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7 Tips for an Efficient Faculty Bibliography: How to Tackle Faculty Bibliography Challenges with (Relative) Ease

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Tips for an Efficient Faculty Bibliography



How to tackle faculty bibliography challenges with (relative) ease

By Marcia L. Dority Baker and Stefanie S. Pearlman

There are many reasons to compile a faculty bibliography: recording faculty accomplishments, preserving information for future generations, and supporting your institution's external affairs office, to name a few. Also, it is a potential publication for librarians at a tenure-granting institution. So, why did we decide to create a faculty bibliography? It was a combination of past inquiries from our patrons and the need to publish. Prior to this bibliography, no such compilation of our faculty's work existed. Although our library hosts a display of *current* faculty scholarship at the start of each fall semester to promote recent faculty publications, we did not have a print or electronic compilation that demonstrated the true depth of our faculty's research, both past and present. We decided to remedy that with our bibliography.

Along the way, this project met with several challenges that ate up more of our time and patience than we thought possible. Although these hurdles made completing the project more rewarding, we don't wish them on anyone. If you have had enough publication challenges in your life and would prefer a little smooth sailing for the next one, here are seven tips to remember when creating a faculty bibliography for your institution.



Plan for it to take A LOT longer than you expect.

Our bibliography project began in May 2012. We thought it would be done by the end of the year. Needless to say, this project took substantially longer than expected, and it was submitted to our publisher in December 2013 for publication in March 2014. Why the delay? Compiling a list of faculty, deciding upon a methodology, and then integrating all of the records takes time, especially when you have other job responsibilities.

Members of your faculty will likely take an interest in this project since it is about them. You may want to add several months to the estimated completion date so you won't feel like you're letting the community down by not completing the project within a strict timeframe.



Prepare to dig through old materials.

We started the compilation by creating a list of all faculty members at the University of Nebraska College of Law, beginning in 1892 (when the College of Law was established) and through the 2013 academic year. We rolled up our sleeves, visited the University of Nebraska archives, and used official university bulletins and law college handbooks to compile our list of College of Law faculty.

TIP
3**Work with someone.**

Working as a team can be extraordinarily useful for several reasons. Obviously, it helps with the workload. In addition, it is very helpful to have a second brain to help sort things out. Which resources should we include? Should we translate the titles of foreign works into English or leave them in the original language? Most importantly, it helps to have a sympathetic ear to listen when you rant about project roadblocks; banging your head against the wall alone is frustrating. For example: “Why on Earth would a library catalog a newspaper article stapled to a folder as a book? Do you know how many of these records I had to double-check and change after spending precious time formatting them?” Once you decide to collaborate, divide the project tasks, create a timeline, and develop a method for sharing the working document.

TIP
4**Discuss parameters BEFORE starting the project.**

Basic facts, such as the project goal (the big *why*), must be clearly defined. If they are not, the project may never end or could become too bloated with information to be useful. Our list of faculty included approximately 229 faculty members, 185 adjuncts, and 24 visiting professors. We decided to only include publications from our resident faculty and those visiting faculty members who taught at Nebraska for three years or more. Deciding which databases, websites, search engines, and books to use to gather information for the bibliographic entries before starting the actual process of finding the data is also necessary. We collected metadata for books, book chapters, articles, and other publications using three resources: HeinOnline, WorldCat, and AALL's *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals*. We also reviewed CVs of current faculty.

Choosing or creating a citation format up front helps maintain consistent records from the beginning, saving time editing at the end of the project. Librarians are time-crunched. A quality bibliography takes time, effort, and labor to complete; setting parameters in advance keeps you sane during the long hours.

TIP
5**Don't reinvent the wheel.**

Don't forget to let fellow librarians, faculty, and staff know about the project. There will be people in your college or university who are familiar with resources or institutional history and who will be able to help complete the project efficiently. We received two such pieces of assistance, one at the beginning of the project and the other when we were just about finished. Try to do this early in the process to take full advantage of their knowledge and information.

TIP
6**Keep track of the rarities.**

You will find unique works when compiling the faculty bibliography. They may not fit into the scope of your project, but you should keep track of them. Use these gems on your library or college Twitter feed or as fun facts in an alumni bulletin. Perhaps something like: “Did you know that our faculty member composed the score to the 1894 production of ‘The Hon. Julius Caesar: An Operatic-Farce-Burlesque-Extravaganza-Comedietta?’” True fact.

You can also use rarities for future research projects. There simply must be a fascinating story behind: “This Pamphlet is True!! It is a History of the Manner in Which Nebraska Became a State, Elected its State Officers and its First U.S. Senators, and Entered the American Union. It is Authenticated by Twenty-One Members of the First State Legislature, Who Signed it at the Session of 1866, July. It was Not Written by C.H. Gere, and it is Entirely Dissimilar from His Narrative of the Events Herein Recorded.” It is another interesting publication opportunity just waiting for attention.

TIP
7**Find the appropriate place to publish your final project . . . and then relax.**

We discussed several options for our faculty bibliography, including publishing it as an e-book, publishing it electronically in the UNL Digital Commons, or hosting it on the library's website. Serendipitously, our library director was searching for an initial publication for the forthcoming Schmid Law Library publication series with the University of Nebraska Press. Our faculty bibliography is the first title in this new venture; it is also available from the UNL Digital Commons at digitalcommons.unl.edu/lawlibrary/14.

Our work on this faculty bibliography was time-consuming but also very rewarding. We hope these tips help you create your college or university's piece of history a bit more efficiently. ■

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