department, scholarly societies, and the institutional repository as valuable or potentially valuable sources of support for data-related services. Scientists at uWindsor are much less likely to place value in the library for supporting research activities involving data. This highlights a growth area for the library to enhance strategic communications or

targeted outreach to faculty members in science disciplines specifically.

Table 12

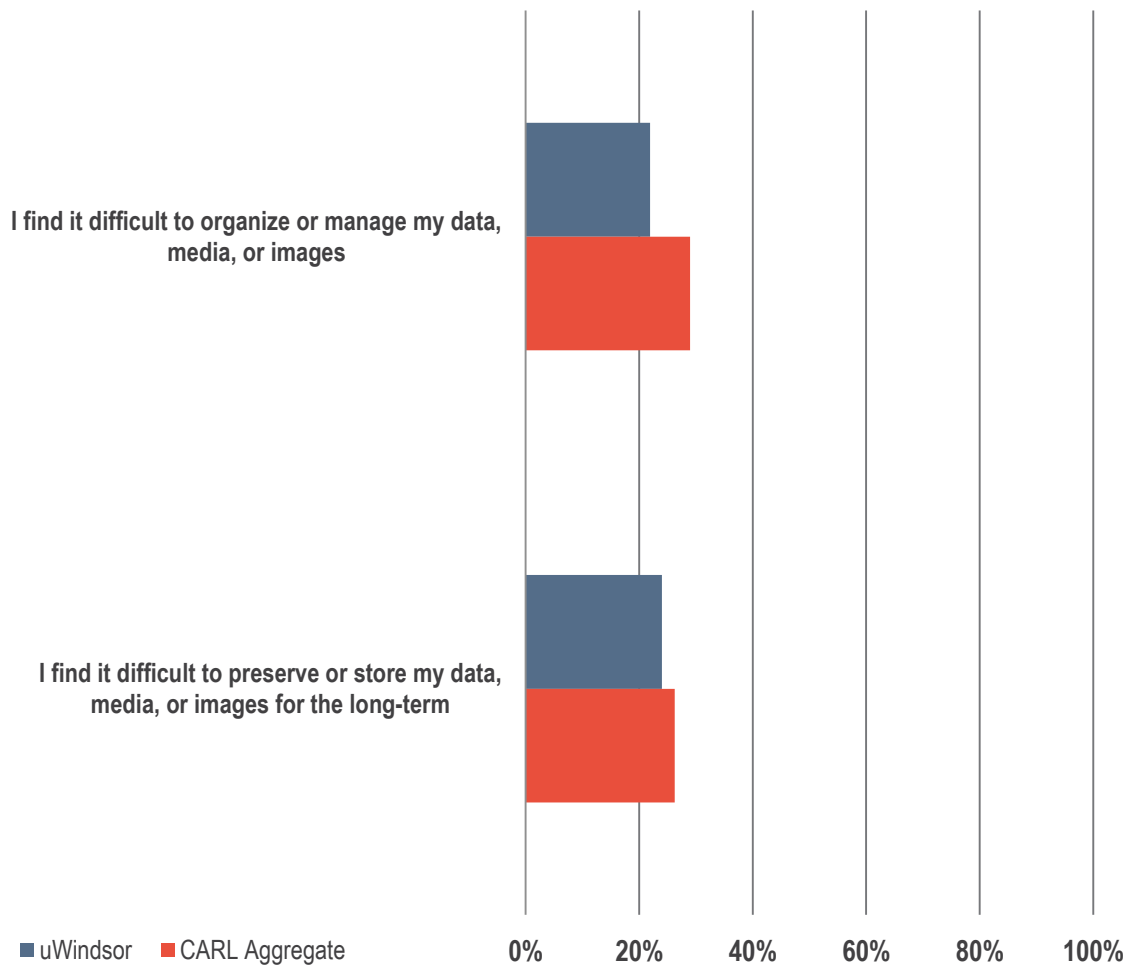
Value of each of the following possible sources of support for managing or preserving research data



*Percent of respondents rating each item as “extremely valuable” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

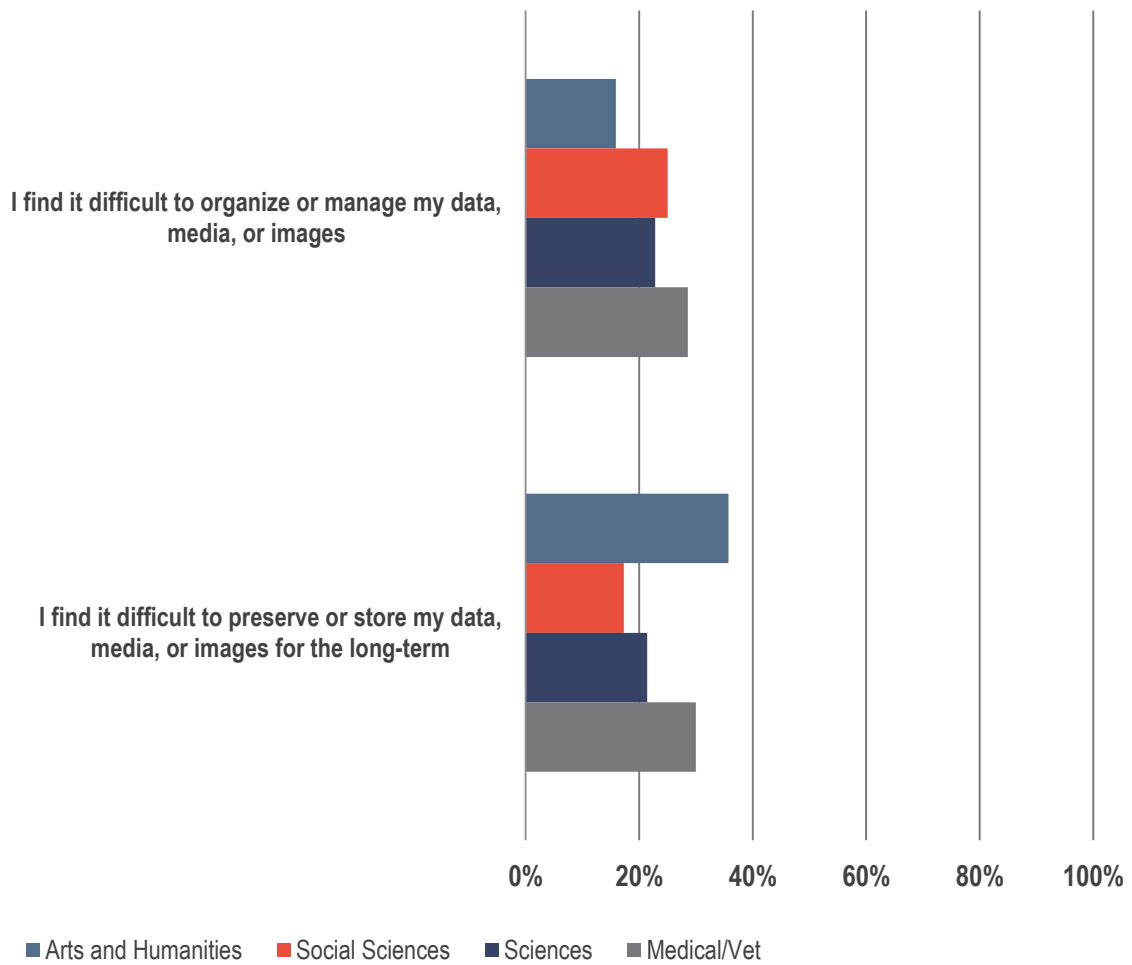
A smaller share of faculty members at uWindsor find it difficult to manage and preserve their research data when compared with their peers at other CARL institutions. As Table 14 shows, however, a smaller share of arts and humanities faculty members find it difficult to manage or organize their data compared with faculty members in other disciplines, but a larger share of arts and humanities faculty members are experiencing difficulties with the preservation and long-term storage of their research data when compared with faculty members in other disciplines at uWindsor. Arts and humanities faculty members may benefit from workshops or educational outreach regarding the preservation of their research data.

Table 13
Data preservation and management behaviors



*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint "extremely well" (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Table 14
Data preservation and management behaviors



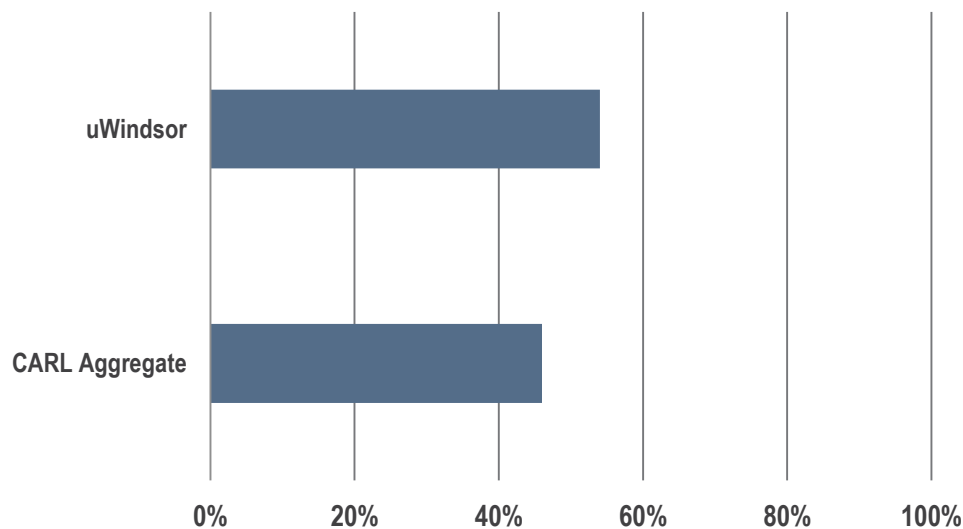
*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint “extremely well” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Information Literacy and Research Skills

In addition to questions related to the research workflow, the CARL survey also included questions to gauge faculty members' perceptions of the role of the library in developing students' research skills and information literacy. In general, a much larger share of faculty members at uWindsor value the library's role in undergraduate instruction when compared to faculty members at other CARL institutions. As Table 15 indicates, faculty members at uWindsor generally believe that librarians provide significant help in supporting undergraduates' learning success.

Table 15

Indicate the extent to which undergraduate students' interaction with librarians at your college or university library helps them to succeed in your courses



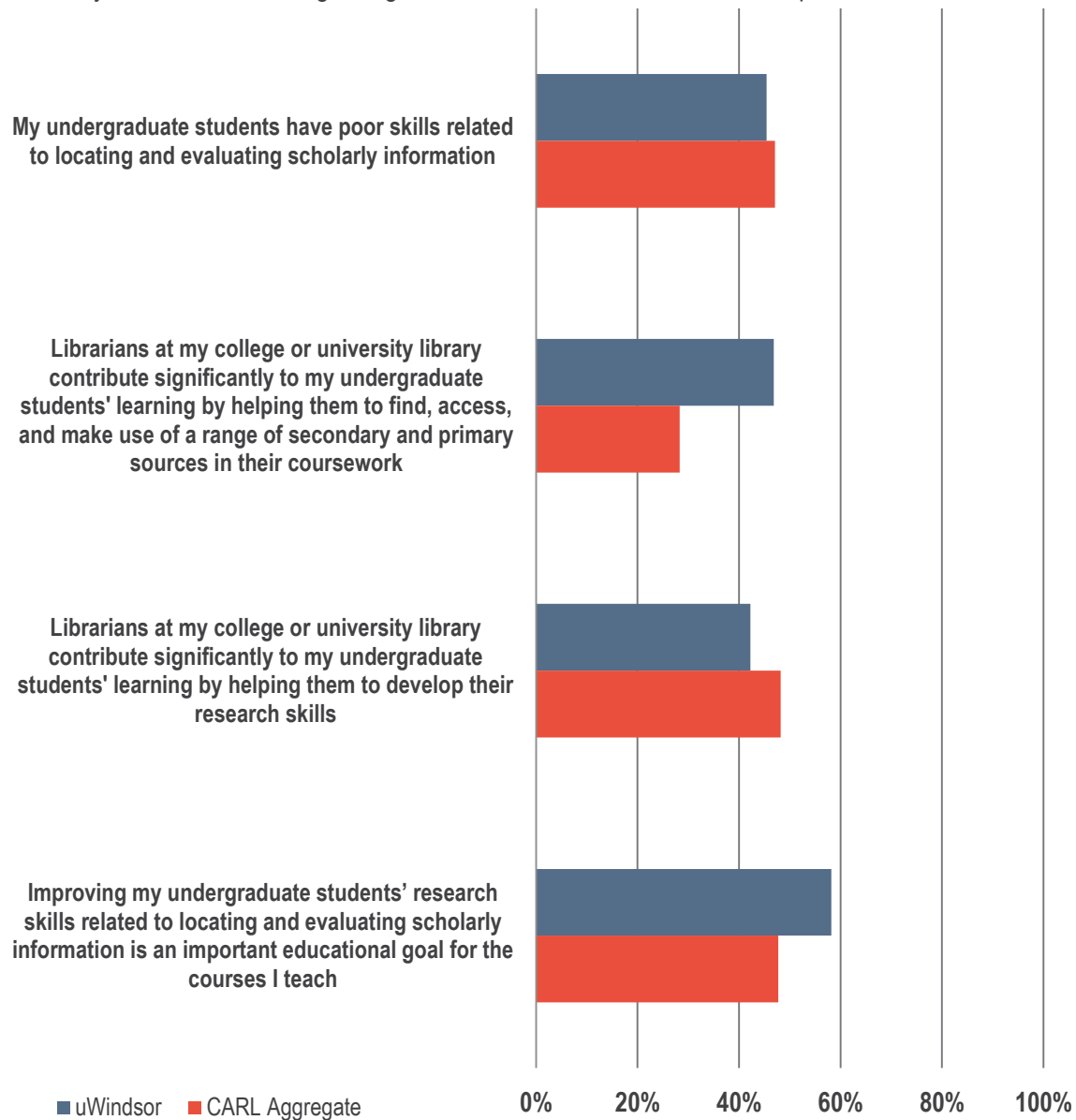
*Percent of respondents indicating the interaction “Helps significantly” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Faculty members at uWindsor are also slightly less likely to believe that their students have “poor” research skills when compared to faculty members at other CARL institutions, and this may in part be attributed to faculty members' confidence in librarian-provided student support services. A much larger share of faculty members at uWindsor believe that librarians contribute significantly in teaching or improving students' information literacy skills when compared with faculty members at other CARL institutions. In general, uWindsor faculty members recognize that librarians are a critical source of support for helping students locate and access needed primary and secondary materials for their courses or research projects. This is a particularly important finding given the context that a larger share of uWindsor faculty members aim to improve their students' information literacy skills compared to faculty members at other CARL

institutions. It is worth noting, however, that uWindsor faculty members are less likely than their peers at other CARL institutions to recognize the role of librarians in developing students' research skills.

Table 16

Faculty members' views regarding their students' research skills development



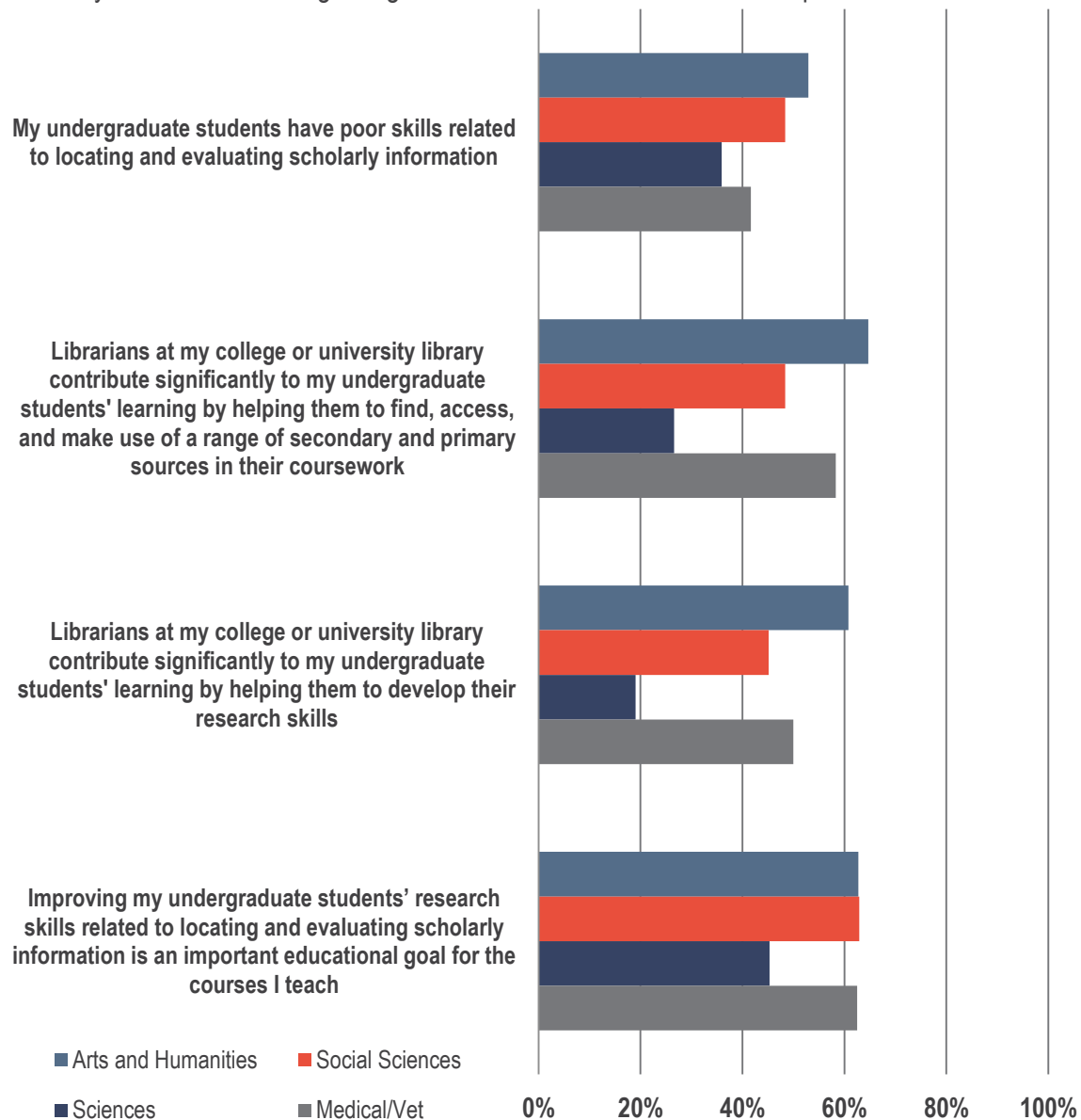
*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint "extremely well" (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

However, this divergence may be explained by differences at the disciplinary level. In particular, scientists at uWindsor are much less likely than their colleagues in other disciplines to value or recognize the role of librarian-provided student support or instructional services. In addition, a much greater share of arts and humanities faculty

members value the library’s role in teaching information literacy and research skills to students. Interestingly, a smaller share of scientists view their students’ research skills as “poor” when compared with faculty members in other disciplines. This could indicate that scientists’ expectations regarding their students’ research skills and information literacy are aligned with the level of their students’ skills. However, this could also indicate that awareness among scientists regarding information literacy standards is not widely understood or that science faculty members do not fully understand the library-provided services in these areas. A further investigation of scientists’ understanding of information literacy requirements may be warranted.

Table 17

Faculty members' views regarding their students' research skills development



*Percent of respondents rating each item as representing their viewpoint “extremely well” (8-10 on a 10-point scale)

Concluding Remarks

The uWindsor library implementation of the Canadian version of the Ithaka S+R Faculty Survey suggests several key growth opportunities:

- A notable pattern to emerge from the findings is the importance of disciplines in shaping many aspects of faculty members' perceptions regarding the roles of the library and the value of library-provided services and content. Specifically, science faculty members at uWindsor appear to be fully aware of the library's role in facilitating access to needed research resources via collections-related expenditures. However, science faculty members consistently indicate that they do not view the library as a major contributor to the success of their students in acquiring research and information literacy skills. These findings highlight a specific opportunity for the library to focus on enhancing targeted outreach and strategic communication among science faculty members at uWindsor regarding library-provided research and instructional support services.
- Arts and humanities faculty members at uWindsor find it less difficult to manage or organize their data compared with faculty members in other disciplines, however, a larger share of arts and humanities faculty members are experiencing difficulties with the preservation and long-term storage of their research data when compared with faculty members in other disciplines at uWindsor. Arts and humanities faculty members may benefit from workshops or educational outreach regarding the preservation of their research data.
- In general, faculty members have mixed opinions about the role of the library and the institution in facilitating open access publishing of their scholarly outputs, but from a consumer perspective, faculty members support the availability of open access content. If supporting access to or the dissemination of open content and research is not a sustainable model for the library and/or the institution, these findings highlight an opportunity for the library to engage in education and outreach about the costs associated with an open access model.

Overall, it is clear that the uWindsor library's content-provision role, including discovery and access in addition to licensing and purchasing, is essential for faculty members across all disciplines in terms of their research productivity.