

ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AS A SCIENCE COMMUNICATION HUB



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▶ INTRODUCTION

Academic libraries act as a hub for science communication, supporting the dissemination of knowledge, facilitating discussion, and encouraging informed decision-making. As many academic libraries are centrally organized within their institution and because they support education and research for all disciplines, they are a prime space for science communication to happen. However, the role academic libraries play in science communication is often missed due to the abundance of other vital roles these libraries fill for their institution. This poster highlights the science communication work of two librarians with distinct perspectives.

▶ METHODS

To provide a case study comparison of the differences in science communication connections made between an established subject liaison librarian and an early-career functionalist librarian, the two librarians documented every instance they met with individuals or groups for science communication projects during the 2026 Fall semester at MSU (August 25 – December 12). In addition to noting the connection, the librarians noted if the interaction was with someone in the library, a campus-affiliate, or part of the broader community. Multiple interactions with the same individual or group are indicated by the weight of the connection, visualized by the thickness of the line between two nodes.

▶ RESULTS

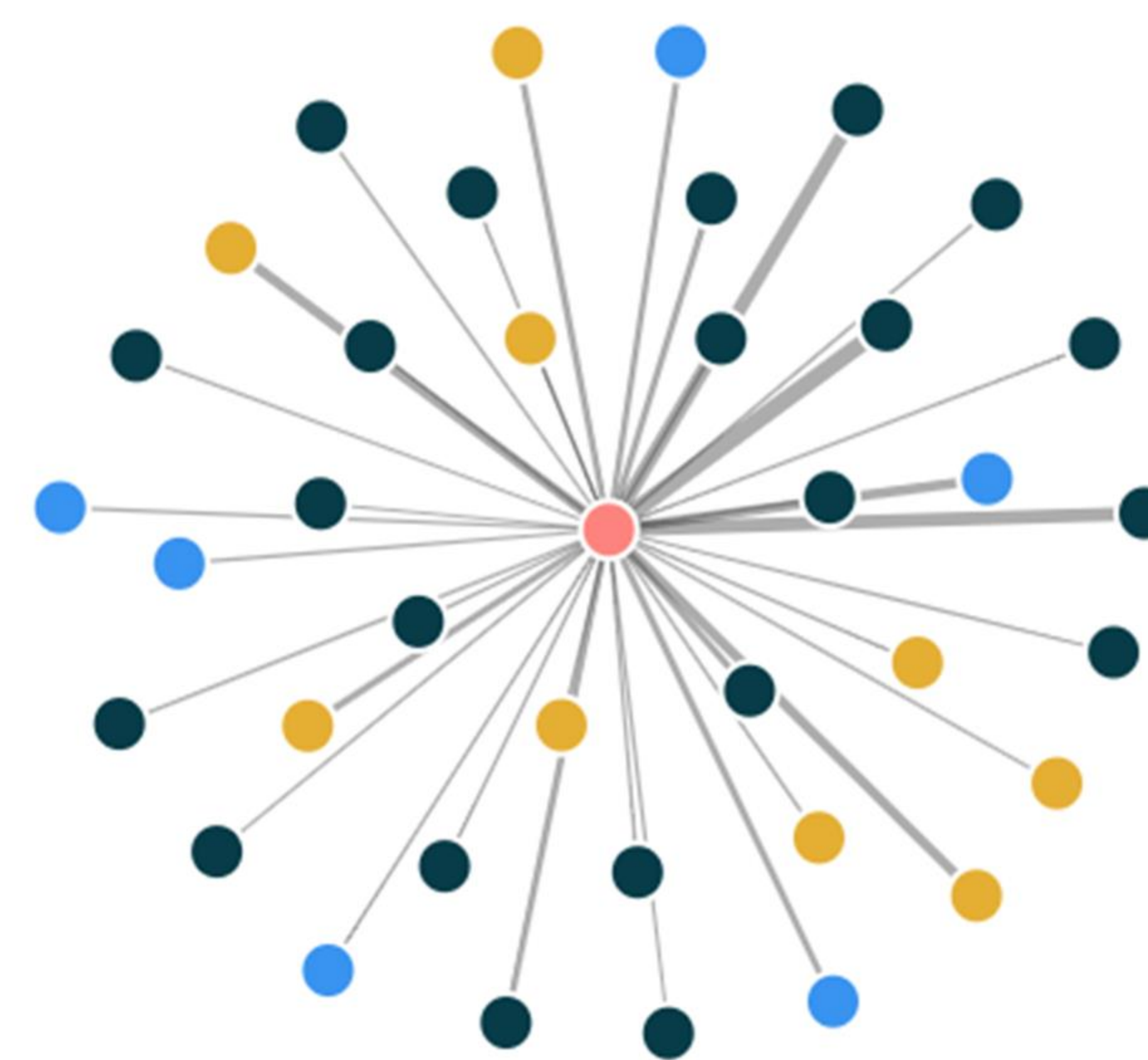
Jodi Coalter, the established subject liaison librarian, made 60 connections with 37 unique individuals or groups in the 2025 Fall semester. Eli Wachter, the early-career functionalist librarian, made 54 connections with 34 unique individuals or groups during the same time span. Wachter (72%) had a greater proportion of connections for the campus community compared to Coalter (58%). Coalter (17%) demonstrated greater connections with the broader community compared to Wachter (2%).

SciComm Connections in Fall 2025

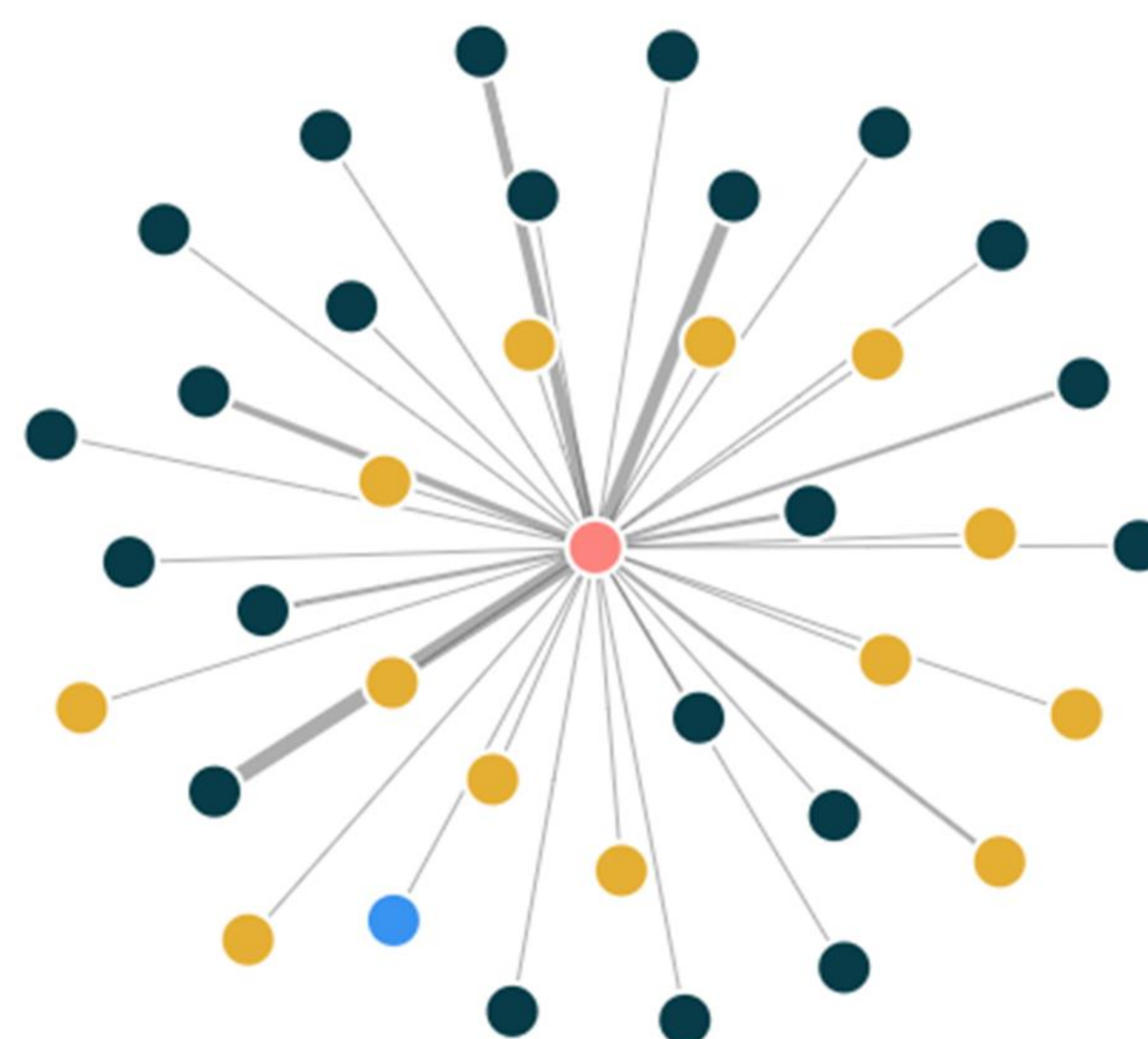
MSU Academic Semester: 8/25 – 12/12

● Librarian ● Campus ● Library ● Community

Jodi Coalter



Eli Wachter



▶ DISCUSSION

Subject liaisons and functionalists support science communication in differing ways due to the priorities of their positions. While both librarians had a similar number of connections within the library, their career and positionality differences can be seen in their interactions with the campus and the broader community. Since Wachter is in a functionalist position, they support science communication across a range of disciplines, allowing them to connect with more people on campus, while Coalter focuses her efforts in supporting people working within her subject areas. Through establishing herself within the field and local organizations, Coalter has a broader reach to connect with and support the non-MSU community.

▶ CONCLUSIONS

Through sharing the connections made by these two librarians, this poster hopes to spark a conversation about the ways in which academic librarians can engage and encourage science communication within their library, within their institution, and within the greater community. Many librarians may be supporting students and researchers in explaining complex science concepts for a general audience without recognizing that this work is science communication. While this support may look different based on career experience and positionality, librarians play a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge outside of individual disciplines.

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