# A Road Map to Collaboration

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## INTRODUCTION

Collaborating with stakeholders outside the library can help form important relationships, tailor library services, and reassert the value of libraries to those who need a reminder, but where and how does one start? Walk through the process with Hunter Library (HL) at Western Carolina University's (WCU) Outreach & Scholarly Communication (OSC) librarian.

## BACKGROUND

**Outreach & Scholarly Communication Librarian mission**

To support the campus community in the use and creation of scholarly products.

Within those broad parameters, the new OSC librarian had the opportunity to determine exactly how that support looked. It was clear that for the position to succeed, it would need the support of groups outside the library. To embark on this journey to collaboration, the OSC librarian:

❖ Mapped the roads we had traveled in the past (our previous efforts).
❖ Took a close look at the present landscape (our community's current needs) & used that information to determine where to go in the future (our goal).
❖ Identified who could help us navigate our course (our collaborative partners).
❖ Crafted a tailored message to convince those folks to join us in our travels (our pitch).

## PAST EFFORTS

To tread new ground, it is beneficial to look at past travels. By reflecting on previous collaborative efforts, you can identify areas that are well served, those that need attention, and those that have yet to be served.

### Questions to ask

❖ With whom has your library worked in the past?
❖ What were the results of those initiatives?
❖ Are there any projects that never got off the ground and are worth revisiting?

### Road map in action

The OSC librarian learned that HL's past scholarly communication-related efforts had been faculty-focused, and given the emphasis on undergraduate research at WCU, it appeared there was an opportunity to explore ways to support that initiative through library services.

## CURRENT NEEDS

After identifying a potential area of focus, examine its present landscape. Are there gaps in the process? How is your library uniquely qualified to fill those gaps?

### Road map in action

The OSC librarian plotted the information creation process to see where along its path undergraduate researchers had support and where they did not. This required looking at all the groups that work with undergraduate research, which not only helped ensure HL would not be duplicating existing services but also afforded us the opportunity to begin identifying potential partners.

- Research, Data Collection
- Proposal
- Creation of Research Product
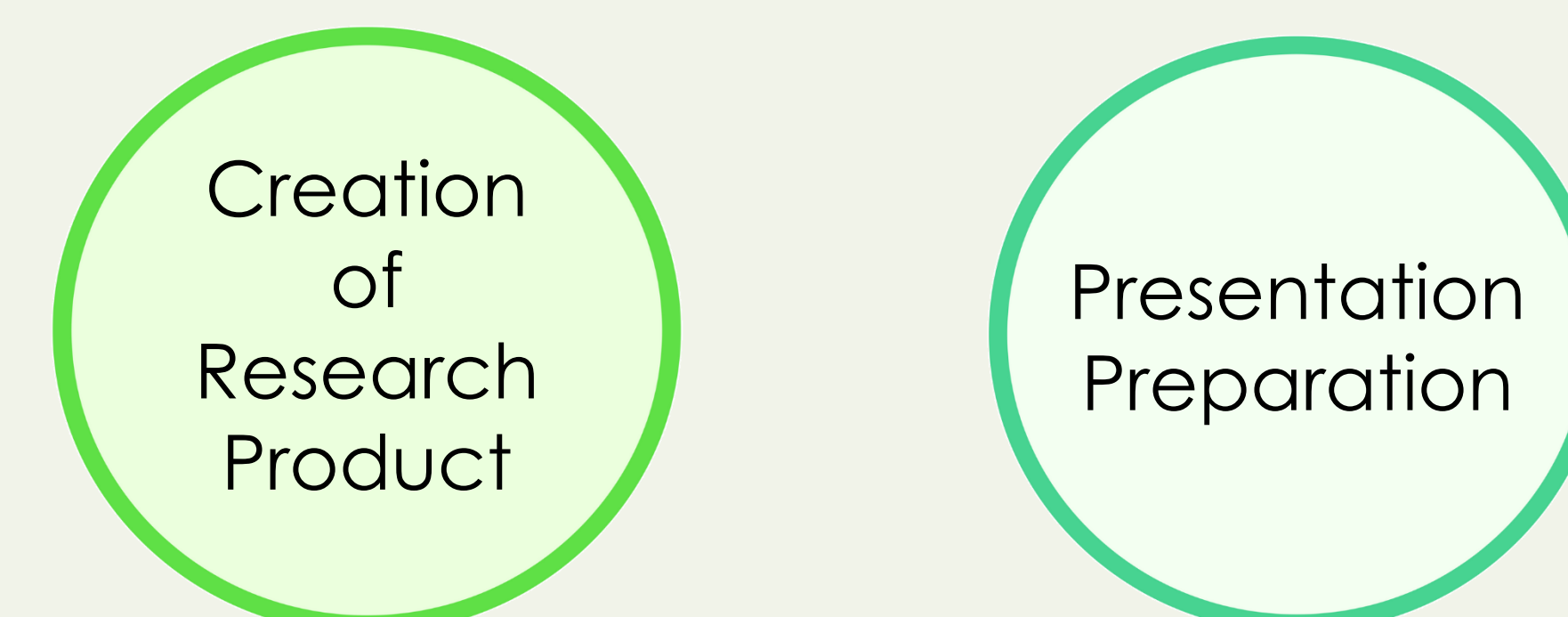- Presentation Preparation
- Presentation

## GOALS

By getting a bird's eye view of the area of focus and identifying gaps, it becomes easier to set goals to chart your future course.

### Road map in action

The OSC librarian found two gaps in support for undergraduate researchers at WCU: the creation of the scholarly product and preparation for their presentation. These are gaps that HL can adapt to address, especially in partnership with other entities on campus, and as such we have made support for these two areas our goal.

- Creation of Research Product
- Presentation Preparation

## PITCHING TO POTENTIAL PARTNERS

By approaching this entire process in a step-by-step fashion that looks at the past, present, and future, you have likely already identified people or groups who would be ideal partners to help you meet your goals. Pitching to them, though, is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Look at their missions and determine how this partnership will speak to those missions.

### Road map in action

The OSC librarian identified three groups, each with a different stake in the information creation cycle, to help navigate our journey.

- **Undergraduate Research Faculty Advisers** — We want to help students create a finished product that showcases their research effectively.
- **Center for Career and Professional Development** — We want to help students present themselves and their research professionally.
- **Writing and Learning Commons** — We want to help students feel confident as they present their research to an audience.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: POSTER WORKSHOP

This project is an example of the process described at left.

### POSTER PRESENTATION STUDENT WORKSHOP

Are you planning to present your research at a conference?
Are you nervous about speaking in front of a crowd?
Are you unsure of how much information to include on your poster?
**Join us in the library for this workshop!**

**Participants will:**
**Explore poster layout tips and tricks**
**Practice public speaking skills**

THURSDAY
10/12/17
3:30 - 4:45PM

HUNTER LIBRARY
ROOM 186

EMAIL
SKAPEL@WCU.EDU
TO SIGN UP

**The gap:** Lack of support for undergraduate researchers as they create and practice presenting their research product.
**The solution:** Event to provide tips, tricks, resources, and opportunities to talk about the presentation process.
**The event:** Poster presentation workshop covering best practices in poster design and presentation skills.
**The partners:** Librarians, undergraduate research faculty advisers, the Center for Career and Professional Development, and the Writing and Learning Commons.
**What worked:** Activity identifying positive and negative elements on a variety of research posters.
**What didn't:** Length of workshop – too short.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Be prepared to celebrate the milestones you reach and have a plan in place to overcome setbacks. Continue to assess the needs in your community and think about ways your library can help meet those needs through strategic collaboration. Keep a timeline of future projects that you can revise as necessary.

### Road map in action

**Spring 2018:** Establish assessment method for workshops.
**Summer 2018:** Publish undergraduate research support LibGuide.
**Fall 2018:** Reprise poster workshop.
**Spring 2019:** Explore WCU undergraduate research journal.

Through this process, the OSC librarian has identified eager new partners who have brought fresh insights and perspectives, worked with us to plan outreach and programming that are meaningful to the WCU community, and helped us overcome obstacles along the way.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Map icon by Hopkins for The Noun Project.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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