# From Last to Ancient First:\* Merging Research Data Services & Social, Natural, Engineering Liaisons

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What happens when information professionals, data wizards, and technology experts combine their strengths in the library?



\* With apologies to Buffy the Vampire Slayer

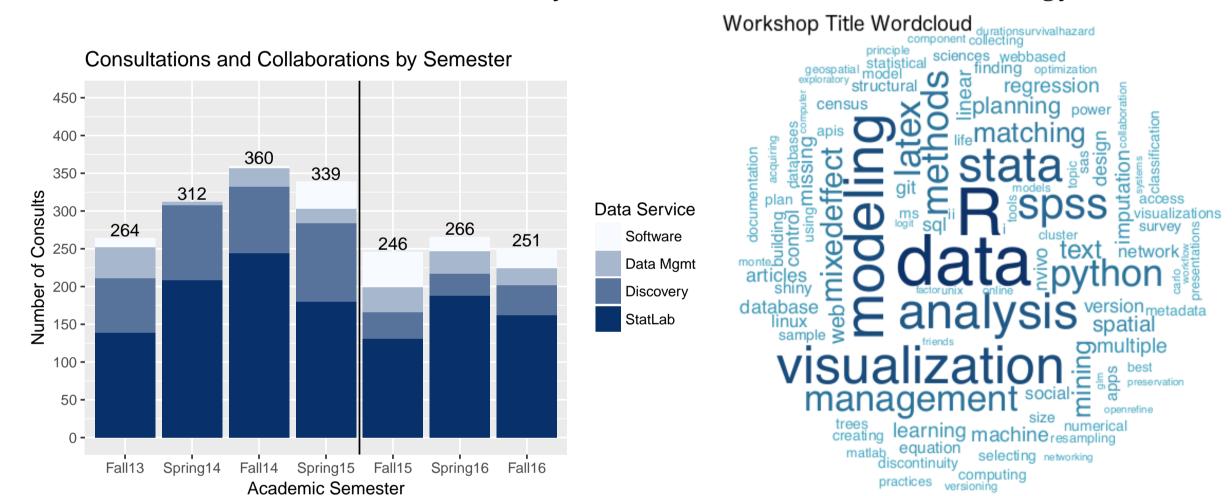
"So no problem, all we need is combo Buffy; her Slayer strength, Giles' multilingual know-how, and Willow's witchy power."

– Xander Harris, Buffy the Vampire Slayer 4.21 (Primeval)

### Research Data Services, RDS

Established in October 2013 by merging four areas of developing expertise:

- Data Management Consulting Group, advocating for and advising on data management planning, sharing, archiving, and curation;
- **StatLab**, providing consultations, training and workshops, and support for data analysis, visualization, and statistical computation;
- Data Discovery and Collections, working with researchers to locate existing data sources for analysis and building the Library's data collections; and
- Research Software Support services, helping researchers locate, access, and install University-licensed research software titles (formerly housed in information technology services).



Engaged in **consultations** with researchers; **education** for data-intensive research approaches; and building **partnerships** within the University to promote data, computational, and quantitative research across campus.

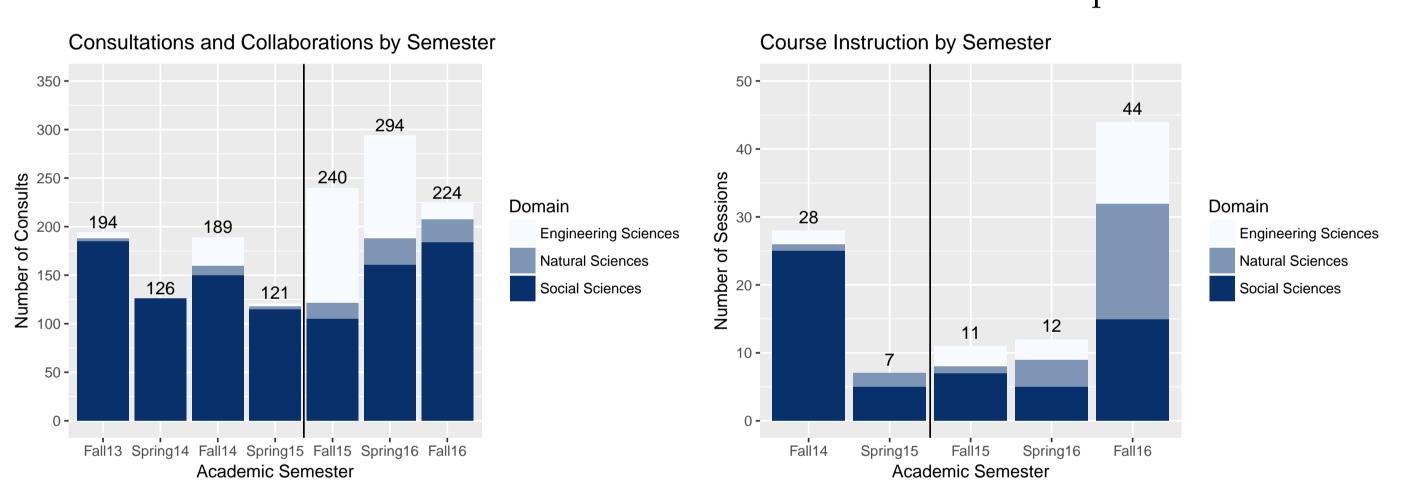
# Social, Natural, Engineering Science Liaisons, SNE

Providing expertise on information discovery, management, creation and dissemination for the social, natural, and engineering sciences. These disciplines account for about **half** of the departments at UVA, **two-thirds** of the faculty, **three-quarters** of the graduate students, and **three-fifths** of the undergraduate students.

As part of reorganization that combined RDS and SNE, liaison portfolios were focused around

- information search and management, teaching and literacy, and scholarly communication;
- deeper engagement with students, staff, and faculty;
- creating partnerships with research support partners outside of the library.

Work around collections and reference services were centralized in new departments.



Note: The changes pre- and post-reorganization are *in part* due to differences in recording methods and cultures within the SNE team prior to integration with RDS.

# The Enjoining, RDS+SNE

"The power of the Slayer and all who wield it. Last to ancient first, we invoke thee.

- ... Accept us and the power we possess. Make us mind and heart and spirit enjoined."
  - Enjoining Spell, Buffy the Vampire Slayer 4.21 (Primeval)

Forced to face a new, super-sized threat (Adam, a biomechanical demonoid), Buffy's super-slayer strength wasn't enough. The enjoining spell combined her power with Giles' extensive knowledge, Willow's magics, and Xander's heart. Adam sought to estrange the Scooby gang, weakening them; instead, they became more powerful than he could have ever imagined!

To meet new (non-apocalyptic) challenges posed by transformations in research and scholarship, our library's 2015 reorganization combined the RDS and SNE teams to promote greater collaboration between our data and information experts, from last to ancient first. In 2015-16 we had only 1.5 FTEs on the SNE team. By 2016-17, we had 4 FTEs, two science and engineering and two social science librarians. And the work began of melding the new and increasingly popular data-oriented services with our long-standing and highly valued information services.

### Achievements

While we haven't saved the world from human-demon hybrids (yet), we have improved:

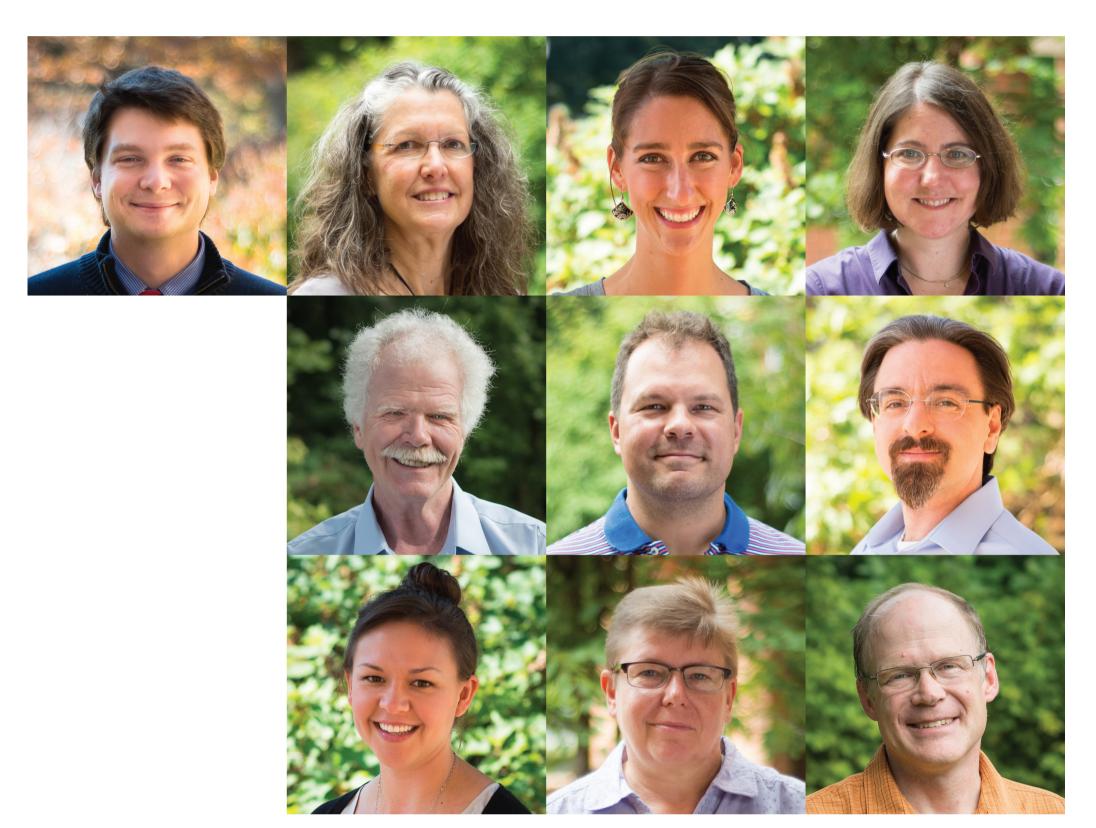
- Collaborations: around liaisonship, increased professional development in information science for non-librarians; around data services, increased knowledge of DMPs and data discovery among research librarians;
- Partnerships: in CADRE, wider diffusion of advanced computing resources and knowledge; in new university initiatives, funding discovery tools and OSF for institutions with the VPR;
- Joint planning: for efforts like data rescue event; for proposals around open data communities in collaboration with the Data Science Institute.

# Challenges

Like Buffy and her gang after the Enjoining spell, we have incurred costs. They had the essence of the First Slayer attacking them in their sleep; we have:

- Time and staff constraints: every one has taken on something new;
- Attention constraints: work on building our newer data services has taken a back seat temporarily, as individuals have been pulled in new directions, and collective energy is redirected toward building internal understanding and team dynamics;
- Obscuring of resource needs: most services are still primarily supported by an individual, but this isn't always evident to library leadership, who may simply see a bigger team.

## The Team



- Pete (PhD Physics), Senior Research Data Scientist-Computation, Liaison to Physics, Computer Science
- Kay (MLS), Research Librarian to School of Education, Liaison to all Education Departments, Systems & Information Engineering
- Meagan (MLIS), Research Librarian to Social Sciences, Liaison to Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology
- Michele (PhD Political Science), Director of Research Data Services & Social, Natural, Engineering Sciences
- Bill (MLIS), Research Data Management Librarian, Liaison to School of Commerce
- Clay (MS Statistics), Senior Research Data Scientist-Statistics, StatLab Manager
- Jeremy (MLS), Research Librarian to Science & Engineering, Liaison to Chemistry, Statistics, Chemical Engineering, Materials Sciences, Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering
- Jenn (MS Sociology, MLIS), Data Librarian, Liaison to School of Public Policy
- Nancy (PhD Physiology), Research Computing Specialist, Liaison to Biology, Biomedical Engineering
- Ricky (PhD Astronomy), Research Librarian to Science & Engineering, Liaison to Astronomy, Environmental Sciences, Math, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Electrical & Computer Engineering

### What's Next?

"You think you know... what's to come... what you are. You haven't even begun." – Tara Maclay, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* 4.22 (Restless)