

Simon Fraser University Faculty Survey: Analytical Memo

August 2, 2016

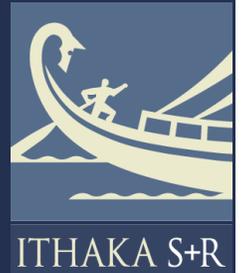


Table of Contents

Overview	2
Key Insights	4
Student Research Skills	5
Role of the Library	8
Research Dissemination	15

Overview

The following memo provides an analytical narrative of the results of the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey, which was administered at Simon Fraser University. The survey instrument covers many scholarly research and teaching-related topics, in part overlapping with the 2015 Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey¹ and other previous iterations of the Ithaka S+R U.S. Faculty Survey.²

During Spring 2016, 1,105 Simon Fraser faculty members received an email invitation to participate in a survey about the impact of electronic technologies on research, teaching, and publishing. Three email reminders were sent before the close of the survey and an iPad was offered as an incentive for participation.

In total, 578 respondents started the survey (about 52%), with 564 of those at least partially completing the survey (about 51%), and 459 of those respondents completing the survey, for an overall response rate of about 42%. Due to the survey flow and skip patterns, not all Simon Fraser faculty respondents received every question in the survey.

In light of the focus in this memo on survey responses by rank and faculty affiliation, the tables below display response rates for each of these demographic items.

Response rate by rank

	Invited	Completed survey	Response rate
<i>Professor</i>	397	161	40.55%
<i>Associate Professor</i>	319	151	47.34%
<i>Assistant Professor</i>	114	53	46.49%
<i>Senior Lecturer</i>	108	34	31.48%
<i>Limited Term Lecturer</i>	42	17	40.48%
<i>Lecturer</i>	34	15	44.12%
<i>Visiting Faculty</i>	55	12	21.82%
<i>LT Assistant</i>	13	4	30.77%
<i>Limited Term Se</i>	4	3	75.00%
<i>LT Laboratory I</i>	2	2	100.00%
<i>Assistant Clini</i>	1	1	100.00%
<i>Associate Clini</i>	1	1	100.00%
<i>Laboratory Inst</i>	3	1	33.33%

1 Wolff, Christine, Alisa B. Rod, and Roger C. Schonfeld. "Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey 2015." *Ithaka S+R*. Last Modified 4 April 2016. <http://sr.ithaka.org?p=277685>.

2 Schonfeld, Roger and Ross Housewright. "US Faculty Survey 2012." *Ithaka S+R*. Last Modified 8 April 2013. <http://sr.ithaka.org?p=22502>.

<i>LT Clinical Ass</i>	3	1	33.33%
<i>LT Instructor</i>	1	1	100.00%
<i>LT Professor</i>	2	1	50.00%
<i>Professor, Prof</i>	3	1	33.33%
<i>Limited Term Re</i>	1	0	0.00%
<i>LT Associate</i>	2	0	0.00%
	1105	459	41.54%

Due to the size of a number of these subgroups, Simon Fraser University chose to group these ranks for analysis in the following way:

- » Professor
- » Associate Professor
- » Assistant Professor
- » Lecturer (including Senior Lecturer; Limited Term Lecturer; and Lecturer)
- » Other (Visiting Faculty; LT Assistant; Limited Term Se; LT Laboratory I; Assistant Clini; Associate Clini; Laboratory Inst; LT Clinical Ass; LT Instructor; LT Professor; Professor, Prof; Limited Term Re; and LT Associate)

Response rate by faculty affiliation

	Invited	Completed survey	Response rate
<i>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences</i>	332	144	43.37%
<i>Faculty of Science</i>	243	102	41.98%
<i>Communication Arts Technology</i>	102	55	53.92%
<i>Beedie School of Business</i>	134	48	35.82%
<i>Faculty of Education</i>	83	41	49.40%
<i>Faculty of Applied Sciences</i>	99	30	30.30%
<i>Faculty of Environment</i>	53	25	47.17%
<i>Faculty of Health Sciences</i>	56	12	21.43%
<i>Lifelong Learning Unit</i>	1	1	100.00%
<i>Vice Pres Academic Office</i>	2	1	50.00%
	1105	459	41.54%

Due to the small number of invited faculty members from the Lifelong Learning Unit and the Vice Pres Academic Office, these faculties were omitted from the following analysis.

Key Insights

In order to continuously improve and effectively market library resources and services, Simon Fraser University asked Ithaka S+R to focus this analytical memo on stratifications by rank and faculty affiliation. Ithaka S+R was also asked to review the survey results in light of topics of interest to the SFU Library, including perceptions of student research skills, opinions on the role of the library, and research dissemination practices and preferences. The results from the survey revealed the following strategically relevant high-level findings:

- » Although faculty members see the responsibility for developing student research skills as attributable to both themselves and the academic library, they often differ based on rank and faculty affiliation in their perceptions of these research skills, the extent to which improving these skills is an important goal in the courses they teach, and the extent to which librarians contribute to the development of these skills.
- » While respondents from certain subgroups, especially those from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Health Sciences, frequently use library resources (i.e. electronic resources or databases) to begin their research, these faculty members do not value as highly the role of the library as a starting point or “gateway” for locating information for research compared to respondents from other faculties; this may indicate a dissonance for these respondents who so often use the library as their starting point for research.
- » Those respondents that are most aware of support services for various aspects of the publication process are also those that find these services to be most valuable, which may suggest an opportunity for the library to target marketing and outreach efforts for these services to specific subgroups of faculty members.

Ithaka S+R believes these topics are among those that are valuable to track for change over time.

Student Research Skills

A series of questions in the Simon Fraser University Faculty Survey focused on the role of faculty members as instructors, including respondents' perceptions of undergraduate students' research skills and opinions on the role of various entities in developing these skills. Questions on this topic were only displayed to respondents that teach as a part of their professional responsibilities; ninety-nine percent of Simon Fraser faculty members identified teaching as a part of their responsibilities.

In analyzing these perceptions and opinions by faculty affiliation, noteworthy differences emerge (see Figure 1). Over half of respondents from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Education, Communication Arts Technology, and Arts and Social Sciences strongly agreed that their undergraduate students have poor skills related to locating and evaluating scholarly information.

When asked about the responsibility for developing these skills, respondents generally indicated that this responsibility is attributable both to themselves and to the academic library; overall, 24% of respondents strongly agreed that developing these skills is their responsibility and 25% strongly agreed that it is the responsibility of the academic library. Larger shares of respondents from the Faculty of Environment, Communication Arts Technology, Education, Health Sciences, and the Beedie School of Business indicated that developing these skills is their responsibility, as compared to the shares that indicated that it is the responsibility of the academic library.

Respondents from the Faculty of Health Sciences, followed by those from the Faculty of Environment and Arts and Social Sciences, expressed most strongly that improving these skills is an important educational goal for the courses they teach. Relatively smaller shares of respondents from the Faculty of Science, Applied Sciences, and Health Sciences agreed that librarians at Simon Fraser University contribute significantly to their undergraduate students' learning, either by helping them to find, access, and make use of a range of secondary and primary sources in their coursework or by helping them more generally to develop their research skills.

Across ranks, we see that approximately sixty percent of all respondents strongly agreed that improving these research skills is an important educational goal for the courses they teach (see Figure 2). While a larger share of assistant professors indicated that it is principally the library's responsibility, as opposed to their responsibility, to develop these skills, they also were less likely than their peers to agree that librarians contribute significantly to their undergraduate students' learning.

Figure 1: Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement below describes your point of view – a 10 equals "Extremely well" and a 1 equals "Not at all well." *Percent of respondents who strongly agreed with each statement (8-10).*

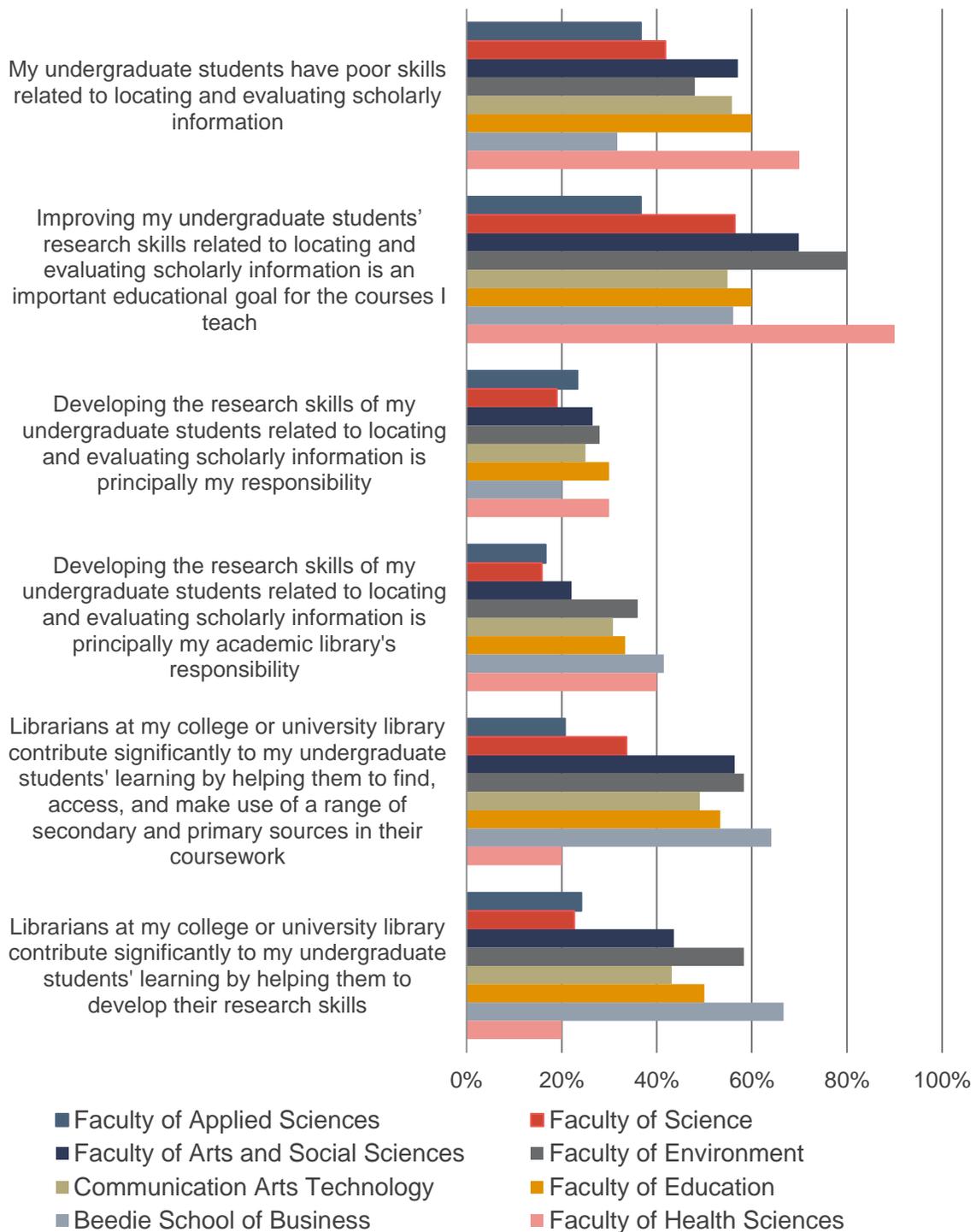
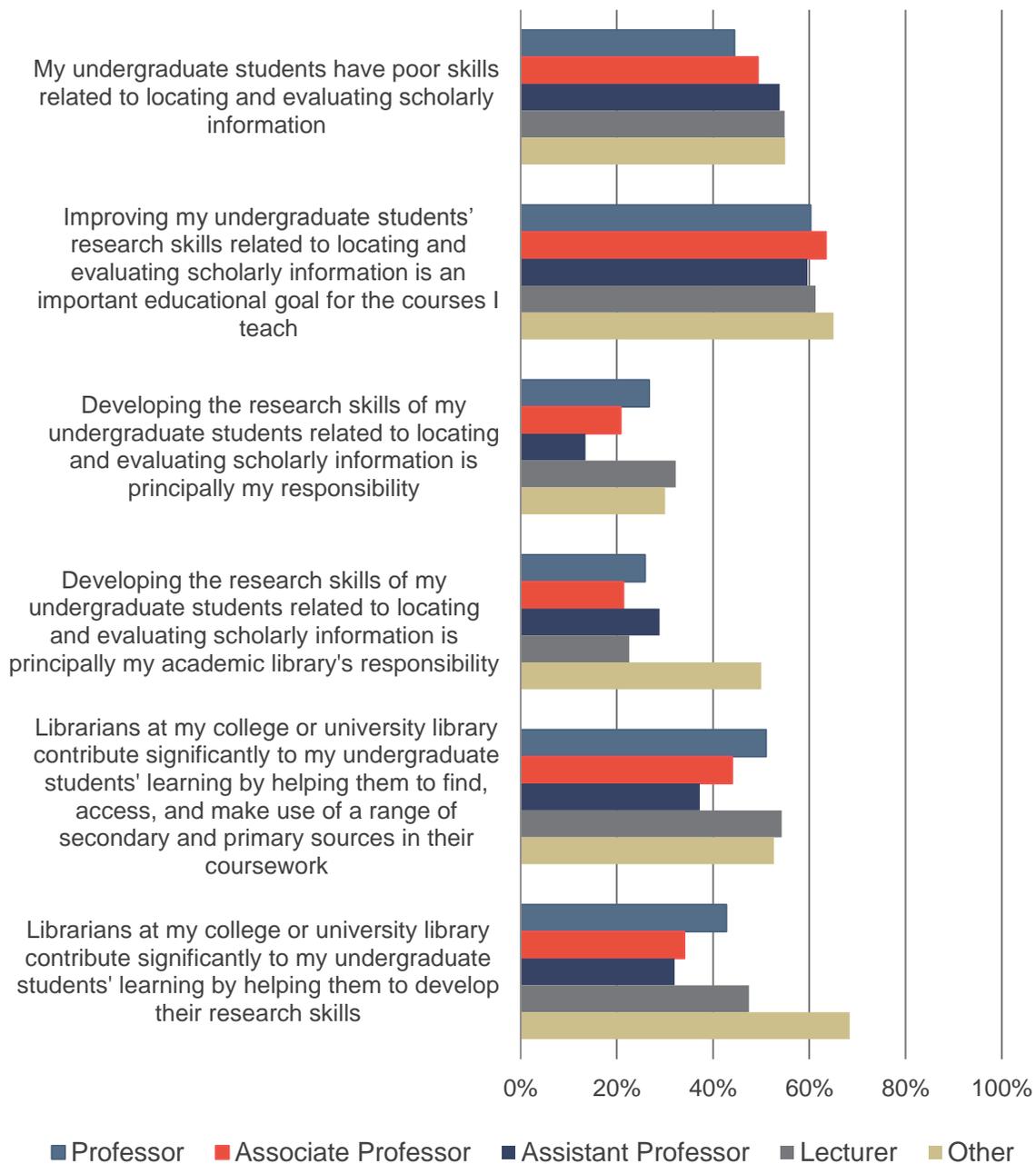


Figure 2: Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement below describes your point of view – a 10 equals "Extremely well" and a 1 equals "Not at all well." *Percent of respondents who strongly agreed with each statement (8-10).*



Role of the Library

Respondents were also asked a series of questions on their perceptions of the role of the library. Fifty-nine percent of Simon Fraser University faculty member respondents overall indicated that they are highly dependent on the library for research that they conduct, and the following question outlines the importance that respondents have assigned the various collections- and service-oriented functions of the library.

Across ranks and faculty affiliations, we see that there is a high level of agreement in the importance of the “buyer” role of the library – that is, that the library pays for resources that faculty members need (see Figure 3 and 4). However, this role is seen as slightly less important by lecturers and respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Communication Arts Technology, and Health Sciences.

Another question in the survey asks respondents about the importance of various sources for accessing materials for research and teaching; we see that lecturers were more likely to rate their own personal collection or subscriptions, and other sources outside of their university library’s collections or subscriptions, as more highly important than did respondents from other ranks. Respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Communication Arts Technology also less highly valued the university library’s collections or subscriptions as compared to respondents with other faculty affiliations, and more highly valued materials that are freely available online; respondents from the Faculty of Health Sciences also more highly valued materials that are freely available online.

Figure 3: 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? Please use the scales below to rate from 6 to 1, where 6 equals "Extremely important" and 1 equals "Not at all important." *Percent of respondents who identified each function as highly important (5-6).*

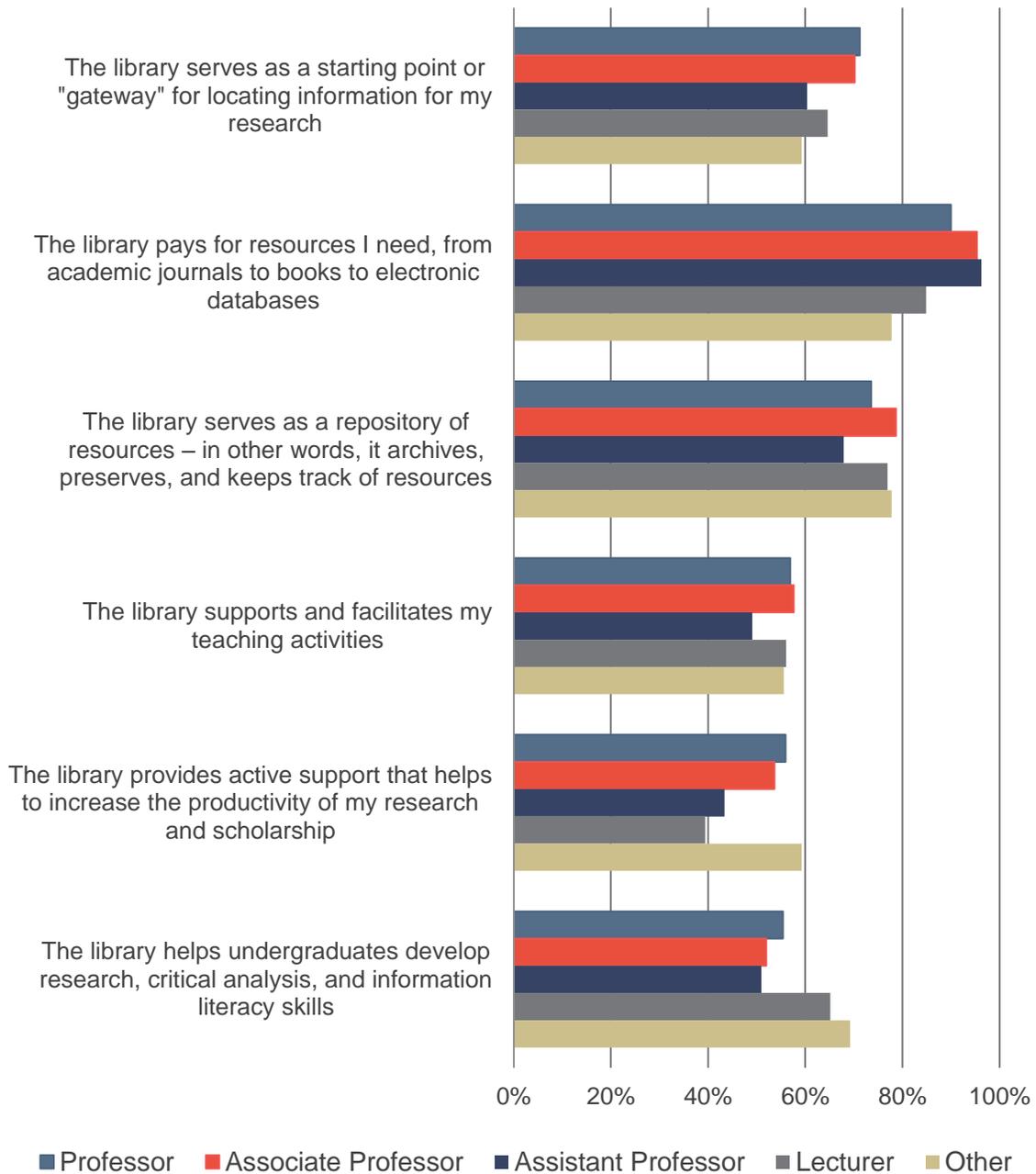
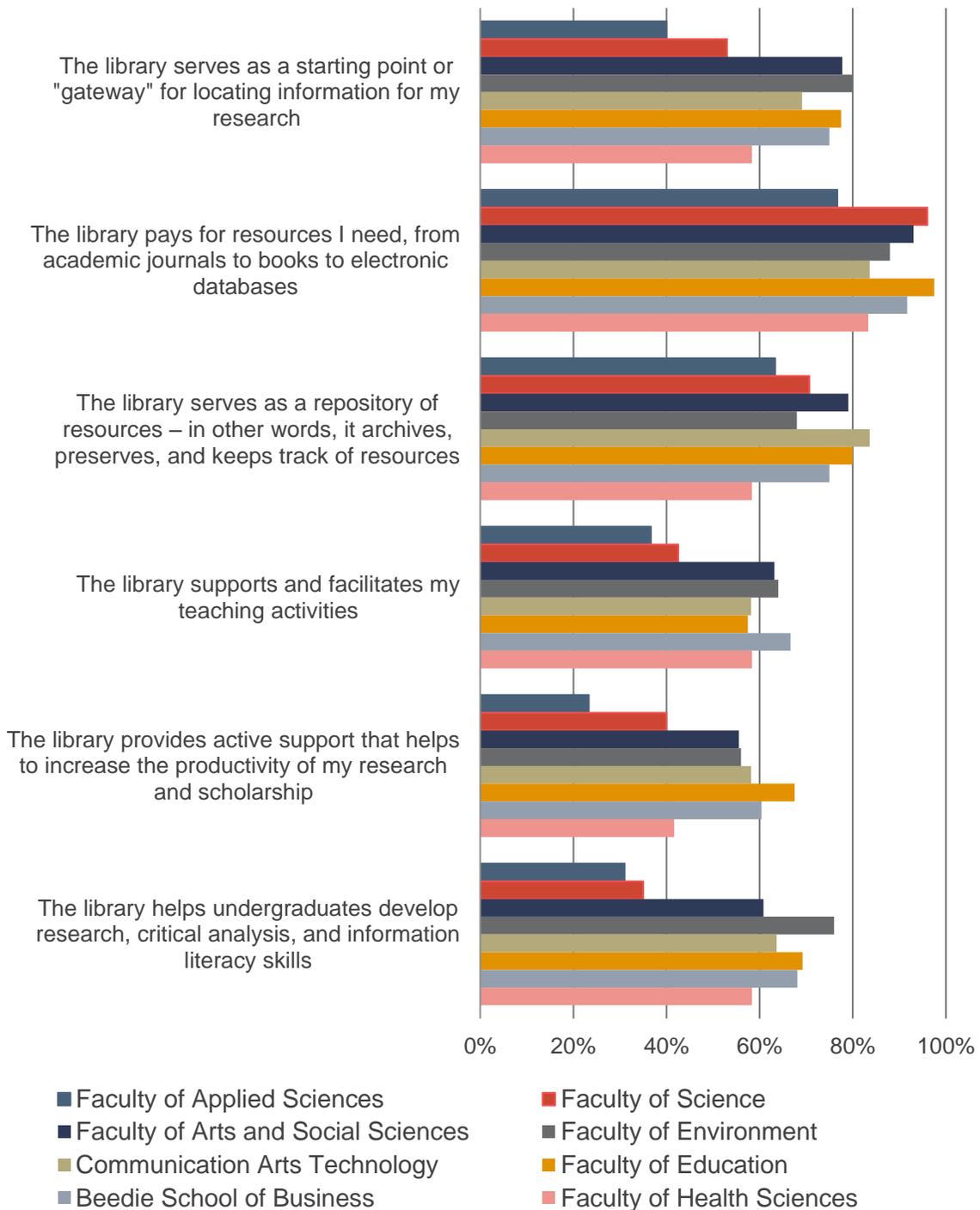
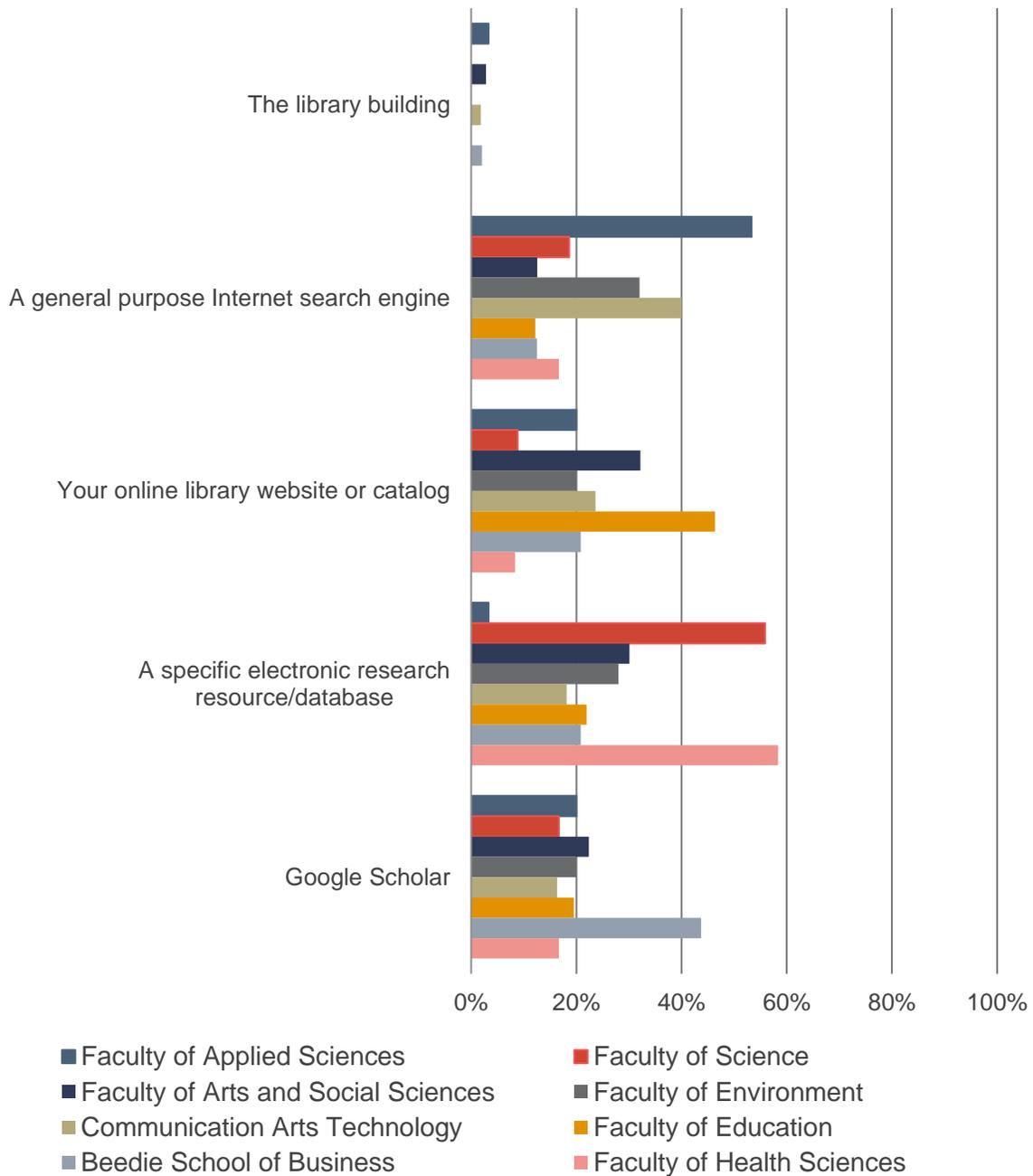


Figure 4: How important is it to you that your college or university library provides each of the functions below or serves in the capacity listed below? Please use the scales below to rate from 6 to 1, where 6 equals "Extremely important" and 1 equals "Not at all important." *Percent of respondents who identified each function as highly important (5-6)*



Respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Faculty of Science less highly value the starting point or “gateway” role of the library as compared to respondents from other faculties. A separate question in the survey asks respondents where they begin their research. A relatively high share of respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences (53% vs. 12-40% from other faculties) use a general purpose Internet search engine, as opposed to the online library website or catalog or a specific electronic research resource or database, which parallels with this finding on the importance of the gateway role (see Figure 5). However, a high share of respondents from the Faculty of Science and Health Sciences (56% and 58%, respectively, vs. 3-30% from other faculties) identified that they begin their research with a specific electronic research resource or database; there may be a disconnect for these respondents in the relatively low importance that they assign this role of the library that they use so often to begin their research.

Figure 5: Below are five possible starting points for research in academic literature. Typically, when you are conducting academic research, which of these five starting points do you use to begin locating information for your research? *Percent of respondents who selected each of the following starting points.*



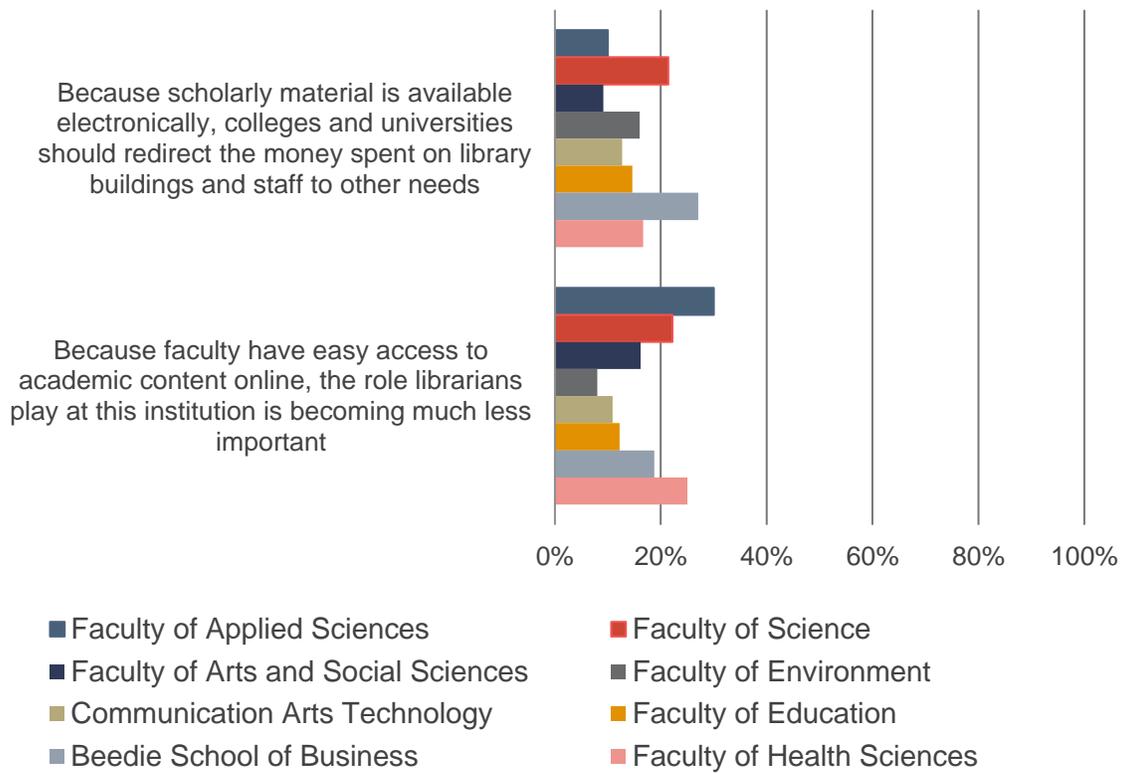
A relatively higher share of lecturers rated the role of the library in helping undergraduates develop research, critical analysis, and information literacy skills as highly important, which corresponds with the earlier finding in which lecturers indicated relatively higher levels of agreement that their students have poor skills related to locating and evaluating scholarly information. Conversely, respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Faculty of Science were less likely to find this role to be highly important; again, relatively smaller shares of respondents from these faculties indicated that their students have poor research skills.

Furthermore, relatively smaller shares of respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Science, and Health Science indicated that the library's role in supporting and facilitating their teaching activities and providing support for their research and scholarship are highly important. Approximately half of respondents across ranks find the "teaching support" role – that is, that the library supports and facilitates their teaching activities – to be highly important.

Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of the value of the library and librarians, in light of increased access to scholarly content online. In the aggregate, fifteen percent of respondents strongly agreed that "because scholarly material is available electronically, colleges and universities should redirect the money spent on library buildings and staff to other needs," and seventeen strongly agreed that "because faculty have easy access to academic content online, the role librarians play at this institution is becoming much less important."

While there was little variation in responses to these statements by rank, we do see some differences by faculty affiliation (see Figure 6). Respondents from the Beedie School of Business and the Faculty of Science demonstrate relatively higher shares of agreement with both statements, and those from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Health Sciences showed relatively higher shares of agreement that the role that librarians play is becoming less important. Respondents from the humanities and social sciences generally demonstrated lower levels of agreement with both statements.

Figure 6: Please use the 10 to 1 scales below to indicate how well each statement below describes your point of view – a 10 equals "Extremely well" and a 1 equals "Not at all well." *Percent of respondents who strongly agreed with each statement (8-10).*



Research Dissemination

In the final section of questions in the survey, respondents were asked about their research dissemination practices and preferences. Questions on this topic were only displayed to respondents who indicated that they perform research as a part of their professional responsibilities; eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated performing research as a part of their responsibilities.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they would be happy to see the traditional subscription-based publication model replaced entirely by an open access publication system in which all scholarly research outputs would be freely available to the public; this share of respondents is notably larger than both that from the US Faculty Survey 2015 (57%) and from the average of other CARL local survey participants (54%).

Respondents from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Faculty of Education agreed more strongly with this statement than respondents from other faculties, as did lecturers, assistant professors, and other faculty members compared to professors and associate professors (see Figure 7 and 8).

Figure 7: “I would be happy to see the traditional subscription-based publication model replaced entirely by an open access publication system in which all scholarly research outputs would be freely available to the public.” *Percent of respondents who strongly agreed with this statement (8-10).*

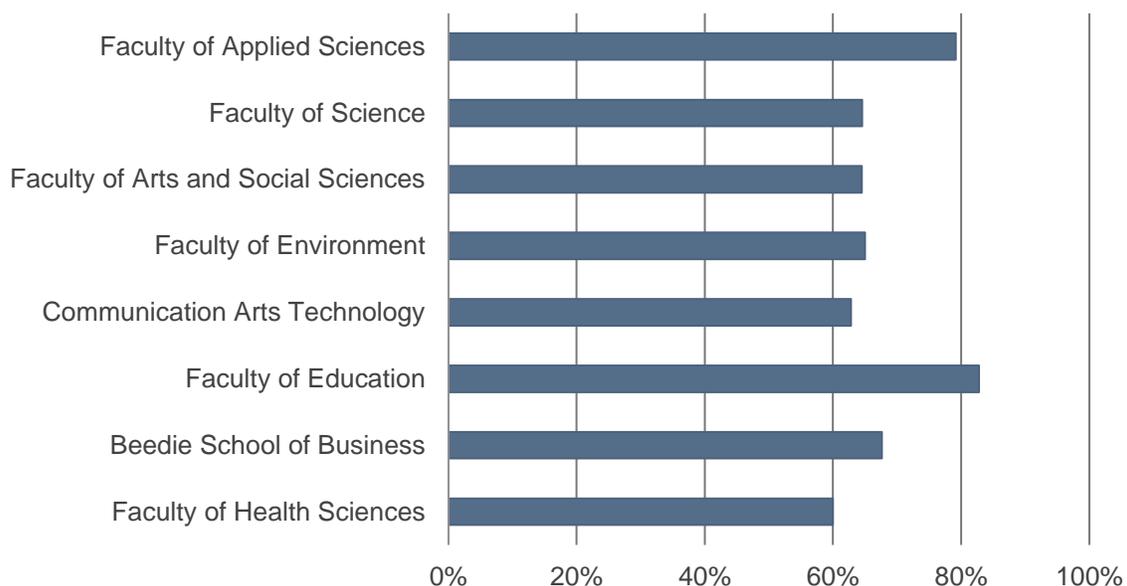
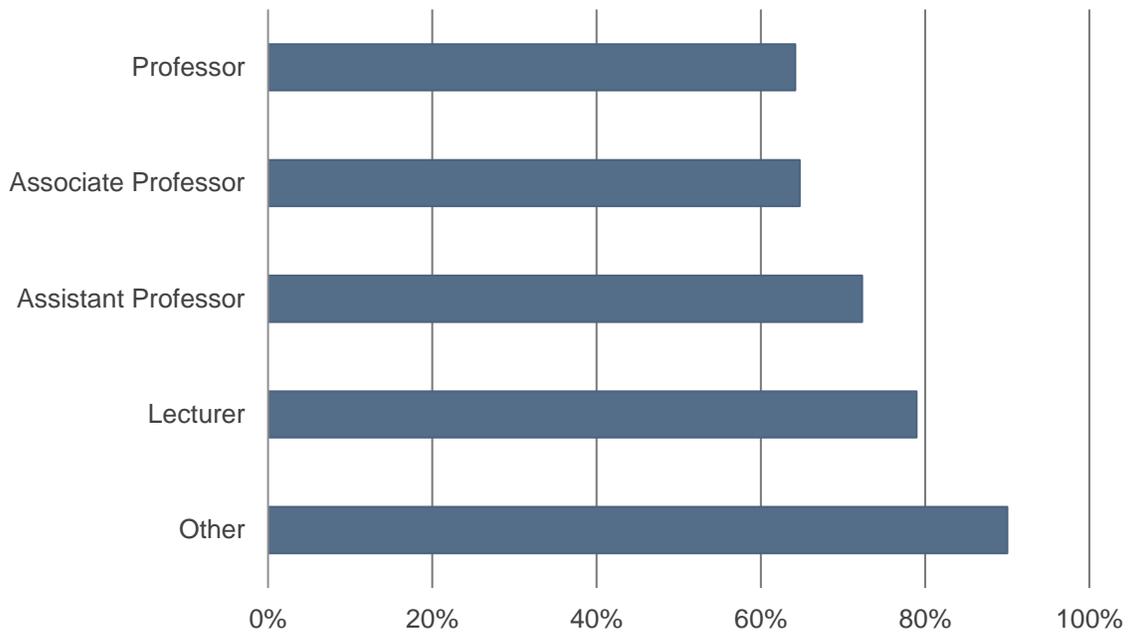


Figure 8: “I would be happy to see the traditional subscription-based publication model replaced entirely by an open access publication system in which all scholarly research outputs would be freely available to the public.”
Percent of respondents who strongly agreed with this statement (8-10).



Respondents were also asked whether their library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider assists them with various aspects of the publication process. Generally, higher shares of respondents from the Faculty of Education and Beedie School of Business indicated that they receive assistance, as did lecturers and other faculty members (see Figure 9 and 10). Because the Simon Fraser Library offers all of these services, these findings may suggest an opportunity for the library to strengthen marketing and outreach efforts to target faculty members from specific faculties and ranks with relevant services.

Figure 9: Does your college or university library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider assist you with any of the following aspects of the publication process? *Percent of respondents who selected “yes” for each aspect.*

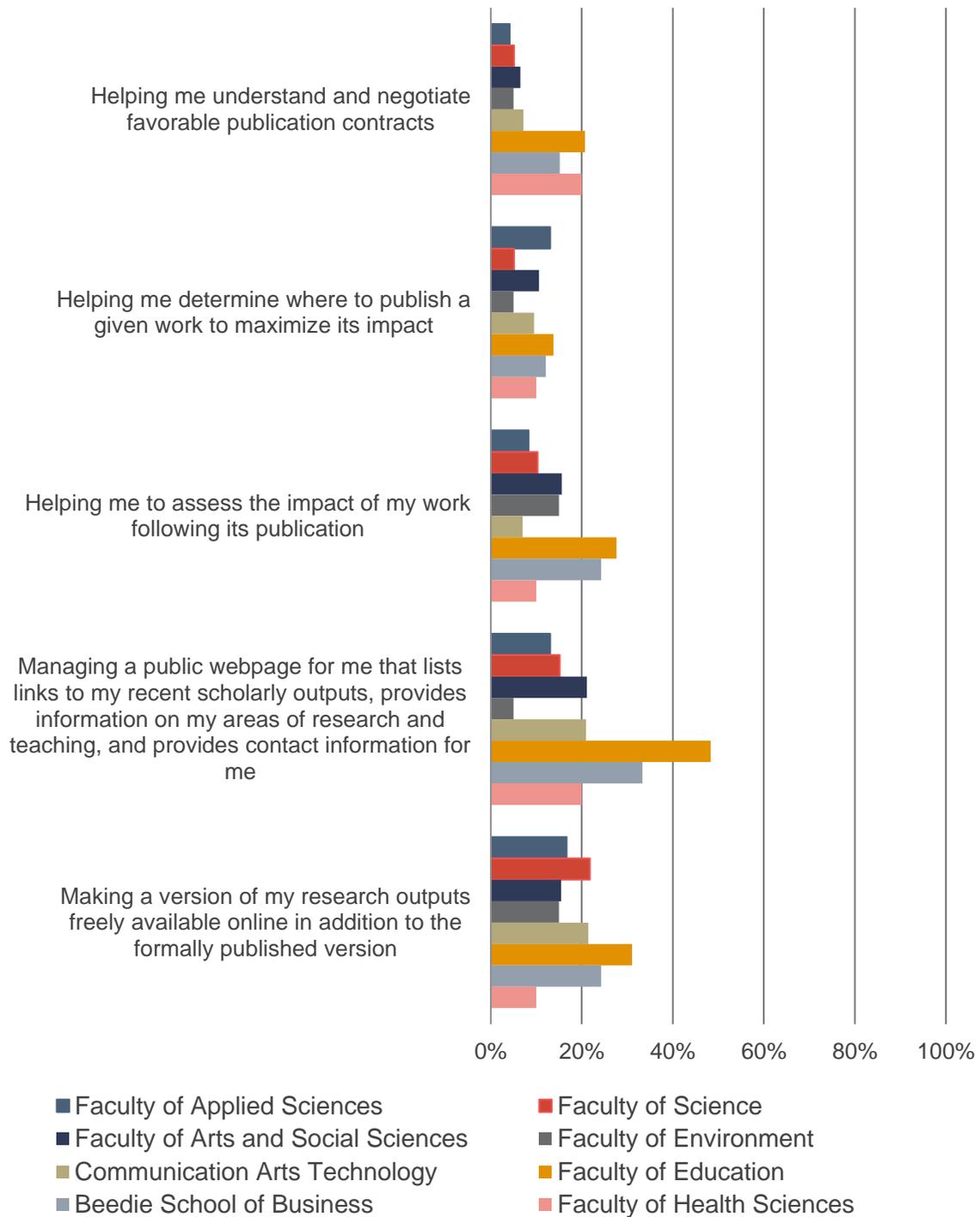
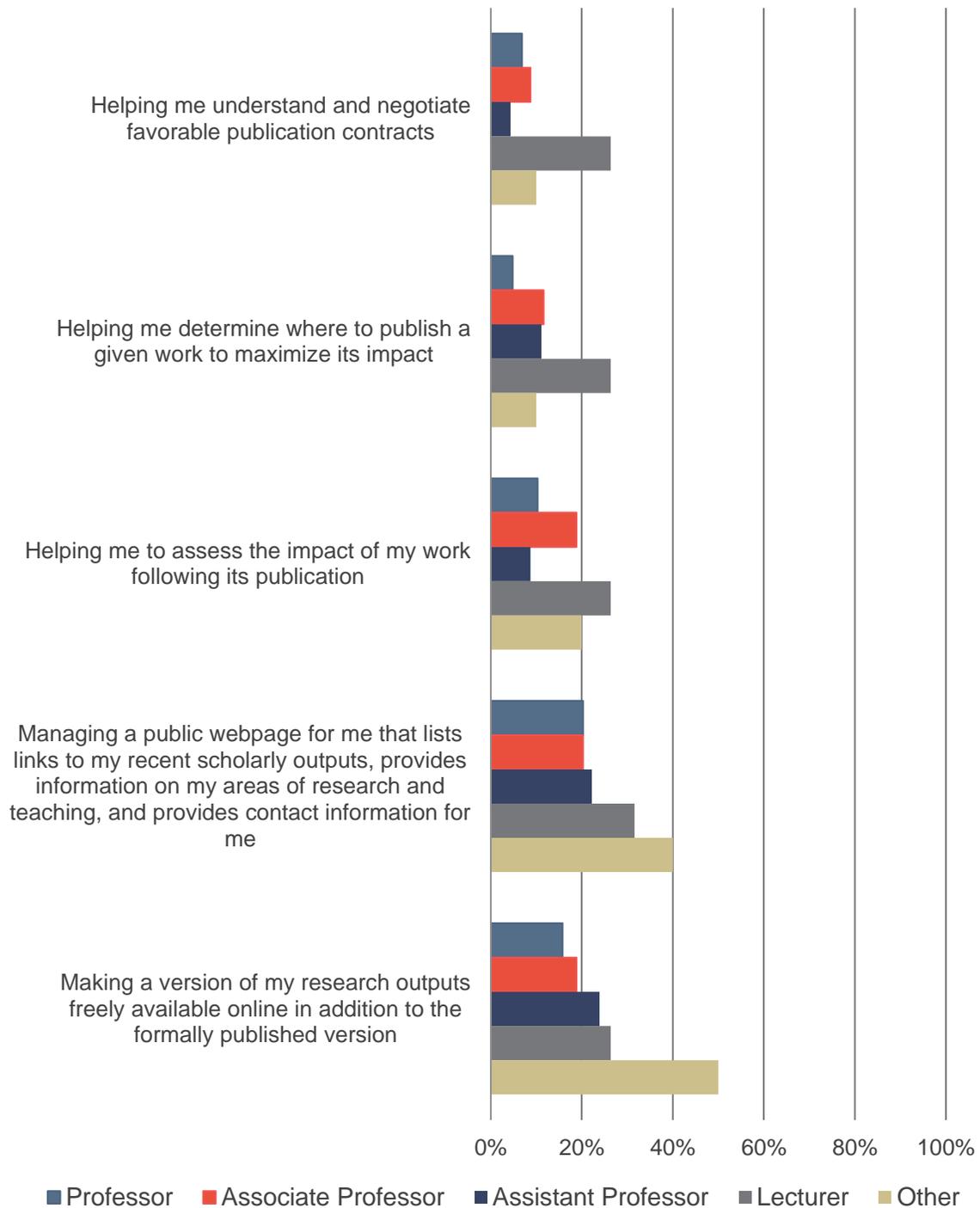


Figure 10: Does your college or university library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider assist you with any of the following aspects of the publication process? *Percent of respondents who selected “yes” for each aspect.*



Finally, we asked respondents how valuable they do or would find support from their college or university library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider for these aspects of the publication process. Respondents from the Faculty of Education indicated substantially higher levels of value for all of the services as compared to respondents from other faculties, whereas those from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Science, and Environment generally indicated lower levels of value (see Figure 11). Similar to findings in the previous question, lecturers and other faculty members generally assigned these services the most value (see Figure 12). We see here that those respondents that have higher awareness of these services are also those that find the services to be most valuable.

Figure 11: How valuable do you find support from your college or university library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider for each of the following aspects of the publication process, or how valuable would you find it if this support was offered to you? Use the scales below to rate from 10 to 1, where 10 equals "Extremely valuable" and 1 equals "Not at all valuable." *Percent of respondents who indicated that support for each of these aspects is highly valuable (8-10).*

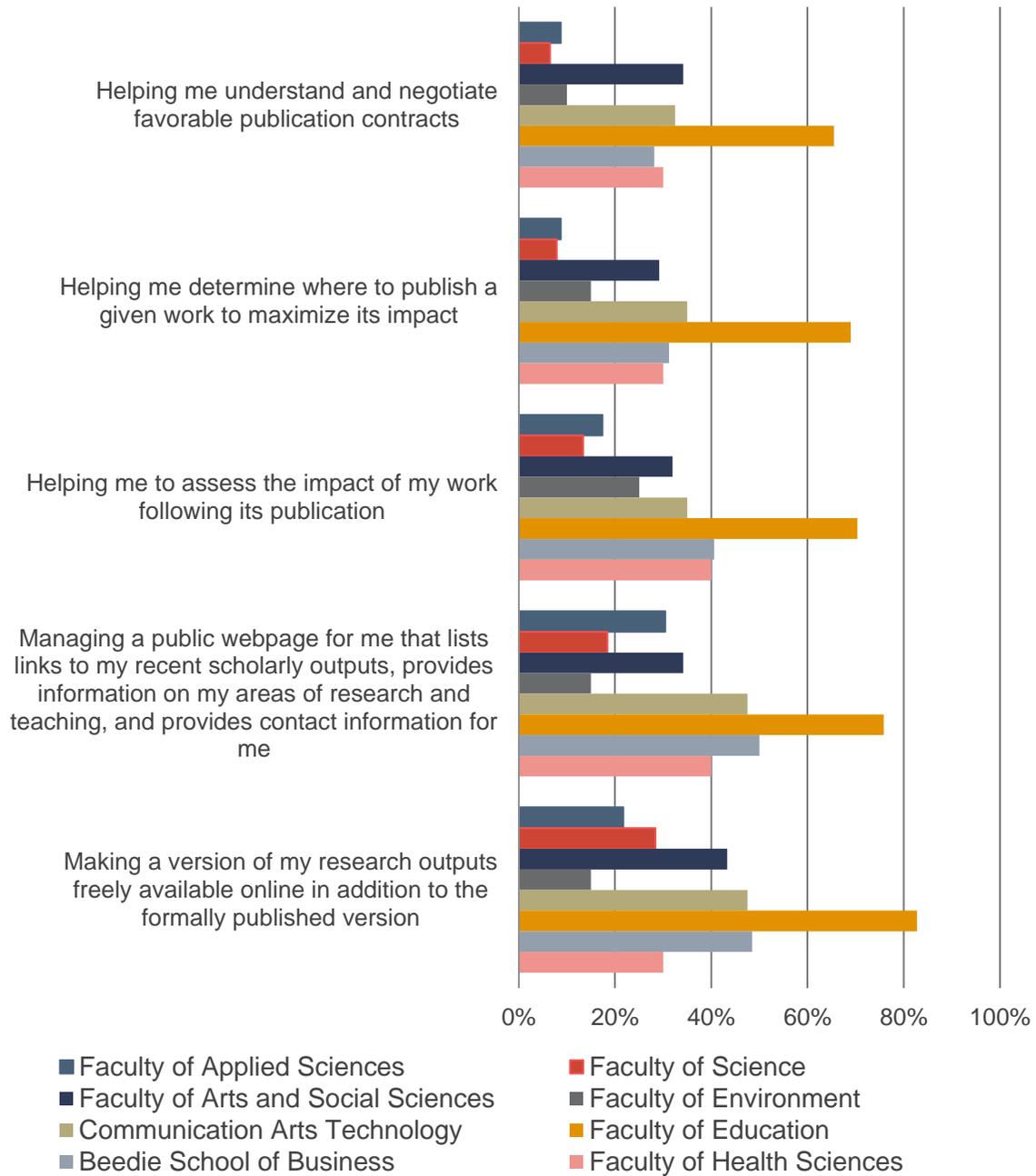


Figure 12: How valuable do you find support from your college or university library, scholarly society, university press, or another service provider for each of the following aspects of the publication process, or how valuable would you find it if this support was offered to you? Use the scales below to rate from 10 to 1, where 10 equals "Extremely valuable" and 1 equals "Not at all valuable." *Percent of respondents who indicated that support for each of these aspects is highly valuable (8-10).*

