

SURVEY RESULTS

University of Virginia Faculty Survey 2019 Analytical Memo

August 14, 2020



ITHAKA S+R

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Overview

The following report provides an analytical narrative of the results of the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey at University of Virginia. The core survey instrument covers a wide range of scholarly research and teaching-related topics overlapping with the Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey 2018.¹ In addition, three thematic modules were selected by UVA for inclusion in their local implementation of the survey: Scholarly Communication; Material Types and Formats; and Discovery & Access.²

The core questionnaire includes topics on discovery and access practices, research and dissemination practices, teaching practices and student learning perceptions, and perceptions of the role of the library. The Scholarly Communication module covers valued publishing services, including issues of copyright and article deposit. The Materials Types and Formats module explores the role and value of various types of materials for research and teaching, including formal publications and primary source materials, and the role of print and digital versions of scholarly journals and monographs. Lastly, the Discovery & Access module takes stock of how faculty members search for known items and the value of mechanisms for gaining access to research literature.

During fall 2019, 2,999 UVA faculty received an email invitation to participate in the survey. Of those that started the survey, 335³ faculty members completed the survey for an overall response rate of about 11 percent.⁴ The following analysis explores findings by discipline and years at UVA.⁵

Comparisons to results within UVA's Carnegie Classification from the U.S. Faculty Survey 2018 are also examined (Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity, referred to as "peer institutions" in the report). Faculty included within the peer institutions comparison group are from a randomized sample obtained from a third party provider. There were a total of 3,406 respondents at institutions within the

¹ Full report of findings: Melissa Blankstein and Christine Wolff-Eisenberg, "Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey 2018," *Ithaka S+R*, 12 April 2019, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.311199>.

² These additional modules were not fielded nationally and therefore there are no comparison data available from peer institutions.

³ Margin of error is 5 percent for $n = 335$ at the 95 percent confidence level.

⁴ Nursing faculty were excluded from analysis when comparing to peer institutions to correspond with the U.S. Faculty Survey 2018.

⁵ The disciplinary comparisons throughout this memo correspond to the U.S. Faculty Survey 2018 mapping.

Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity Carnegie Classification, representing 1,253 institutions across the United States.

The sample of respondents for the stratifications detailed above breaks down in the following manner:

UVA Discipline⁶

- Humanities:⁷ 109
- Social Sciences:⁸ 71
- Sciences:⁹ 144

Years at UVA

- 0-10 years: 135
- 11-15 years: 84
- 21+ years: 105

⁶ Does not sum to the total number of respondents due to excluding respondents from the Nursing discipline within these categories.

⁷ Including Arts & Sciences: Arts and Humanities; Arts & Sciences: Humanities; Law; and Papers (Washington, Madison, etc.).

⁸ Including: Arts & Sciences: Social Sciences; Darden (Business); Education; Commerce; Batten (Public Policy); Miller Center (presidential scholarship, public policy, political history); Arts & Sciences: Undergraduate College Ops; and Provost.

⁹ Including Arts & Sciences: Sciences; Engineering; Medicine; and Architecture.

Key Insights

The UVA Local Faculty Survey provides evidence-based strategic insights into the library's role at UVA by assessing the attitudes and practices of faculty members. It is important to note, however, that the following findings represent perspectives and behaviors before the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. in early 2020. Therefore, as these data were collected in late 2019, the following findings can be used to represent a baseline for UVA faculty perspectives and practices before the pivot to remote research and teaching. The results from the survey reveal the following strategically relevant high-level findings:

- UVA faculty members generally have a more favorable view of the library than faculty at peer institutions. Humanists especially value many of the roles and support provided by the library.
- When discovering new materials for research and teaching, UVA faculty members more often use specific scholarly databases than Google Scholar. Faculty at peer institutions use the two starting points at the same rate.
- Electronic versions of scholarly monographs are just as important to research and teaching practices as print versions. However, electronic versions of primary sources are considered relatively more important than physical collections at UVA and at other institutions.
- UVA faculty are primarily autonomous when organizing, managing, and preserving their data, though some – particularly mid-career faculty as well as scientists— have relative difficulty with these practices.
- When deciding in which journals to publish, the most desirable characteristics correspond to prestige and high readership and remain tied to traditional incentives of scholarly publishing for tenure and promotion.
- Faculty are more likely to see the value in journals permitting them to publish at no cost versus journals permitting others to read at no cost. However, well over half of UVA faculty support the university requiring peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings to be made freely available online.

- UVA faculty are somewhat less interested in using and adopting open educational resources (OER) compared to faculty at peer institutions—though a greater share of newer faculty to UVA are interested in using and creating OER than their colleagues who have been with the university longer.
- Most faculty have not used learning analytics tools, and there are high levels of skepticism surrounding their use to improve teaching and intervene with struggling students.

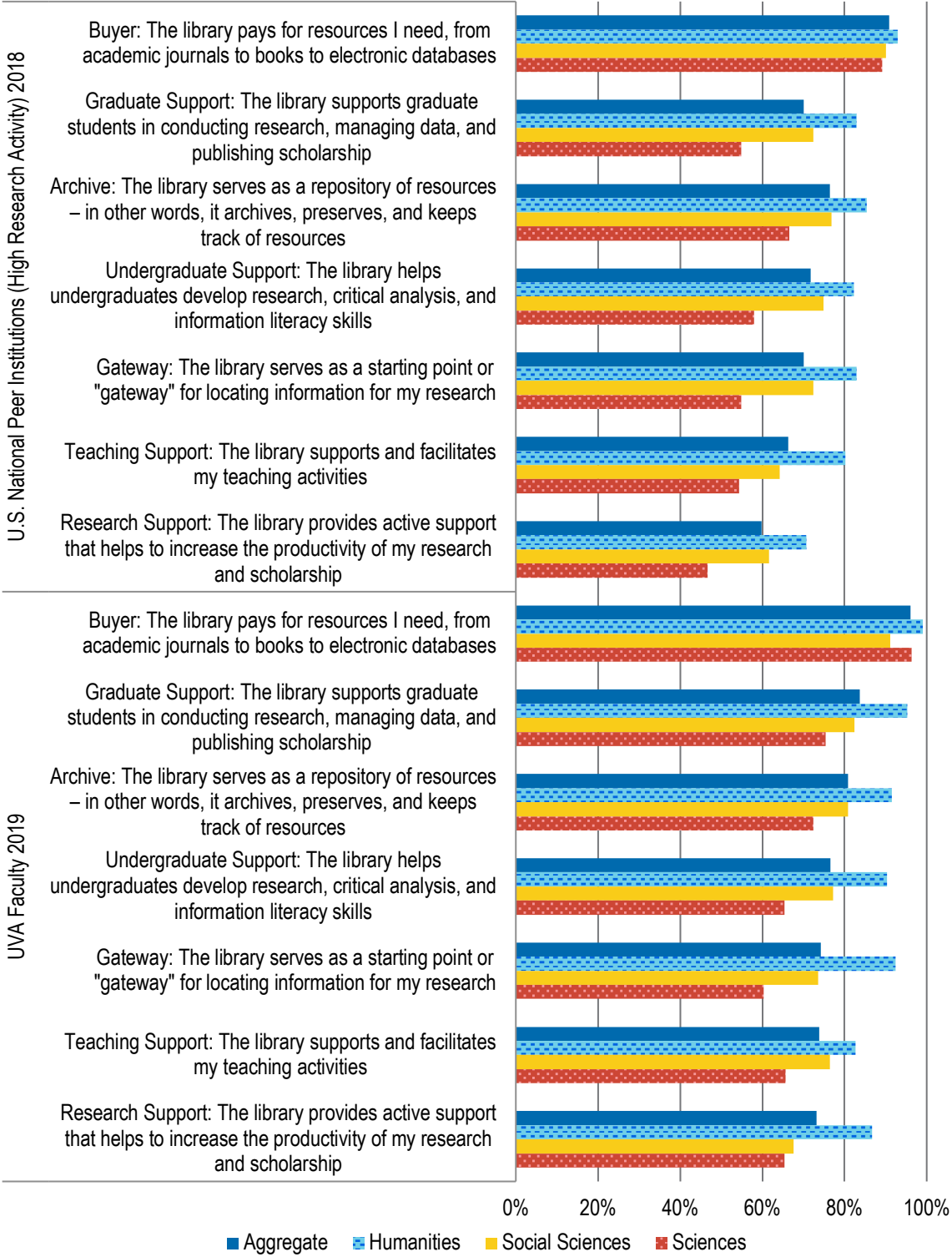
Role of the Library

UVA faculty generally have a more favorable view of the library and its role in supporting students, teaching, and research than do faculty at peer institutions (see Figure 1). UVA faculty members rate the library's role in buying needed materials as most important, followed by the library's support of graduate students, and as a repository of resources. A greater share of UVA humanists – as is also the case at peer institutions – rate each role of the library as relatively more important than their colleagues in other disciplines. UVA humanists also rate each role of the library substantially more important than humanists at peer institutions.

UVA faculty also rate the library's support of graduate students as notably more important than those at peer institutions—84 percent of UVA faculty rate the library's support of graduate students in conducting research, managing data, and publishing scholarship as important compared to 70 percent of faculty at peer institutions. Although UVA humanists rate the library's support of graduate students as relatively more important than their peers in other disciplines, UVA scientists drive this difference with peer institutions. UVA scientists rate the importance of the library's support of graduate students 20-percentage points higher than scientists at peer institutions, while UVA humanists and social scientists rate the library's role in supporting graduate students 12 and 9 percentage points higher respectively (see Figure 1).

About a third or less of UVA faculty are currently provided with assistance from the library, a scholarly society, university press, or other service provider with various scholarly communication services such as assessing impact post-publication or developing a public webpage. However, 42 percent of UVA faculty do or would value support from the library in managing a public webpage. Additionally, 37 percent of UVA faculty would value support assessing impact following publication, followed by a little less than 30 percent who would find help with both understanding and negotiating publication contracts, and determining where to publish to maximize impact to be valuable. Overall, UVA faculty would value support in these areas relatively more so than those at peer institutions.

Figure 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 UVA faculty and U.S. faculty at peer institutions by discipline who rated each as important.*

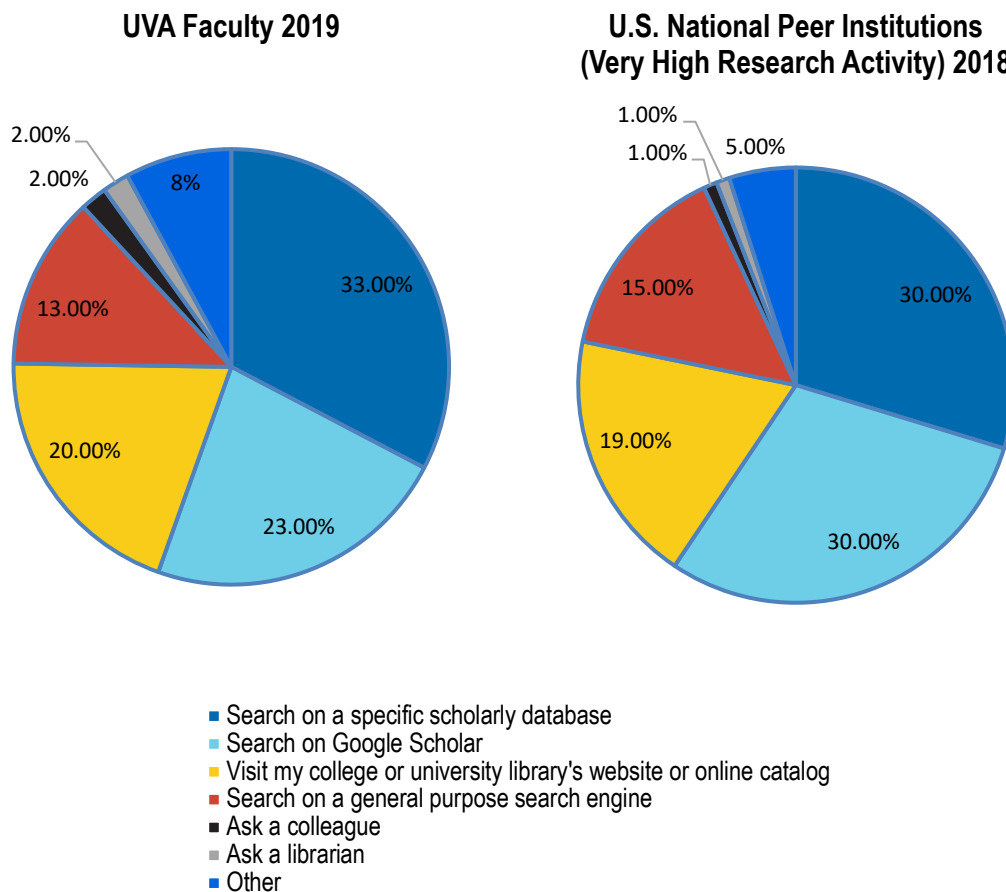


Discovery, Access, & Material Types

Discovery & Access

When discovering new scholarly materials, a third of UVA faculty use a specific scholarly database, followed by Google Scholar and their library's website or online catalog (see Figure 2). Similar shares of UVA faculty use a specific scholarly database compared to faculty at peer institutions, but are less likely to use Google Scholar. This is also particularly driven by UVA faculty in the sciences, as 40 percent of UVA scientists use specific scholarly databases when discovering new scholarly materials compared to 34 percent of U.S. faculty. Additionally, 23 percent of UVA scientists use Google Scholar compared to 35 percent of U.S. faculty in the science disciplines.

Figure 2. When you explore the scholarly literature to find new journal articles and monographs relevant to your research interests, how do you most often begin your process? Select one of the following. *Percent of respondents who selected each item.*

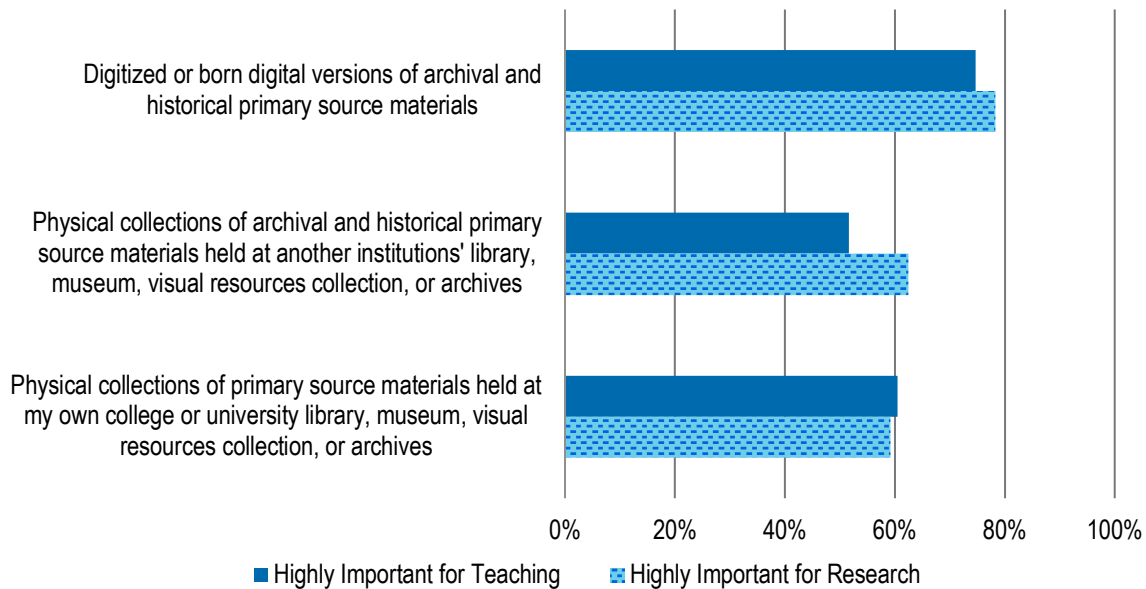


When a particular resource is not in the library's collection, a little over half of faculty agree they can get satisfactory access to materials elsewhere. About 60 percent of UVA faculty often use interlibrary loan (ILL) or document delivery services provided by the library, followed by 56 percent who often search for a freely available version online. Less than 20 percent give up and look for a different accessible resource or purchase the article themselves from a publisher or vendor. UVA humanists more often use ILL services compared to both their colleagues in other disciplines and humanists at peer institutions: about 87 percent of UVA humanists often use ILL services, compared to 71 percent of humanists at peer institutions, 41 percent of UVA scientists, and 52 percent of UVA social scientists.

Material Types & Formats

Electronic versions of scholarly monographs are just as important to faculty as print versions both at UVA and peer institutions. About 57 percent of UVA faculty agree that electronic versions of scholarly monographs play a highly important role in their research and teaching and 54 percent responded similarly about print versions. When asked about preferences for primary sources, both faculty who use them for teaching and research purposes rate digitized and born digital versions as highly important – more important, in fact, than physical collections held at UVA or elsewhere (see Figure 3). While physical collections of primary source materials at UVA are rated similarly in importance for research and teaching purposes, a greater share of faculty who use primary resources in their research rate the physical collections of other institutions as important compared to faculty who use these resources in their teaching.

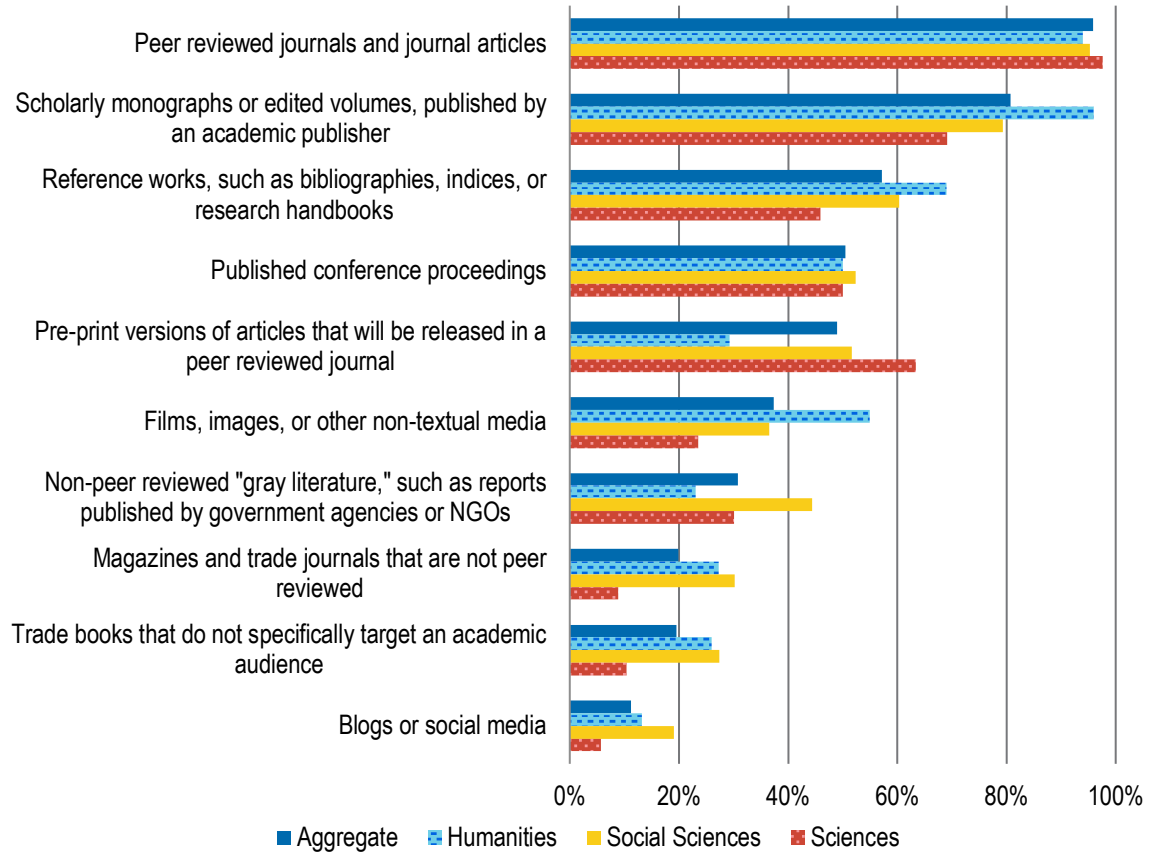
Figure 3. Some scholars use primary source materials in their teaching and research, such as archival materials, historical newspapers, manuscripts or images. How important to your teaching are each of the following types of primary source collections? And, how important to your research is each of the following types of primary source collections? *Percent of respondents who teach undergraduate and graduate students and percent of respondents who conduct scholarly research that rated each as highly important.*



Overall, 92 percent of UVA faculty rate the library's collections or subscriptions highly important, followed by two thirds who find freely available materials online highly important. Less than half of UVA faculty consider their own personal collection or subscriptions, the collections or subscriptions of other institutions, and their academic department as highly important. UVA faculty are aligned with those at peer institutions when rating the importance of different sources of materials used for research and teaching, though UVA faculty rate freely available materials about 10 percentage points lower in importance compared to peer institutions. UVA humanists and social scientists are especially less likely to value freely available materials compared to those in the same disciplines at peer institutions.

Nearly all UVA faculty, regardless of discipline, find peer-reviewed journals and journal articles to be highly important for their research, followed by scholarly monographs and reference works which tend to be more highly valued by humanists (see Figure 4). Social scientists rate pre-print versions of articles as relatively more important than their colleagues, while scientists rate non-peer reviewed "gray literature" as relatively more important.

Figure 4. Scholars draw on a variety of different types of scholarly materials in their research. How important to your research is each of the following types of materials? *Percent of UVA respondents who rated each as highly important.*



Research Practices

Data Management & Preservation

UVA faculty, like their peers at other institutions, often organize and manage their research data on their own, though UVA faculty have more difficulty preserving these data compared to faculty at peer institutions. Eighty-two percent of UVA faculty organize and manage research data on their own computer(s), followed by half who use a cloud storage service (such as Google Drive, Dropbox, Flickr, etc.). Only 2 percent have the library manage and organize their data on their behalf. UVA faculty are more likely to have difficulty with organizing and managing data (30 percent versus 25 percent) and preserving data (35 percent versus 27 percent) compared to peers elsewhere.

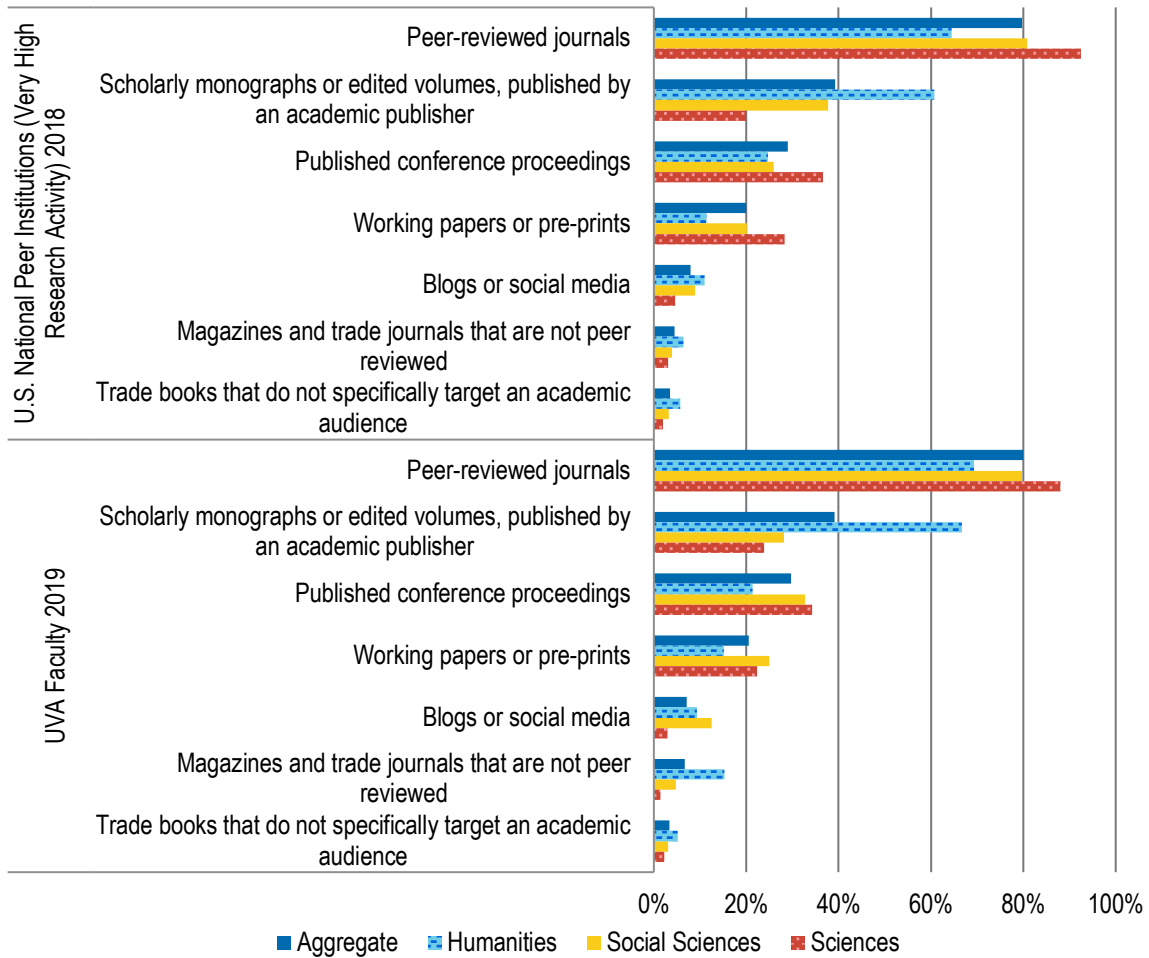
By discipline, UVA scientists report greater difficulty with organizing and managing data, as well as preserving and storing their data in the long-term, both compared to their colleagues in other disciplines at UVA and scientists at peer institutions. About 40 percent of faculty who have been with UVA for 11-15 years agree they have difficulty with organizing and managing data compared to 30 percent of faculty who have been at UVA for 0-10 years, and 25 percent for 21 or more years. Additionally, about 47 percent of faculty who have been with UVA for 11-15 years have difficulty with preserving that data compared to 33 percent of those who have been with UVA for 0-10 years, and 30 percent for 21 or more years. Given that mid-career faculty have reported higher levels of difficulty, they may also be more open to learning about new sources of support for managing and preserving their research.

Further, about two thirds of UVA faculty are preserving collections or sets of research data at the conclusion of their project on their own via commercially or freely available software or services, and 40 percent use a repository made available by UVA or another type of online repository. Relatively fewer UVA faculty are preserving their data using freely available software compared with peer institutions (64 percent versus 72 percent respectively). When asked how valuable different sources of support are or might be when managing and preserving their data, the greatest share of UVA faculty – about two thirds – highly rate file hosting services (like Box or Dropbox), followed by freely available software and the library (both about 51 percent). A greater share of UVA humanists (about 62 percent) rate the library as a valuable source of support for managing and preserving their data compared to both their colleagues in other disciplines at UVA (58 percent for UVA social scientists and 50 percent for UVA scientists), and humanities faculty at peer institutions (51 percent).

Research Dissemination

Eighty percent of UVA faculty often share research findings in peer-reviewed journals, followed by 40 percent in scholarly monographs, 30 percent in published conference proceedings, and 21 percent in working papers or pre-prints. UVA social scientists are less often publishing scholarly monographs compared to social scientists peers at other institutions (28 percent versus 38 percent respectively) and more often publishing conference proceedings (33 percent versus 26 percent respectively; see Figure 5). UVA humanists are more often publishing in magazines, trade journals, and scholarly monographs than humanists at peer institutions (15 percent versus 6 percent respectively).

Figure 5. You may have the opportunity to share the findings of your scholarly research in a variety of different formats. Please use the scales below to indicate how often you have shared the findings of your scholarly research in each of the following ways in the past five years. *Percent of respondents who have often shared their findings in the following formats.*



The most desirable characteristics of journals in which to publish – at UVA and beyond – are prestige and high readership: 90 percent of UVA faculty rate high impact factor and wide circulation as highly important in their decision-making. A greater share of UVA social scientists (95 percent) view impact factor as highly important compared to UVA scientists and humanists (both about 89 percent), as well as compared to social scientists at peer institutions (85 percent). Further, a larger proportion of UVA faculty rate high selectivity as an important characteristic compared to faculty at peer institutions, with a little over 70 percent of UVA humanists and social scientists rating this characteristic as highly important compared to 58 percent of faculty members in the same disciplines at peer institutions.

These characteristics are generally understood to be incentivized by tenure and promotion. A greater share of UVA faculty understand the criteria used to evaluate them for tenure and promotion compared to faculty at peer institutions (77 percent versus 71 percent respectively), while a little over half of both UVA faculty and those at peer institutions shape their research outputs and publication choices to match these criteria. Shaping research outputs to match tenure and promotion criteria is more pronounced for UVA social scientists (70 percent), compared to their colleagues in other disciplines (about half of UVA scientists and humanists), as well as social scientists at peer institutions (59 percent).

Open Access

About six in ten UVA faculty both agree that they would be happy to see the traditional subscription model replaced entirely by an open access publication system and that they would be happy to see the same publishers involved in such a model. Additionally, a greater share of UVA faculty view journals permitting scholars to publish for free (without paying page or article charges; 62 percent) as highly important compared to journals making their articles freely available (with no cost to purchase or read; 35 percent).

UVA humanists rate journals permitting scholars to publish for free as relatively more important than their scientist and social scientist colleagues, while UVA scientists and social scientists are more likely to rate journals making their articles freely available online as highly important. This trend is similar to faculty at peer institutions, though UVA social scientists are more likely to value a journal permitting scholars to publish for free compared to social scientists at peer institutions (70 percent versus 56 percent).

Although only about a third of UVA faculty rated a journal making its articles freely available as an important characteristic when publishing, 66 percent of UVA faculty support a requirement for peer-reviewed journals or conference proceedings to be made freely available online. About half similarly would support scholarly monographs being made freely available. This requirement is supported most by UVA social scientists (73 percent agree), followed by scientists and humanists (69 percent and 57 percent agree respectively).¹⁰

¹⁰ For additional comparison of open access preferences to the national landscape, please see: <https://against-the-grain.com/2019/10/ithaka-sr-faculty-survey-response-open-access/>.

Teaching & Learning

Open Educational Resources

The vast majority of UVA faculty have autonomy in deciding which textbooks and other course materials are used within the courses they teach. By discipline, 95 percent of UVA humanists and social scientists are the primary decision maker compared to 75 percent of scientists.

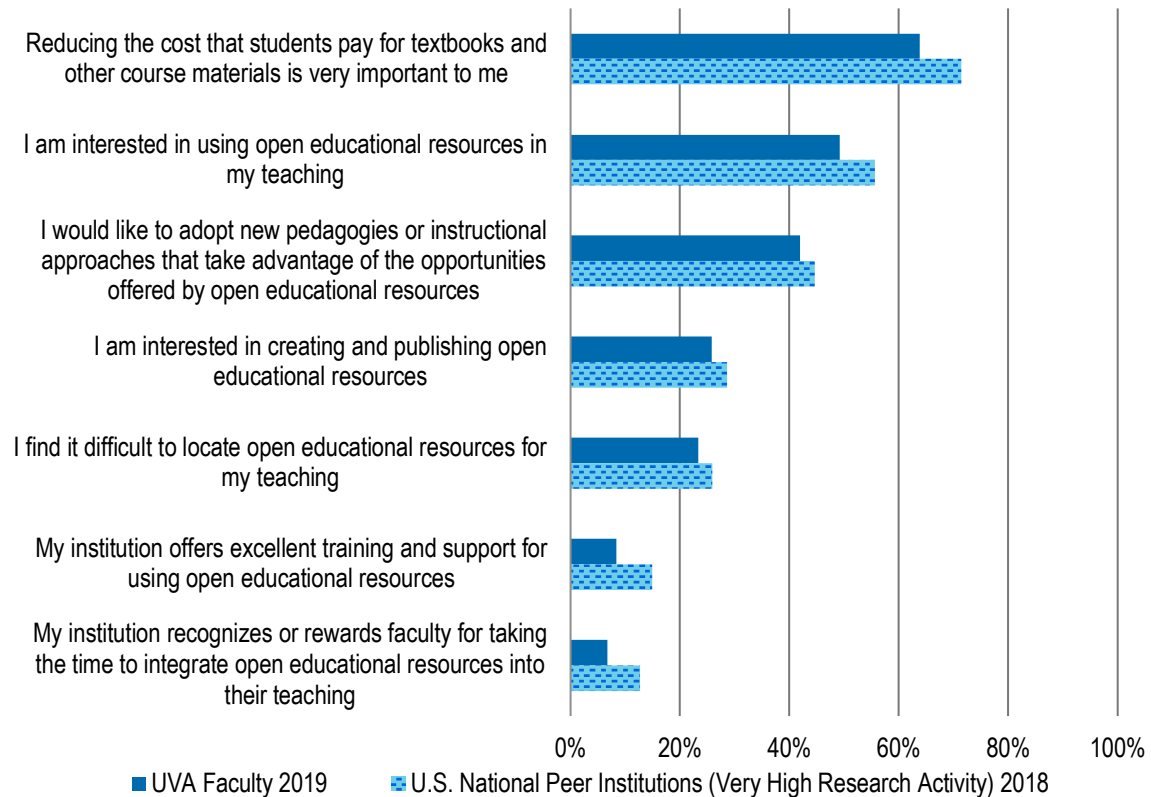
Fifty-five percent of UVA faculty often give preference to course materials that are low or no cost, and 40 percent often assign course materials that are available through the library. While a substantial share of UVA faculty –64 percent – agree or strongly agree that reducing the cost that students pay for course materials is very important, relatively more at peer institutions – 71 percent – feel similarly (see Figure 6). By discipline, UVA humanists and social scientists less often prioritize low cost or free materials than those in similar disciplines at peer institutions.

UVA faculty are less likely than those at peer institutions to currently use or create open educational resources (OER) and are relatively less interested in the prospect of using them.¹¹ Approximately 28 percent of UVA faculty have used open textbooks, 15 percent have used open course modules, and 25 percent have used open video lectures, compared to 32 percent, 24 percent, and 32 percent of faculty at peer institutions respectively. Additionally, 7 percent of UVA faculty have created open textbooks, 9 percent have created open course modules, and 8 percent have created open video lectures compared to 7 percent, 14 percent, and 11 percent of faculty at peer institutions respectively.

About a quarter of UVA faculty are interested in creating and publishing OER, yet a similar share find it difficult to actually locate OER for their teaching (see Figure 6). Newer faculty are more interested in using and creating OER; 59 percent of faculty who have been at UVA for 0-10 years agree or strongly agree they are interested in using OER, compared to 44 percent and 45 percent of faculty who have been with UVA for 11-15 years and 21 or more years respectively. Also, about 33 percent of faculty who have been with UVA for 0-10 years agree or strongly agree they are interested in creating or publishing OER compared to 25 percent and 19 percent of faculty who have been with UVA for 11-15 years and 21 or more years respectively.

¹¹ Open educational resources were defined within the survey as “teaching, learning, and research materials used for educational purposes that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license, such as Creative Commons, that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.”

Figure 6. Please read the following statements and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each. *Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement.*



Learning Analytics

Fewer UVA faculty have used learning analytics tools in their teaching practices compared to those at peer institutions, and there remains skepticism of using these tools both by those who have and have not used them.¹² Of the faculty who *have* used learning analytics, a third agree or strongly agree that using these tools helps to improve their teaching —similar to faculty at peer institutions – and to help them intervene with students who might be struggling (compared to 42 percent at peer institutions). Less than 20 percent of UVA faculty who *have not* used learning analytics agree or strongly agree they are interested in using these tools, or think that using these tools would help improve their teaching and intervene with students who may be struggling.

¹² Learning analytics tools were defined within the survey as “tools that summarize and/or analyze student activities, learning, or performance, and produce for you a dashboard, early alert emails, etc.”

UVA faculty – like colleagues at other institutions – are not particularly concerned about potential restrictions to their autonomy caused by the use of learning analytics tools, but are less likely to agree or strongly agree than faculty at peer institutions that their university has protocols in place to protect student’s privacy. Less than 20 percent of UVA faculty members agree or strongly agree that the university has sufficient systems or protocols in place to prevent a breach of student data and that the university has excellent training and support for using these tools.

Concluding Remarks

These findings provide an overview of the perspectives and practices of research and teaching faculty prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring semester of 2020. UVA faculty members have a generally favorable view of their library and regard their library to be more important for their research and teaching compared to peer institutions. UVA faculty particularly rate the buyer, graduate support, archive roles of the library as important. While print and electronic versions of scholarly monographs are considered equally important, a greater investment in electronic materials is likely necessary – at least in the short-term – given the extent to which the pandemic has limited access to print materials. Although faculty are primarily autonomous in organizing, managing, and preserving their research data, increased support for these practices may be desirable, especially as we look to the fall 2020 semester during which research will primarily take place virtually. Lastly, due to the high probability of many courses held entirely or partially online in the near future, greater support to newer faculty at UVA in the use and creation of OER is recommended. While interest is expressed across the survey in new approaches to conducting research and teaching, appropriate support and incentives will need to be provided to change behavior in the long-term.