Undergraduate Honors Theses in the IR@UF

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
Overview

• How did the IR@UF become the host for undergrad Honors theses?
• How do undergrad Honors theses compare to graduate ETDs?
• Who controls policies and procedures for undergrad Honors theses at UF?
• How have we refined our initial processes for hosting undergrad Honors theses?
Student Terminal Projects in the IR@UF

SOME CONTEXT
Recent numbers for student terminal projects in the IR@UF

- The IR@UF contains ~76,400 titles
  - More than a third are student terminal projects

- ETDs – 28,172 titles overall
  - Undergraduate Honors Theses — 1,472 titles, about 5% of ETDs

- Supplemental Material – 112 identified* objects
  - 21 of those are associated with undergrad Honors theses, ~19% of total

*Working with Graduate School to retrospectively identify grad student supplemental material

[Image of a page from UF Institutional Repository]
ETD collection includes more than digital submissions

- Other ETD subsets include:
  - Scans of print dissertations — 11,247 titles (~80% of 14,134 total)
  - Scans of print theses (author/patron requests) — 92
    - Estimated 15,000+ awaiting digitization
  - PILOTs — 548 titles
    - Non-traditional Honors theses are grouped with traditional ones, graduate PILOTs aren't
Brief history of Honors theses at UF

- **2009** - Honors Program began accepting electronic works
  - Hosted online database for theses and abstract only records

- **2013** – Meeting of Director of Honors Program and Library Dean
  - Decision taken to transfer responsibility to the Libraries
  - Made sense to move to IR@UF
    - Theses are required by departments/programs, not directly by Honors Program
    - The IR@UF already hosted ETDs
  - Initiated planning for transition
Brief History of Honors Theses at UF

• 2014 – Students began submitting directly to the Libraries

• 2016 – Honors Program website redesigned
  ◦ Theses database no longer supported
  ◦ Transferred legacy files and records to library for inclusion in IR@UF
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### Comparing graduate and undergraduate Honors ETDs

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<tr>
<th>Graduate ETDs</th>
<th>Undergraduate Honors Theses and PILOTs</th>
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| Roughly 350-450 ETDs per term |  - Spring terms heaviest, 300+  
  - Summer usually well under 50  
  - Fall typically under 100 |
| Required for almost all graduate programs |  - 50+ degree granting units  
  - Majority of those units require theses or PILOTs for magna and summa cum laude  
  - Some only for summa  
  - Four units in the School of Construction Management require PILOTs for magna and summa, no theses |

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**UF The Graduate School UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA**

**UF Honors**
## Comparing graduate and undergraduate Honors ETDs

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| Collection and certification centralized in the Graduate School | • Certification reports drawn from student records system by Libraries IT staff  
• Most works submitted individually by students  
  • A few advisors submit on behalf of students |
| Record creation and item ingestion are highly automated | • To date, record creation requires significant manual work  
• Project underway to deploy a web portal able to enforce both metadata and file format requirements  
  • Back end will connect student input with data from Registrar’s Office |
### Comparing graduate and undergraduate Honors ETDs

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<tr>
<td>Graduate Editorial Office offers several types of restriction and embargo, our content system supports them</td>
<td>No embargo options offered until automation prototype deployed summer 2017; previously student choices were go online or be archived to Libraries storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University/Libraries support optional ProQuest participation</td>
<td>No involvement with external repositories</td>
</tr>
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Graduate ETD metadata

• Use the ETD Metadata Module to hold information about the works
  ◦ Enhances search facets for the UFETD collection

• Information supplied by Graduate School with file transfer

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<tr>
<td>Degree: Master's (M.S.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Grantor: University of Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Disciplines: Aerospace Engineering, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Chair: Fitz-Coy, Norman G.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Members: Wiens, Gloria J. Dixon, Warren E.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Undergraduate Honors ETD metadata

- In early semesters, Honors metadata was limited
  - Title, type, author, publication date, poor keywords, and abstract

- In 2016, we began enriching the metadata with info drawn from student records
  - We use Access and Excel to make the info resemble the graduate metadata module
Supplemental materials

• Graduate students
  ◦ After getting authorized, they can self-submit supplemental material
    ▪ Datasets, media files, sources that do not violate copyright
  ◦ Also able to link the record for that material to their ETD record
    ▪ For very large datasets, we refer students to our Data Librarian
    ▪ Students can include links to outside repositories in metadata for their works

• Undergrad Honors students
  ◦ IR staff manually loads supplemental material for students
    ▪ Large files, e.g. long videos, require special file transfers from students
Responsibility for Honors ETDs Brought Challenges AND OPPORTUNITIES
Initial challenges arising from the transfer

- Lacked communication plan for Academic Advisors
- An external vendor created the Honors Program website
  - When the Honors Program took down the site:
    - Lost access to web form and files
    - Had no contact information for vendor
  - Eventually:
    - Gained access to most files
    - But still couldn’t re-use metadata or workflow design built into web form
- Metadata standards for IR@UF higher than required by Honors Program
Initial challenges arising from the transfer

• Unlike graduate ETDs, Honors theses are submitted by individual students, not a central body.

• No web form meant submissions were made via email until summer 2017.
  ◦ Significant manual work required for:
    ▪ Metadata entry
    ▪ Submission file(s) management
    ▪ Addressing student confusion and errors

• Legacy theses from retired Honors Program database needed metadata built with info from student records.
Decentralized degree standards and authority

• Honors Program vs. Honors Degree
  ◦ Honors degrees include special notations on diplomas and transcripts
  ◦ Honors Program requires an Honors degree for completion
    ▪ Graduates have both Honors and Honors Program notations on diplomas and transcripts

• Honors degree granting units are numerous (50+)

• Results of decentralization include units whose terminal projects are web sites built with free tools—cannot currently capture them
Decentralized degree standards and authority

- Challenges in getting students to follow procedures
  - Unit staffs vary in knowledge and time to learn and share IR@UF procedures
  - Academic units and students don't think much about library submissions until the final hectic weeks of a term
  - Levels of student maturity and involvement with their terminal projects vary
  - IR staff writing and students reading instructions yields regular misunderstandings that require individual attention
    - Despite ability to earn a high GPA, many Honors students do not read online guidance carefully (some not at all)
Undergrad ETDs as a service opportunity

- The IR@UF can serve undergrad Honors students by:
  - Providing a preservation and distribution platform at no cost to them
  - Adding ‘weight’ to their projects by hosting them in an official Libraries collection
  - Giving them a publication learning opportunity

- By providing this service to Honors students, the IR@UF:
  - Gains organic marketing as students share their permanent links
  - Builds awareness of the IR among faculty and academic staff who serve Honors students
Evolving ad hoc processes for managing Honors ETDs

- Project database originally built using paper Honors forms as core data model
  - Supported basic mass email to students
  - Enabled tracking of submitted files and metadata gaps/problems

- Recent database improvements
  - Removed irrelevant-to-IR fields (legacies from the paper forms)
  - Added fields to improve student contact tracking
  - Built and refined queries to help streamline metadata creation from multiple information sources

- Immediate-future improvements
  - Tracking of specific gaps/problems in student submissions
  - Using that data to customize form mail with specific problem statements
First steps towards automation and standardized metadata

- Metadata structure
- Submission form task flow
- Planned Global UI elements
  - Banner/block with student name, Global Form Name, Current Page Name
  - Commands below/beside banner
    - Save my work so far, I’ll finish later
    - Select time between reminders
    - Send feedback to the IR@UF team
Resources

• G.W. Swicord, Institutional Repository Assistant
  ◦ gwswicord@ufl.edu

• Christy Shorey, Manager of the UF Institutional Repository and Theses and Dissertations Program
  ◦ chrshor@uflib.ufl.edu

• Permanent link to this slideshow and supplemental material(s)
  ◦ http://ufdc.ufl.edu/l/IR00010045/

• Undergraduate Honors Theses Collection
  ◦ http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ufetd

• Graduate ETD Collection
  ◦ http://ufdc.ufl.edu/ufhonors