Dissertation Proposal Defense

Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science


Date: December 11, 2023
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Place: Room 828, Information Science Building, 135 N. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15260

Committee:
- Dr. Alison Langmead, Clinical Professor, Information Culture and Data Stewardship, School of Computing and Information; History of Art and Architecture, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- Dr. Marcia Rapchak, Teaching Assistant Professor, Information Culture and Data Stewardship, School of Computing and Information
- Dr. Eleanor Mattern, Teaching Assistant Professor, Information Culture and Data Stewardship, School of Computing and Information
- Dr. Michael Dietrich, Department Chair and Professor, History and Philosophy of Science, Department of Philosophy

Abstract:

Through my dissertation research, I propose to explore the social construction of indicator-driven research assessment (IDRA), focusing on the factors that together transformed the methodology from one supporting federal research and development impact assessments to an integral and influential component of the global research infrastructure. This research addresses the questions of how constituent actors, values and emergent technologies have contributed to the course of IDRA’s evolution, and what this history might suggest about the role of values in the incentivization structure of the scientific enterprise. I plan to draw on methods from the historical and science and technology studies (STS) traditions to support this inquiry. Specifically, the STS Biography of Artifacts and Practices theory-method package will be used to interrogate select moments in IDRA’s evolution to identify why some adaptations to the methodology succeeded and others failed to become meaningfully incorporated into practice. Undertaken at a time when explicitly values-driven efforts are being advanced as research assessment reforms, this research will illuminate the historical relationship between what “good science” is understood to be, who makes these decisions, who is affected by them and what role scientific values have played in making them.