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## Opening Access: Increasing Scholarly Impact with DigitalCommons@UNO

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# Opening Access: Increasing Scholarly Impact with DigitalCommons@UNO

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## ABSTRACT

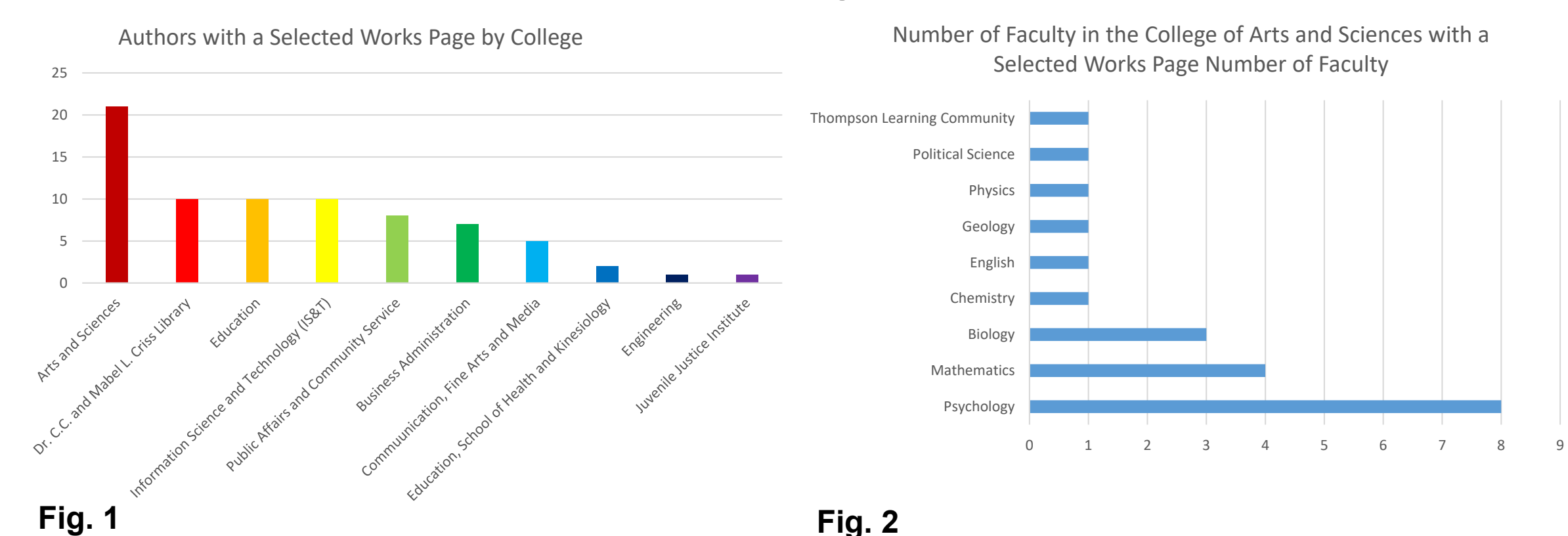
*DigitalCommons@UNO* (<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/>) is an *Institutional Repository (IR)* and an initiative implemented by the *University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)* Libraries to support our *UNO* scholars through providing a *Green Open Access* solution. *DigitalCommons@UNO* disseminates a wide variety of scholarship including faculty papers, electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs), conferences and journals. Since its launch in 2014, the *UNO* Libraries have been implementing and managing *DigitalCommons@UNO* through outreach to the *UNO* community in an effort to collect scholarly works into the *IR*.

## Methods of Outreach Currently Employed

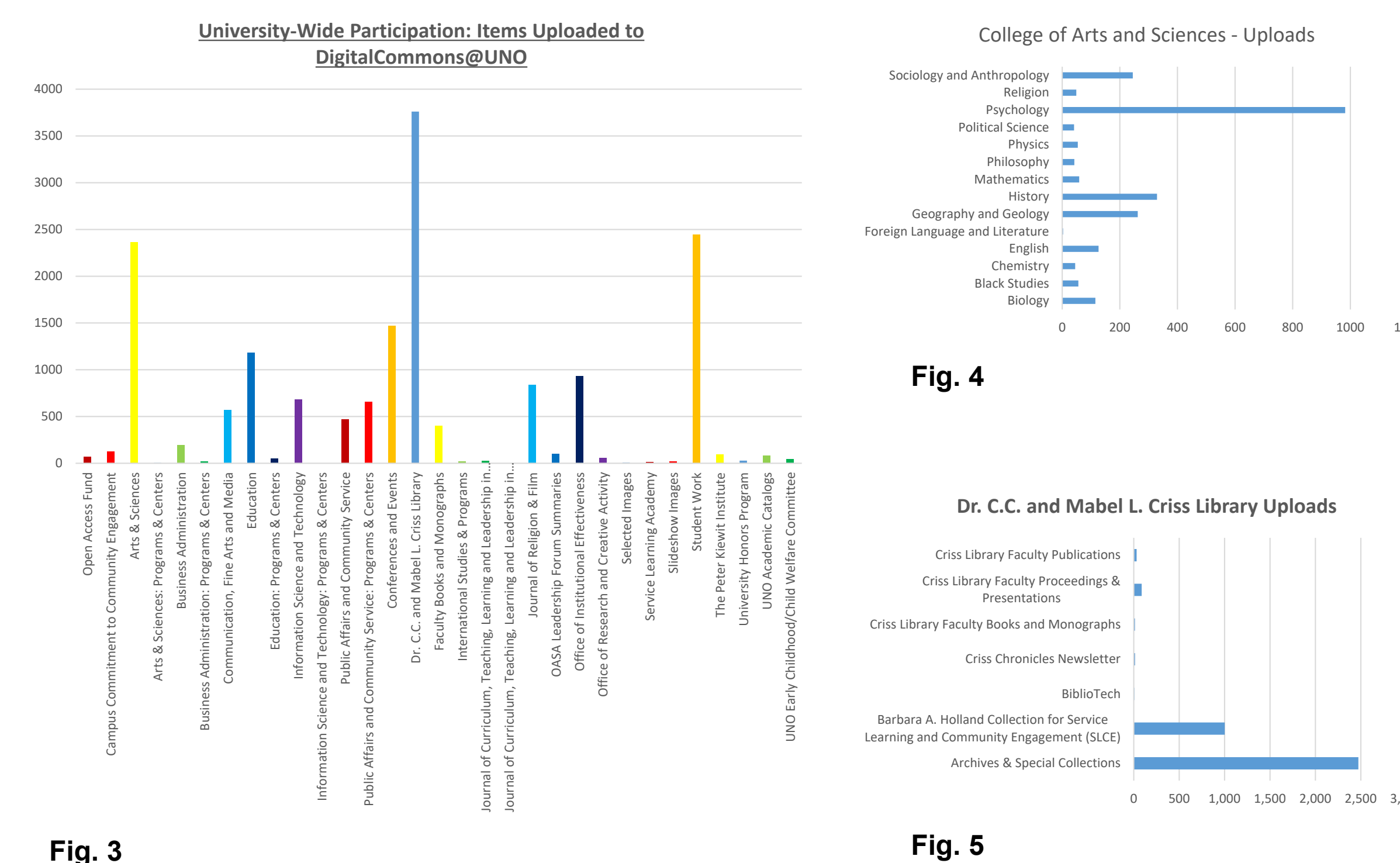
- *DigitalCommons@UNO* Institutional Repository website
- Subject Librarian collaboration and referrals
- Departmental presentations
- In-person networking
- *OA Fund* mandates for material inclusion in the repository
- *DigitalMeasures*
- Distribution of promotional material (fliers/ decals)

## Faculty Participation in SelectedWorks

*SelectedWorks* ([https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/sw\\_gallery.html](https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/sw_gallery.html)) is a feature of *DigitalCommons* that acts as a showcase for faculty scholarship in a similar way to platforms such as *ResearchGate*. As will be seen in the next graphs, the highest level of participation comes from the *College of Arts and Sciences*.



## Levels of Participation



An overview of departmental participation, in terms of number of items submitted to *DigitalCommons@UNO*, can be seen in *figure 3*. This demonstrates that the most active participants in the university are the *College of Arts & Sciences*, the *Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library* and *Student Work* (which is comprised of student dissertations). *Figures 4 and 5* dissects the participation levels of the *Arts & Sciences* and the *Library* revealing that participation levels are not equal across departments. The greatest single collection comes from the *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection* in *Archives & Special Collections* which holds 2,247 items followed by the *Barbara Holland Collection* that holds 1,001 items. However it could be argued that as the basis of these collections are single, large donations the greatest level of active participation comes from the social sciences including Psychology, History, Sociology and Anthropology and Geography and Geology.

## Challenges

- Faculty participation (e.g. faculty who are not accepting of OA ideals)
- Collaboration with subject/librarian librarians
- (Storage) and access to different kinds of materials
- Author rights/permission issues
- Offer equal opportunity to all disciplines across campus

## Conclusion and Future Directions

*DigitalCommons@UNO* has provided academic support to over 27 departments, resulting in over 12,219 uploads and over 1 million downloads distributed globally. The strengths of the collections contained within *DigitalCommons@UNO* in part reflects the prevalence of *Open Access* publishing within disciplines. For instance, the highest participation rates for *Open Access* are in scientific fields which reflects collection size on *DigitalCommons@UNO* (*Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics* within the **College of Arts and Sciences**, *Computer Science and Information Systems and Quantitative Analysis* within the **College of Information Science and Technology**). Grant funding within this field often mandates publishing research *Open Access* and this in turn has an effect on faculty willingness to participate in the *Institutional Repository*. Yet more specifically, the greatest participation levels come from the Social Sciences, which does reflect industry publishing standards but to a lesser extent than the traditional scientific disciplines. This suggests that the support of individuals within the Social Sciences is important, if not more so, than the preponderance of disciplinary *Open Access* publishing. However, the largest contributor to the *Open Access* repository at *UNO* is *Archives & Special Collections*, due to their large *Arthur Paul Afghanistan Collection*, showing the changing nature of the heritage sector in the digital age and their commitment to outreach. Therefore, the greatest challenge for the growth of the *Institutional Repository* lies in encouraging the non-scientific fields outside of *Archives & Special Collections* to participate. Increased collaboration with the subject librarians and presentations to faculty within these departments are needed. As a result, *DigitalCommons@UNO* would not only enable the university's research standing to grow but would also increase individual scholarly impact.

## References

Bepress, *DigitalCommons@UNO* Dashboard, <https://dashboard.bepress.com/#/> (accessed May 16<sup>th</sup> 2018)

