



Departmental Research Trends at OUWB (2013-2024): Exploring Equity, Growth and Student Opportunity

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Introduction

Tracking academic output across departments can provide insight into institutional growth, productivity, and evolving educational culture. However, interpreting these data requires careful attention to variation in department size, scholarly norms, and available resources. At OUWB, departments vary not only in faculty number and structure, but also in the types of research they emphasize (e.g., clinical, basic science, medical education). By analyzing 12 years of faculty publications, this project seeks to illuminate trends, identify high-growth areas, and explore how scholarly engagement can translate into student opportunity and institutional improvement.

Aims and Objectives

- Quantify academic productivity across departments at OUWB from 2013–2024 by analyzing faculty publication trends.
- Identify departments with high cumulative output and significant annual growth in scholarly activity.
- Acknowledge limitations in raw publication data, including lack of adjustment for departmental size and expectations.
- Use publication trends as a framework for enhancing institutional support for faculty scholarship.
- Demonstrate how departmental productivity may strengthen a program’s appeal to residency applicants and elevate national ranking potential.
- Emphasize the role of medical students in this landscape by promoting research mentorship, building strong academic portfolios, and aligning with departments that support student scholarship.

Methods

Annual publication data were obtained from the OUWB Medical Library, including peer-reviewed articles, books/book chapters, meeting abstracts, and other scholarly work. Departmental output was analyzed for cumulative totals and growth trends over time. To ensure fairness in interpretation, we considered the known variability in departmental size and requirements, acknowledging this as a limitation and an area for future stratified analysis.

Results

Internal Medicine led in cumulative publications (n=1590), while Ophthalmology showed the highest average annual growth (10.71%). Surgery and Urology, and Pathology also demonstrated strong contributions, with consistent publication activity. Departments such as Radiology, Emergency Medicine and Anesthesiology showed high average annual growth as shown in **Figure 1**. As an institution, OUWB has had an increase of publications with citations and peer reviewed articles being the highest count as shown in **Figure 2**. MedEdPORTAL and abstract submissions varied, reflecting differences in education-focused scholarship. A visual comparison of total publications and growth rates helps illustrate relative productivity but must be interpreted in light of differences in departmental size and expectations.

Figure 1. Departmental Publication Trends in growth at OUWB (2013–2024)

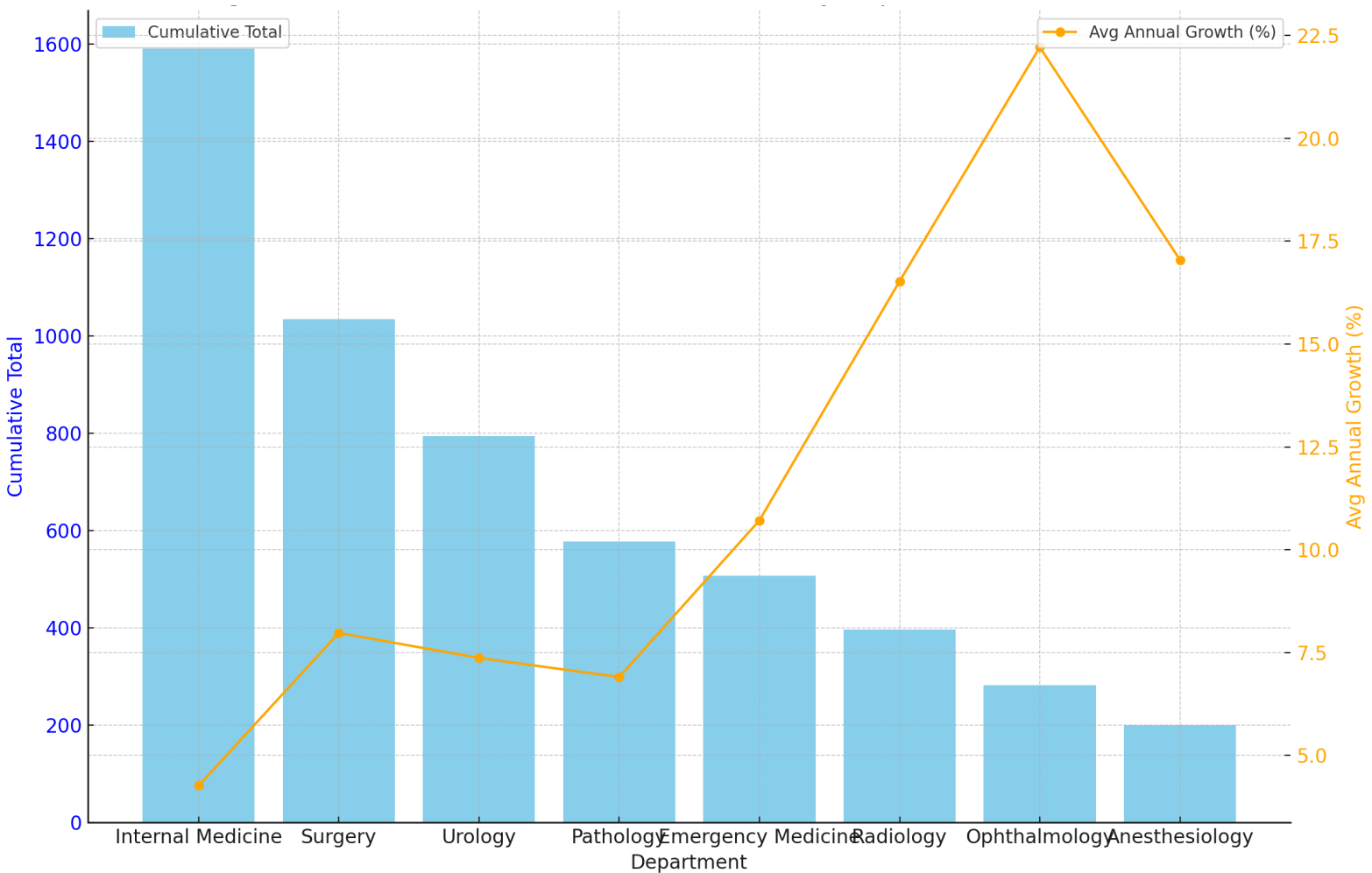


Figure 2. Cumulative Academic Productivity by Publication Type (2013-2024)

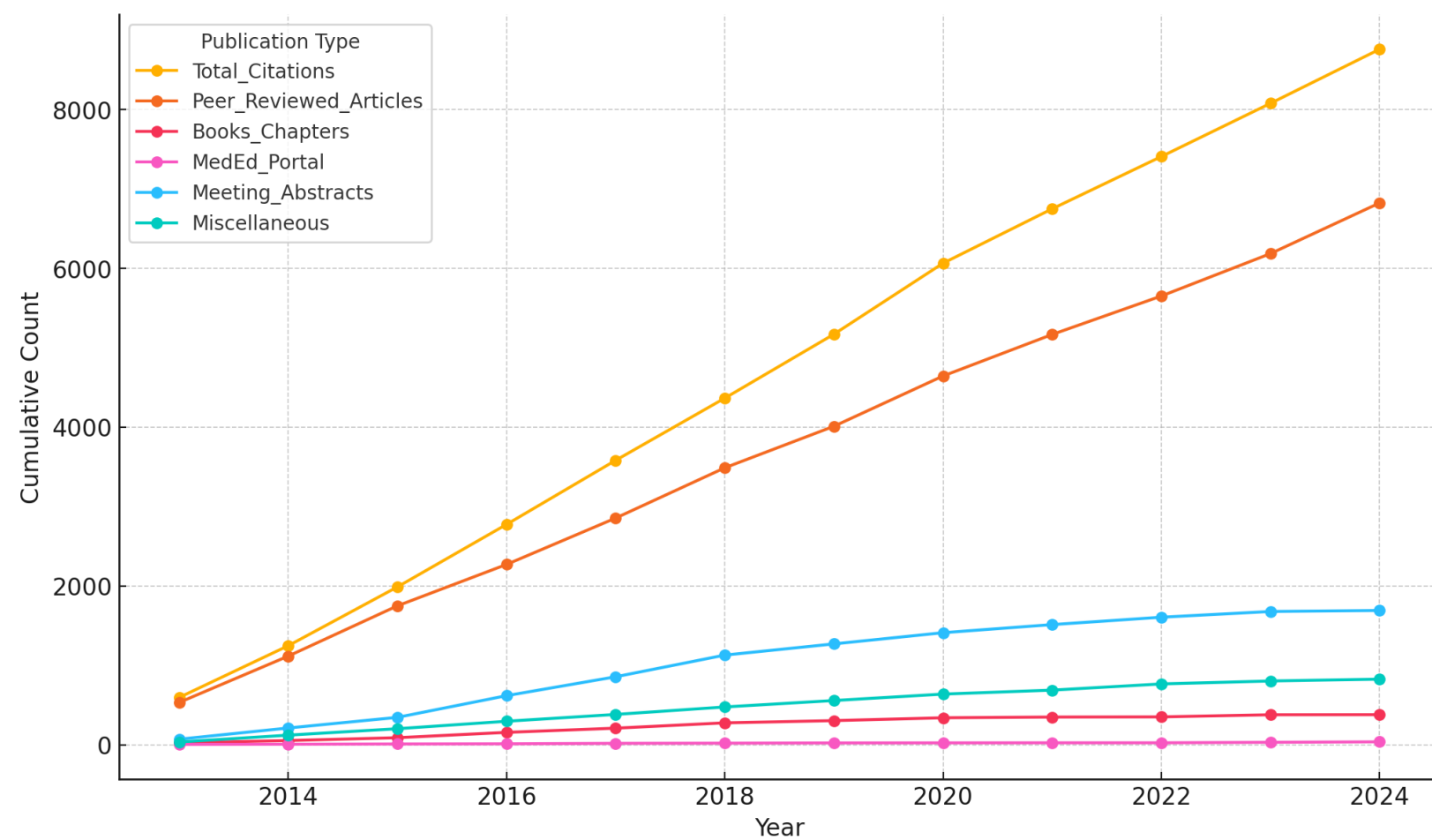
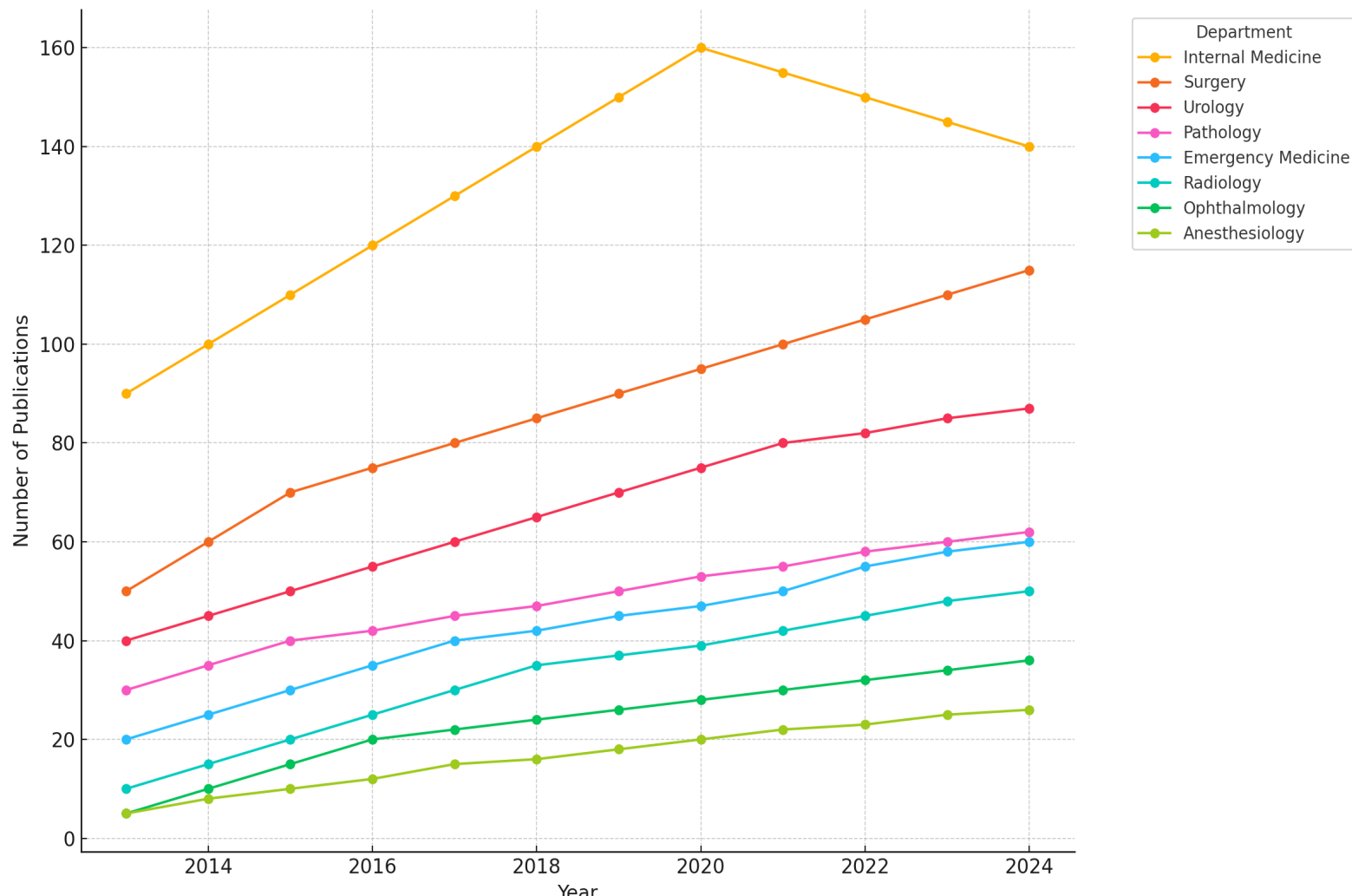


Figure 3. Trends in Publications by Department (2013-2024)



Conclusions

A decade of publication data at OUWB reveals promising growth and departmental variation in scholarly activity. This analysis provides a framework for improving equity in research support, enhancing student mentorship opportunities, and guiding future departmental planning. By contextualizing trends and focusing on opportunity rather than comparison, we aim to foster a collaborative and academically enriching environment for students and faculty alike.

Discussion

Rather than ranking departments, these data can be used to understand institutional strengths and guide support where needed. For example, departments with rapid growth may benefit from infrastructure to sustain momentum, while others may benefit from collaboration-building, mentorship structures, or more inclusive definitions of scholarly output. These insights can also inform medical student engagement by identifying departments with active mentorship cultures or accessible research pathways.

Implications for Medical Students

- Research engagement is an essential element of medical education, particularly for students pursuing competitive specialties. Departments with visible, productive research cultures often provide more structured opportunities for student involvement. Analyzing publication trends allows students to:
- Identify high-output departments with mentorship potential
 - Engage in growing departments where student participation could be valuable
 - Use departmental culture as a factor in seeking research mentors or electives
 - Strategically align their scholarly experiences with residency goals

Departmental research productivity may influence how students perceive other institutions during the residency match process. For students creating their rank lists, working within departments with established or growing reputations for scholarship can support both interview competitiveness and match outcomes. National rankings often incorporate academic output, and students benefit when their home programs are viewed as strong scholarly environments.

References

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