



ITHAKA S+R LOCAL SURVEY



THE ITHAKA S+R LOCAL FACULTY SURVEY AT SUNY POTSDAM STARTING A CAMPUS CONVERSATION

SUNY Potsdam faces some unique challenges. Library Director Jenica Rogers notes “We are in the middle of nowhere geographically. Historically, we were two separate schools with very separate missions that were combined to create one college. There are few good broadband options in our community. We are a small institution in a giant system. We often feel that nationally-reported data and trends do not reveal our local truth.”

Given this, Rogers was not interested in administering the [Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey](#) to benchmark SUNY Potsdam against other institutions, “we don’t really want to compare ourselves; we want to see what we can do here to improve.” The campus’s assessment office focuses primarily on student learning, and Rogers felt the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey offered the opportunity for both the library and the university to understand their faculty members’ teaching and research practices in depth.

Her colleagues agreed, with the academic deans providing some financial support to run the survey. “There is data here that I can use as the Director of Libraries, but there is also data that the academic deans can use to help them understand where their faculty members are.” Rogers was able to use the national [Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey](#) reports to show her deans what type of information the survey would capture and could project out the type of impacts they could expect. “I have a lot of campus respect and I have a strong voice; but even so it is helpful to have a springboard such as this one to start a conversation. Then the conversation is not just about me – about what I believe – but is also grounded in data.”

Rogers is using the survey results as she drafts her library’s next strategic plan, and while some of the changes she would like to make are still aspirational, “it allows us to begin the conversation, particularly related to scholarship and technology support.” Rogers reports that the provost intends to take the data and incorporate it into her proposal to create a faculty development center for pedagogy and technology. “She can use what we learned in an active way to carry her agenda forward: that is good for me, that is good for the libraries. We sit at a hub for teaching and learning.”

An unexpected outcome was that the survey was good for morale. SUNY Potsdam’s faculty members value their library at a higher level compared to the national survey. “What a great way to launch my library staff retreat this summer. I pointed to the results and said, look, we earned this. Now – what are we going to do next?”