

Interim Report of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarly Communication

Background

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarly Communication was established in September 2019. Three broad goals were identified:

1. Explore how the Penn community defines “scholarly communication,” review the environment, and identify critical issues in these areas.
2. Identify broader trends in scholarly communications and issues that are emerging (e.g.: the impact of publishers on scholarship, partnership agreements, achieving “open access,” and copyright retention).
3. Make recommendations to the University and the Library on its future contracts with companies that publish scholarly journals.

Historical Information

A Committee on Open Access Publishing was appointed by the Provost and Senior Vice Provost for Research in December 2009 to examine the status of open access publishing practices and to make recommendations for establishing procedures to promote open access that better serve the Penn community and the general public. In May 2010 the Committee presented its recommendations to the Provost, the Senior Vice Provost for Research and the Council of Deans. Between September 2010 and April 2011 these recommendations were discussed with the faculty of the Schools across the University. In May 2011, the recommendations in the form of a Statement of Principles were endorsed by the Faculty Senate.

- Faculty Open-Access Statement of Principles for Scholarly Articles (September 13, 2011)
- SEC Discussion on Open Access Statement (April 2011)
- SEC Endorsement of Open Access Statement (May 2011)

Charge

The Faculty Senate’s Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarly Communication will convene for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years with a focus on deliberating on current issues in the publisher ecosystem and the dissemination of scholarly research. Specifically, the committee will evaluate how publishers are influencing, and at times inhibiting, the production of and access to information resources and explore opportunities to form unique partnerships and transformative agreements. The Committee will also address overarching issues (e.g., publisher influence, partnerships and publisher agreements, open access/scholarship, copyright and retention of author’s rights, privacy, new and experimental models for publishing, the production and dissemination of information), broadly disseminating a common understanding of the scholarly resource landscape and developments within it.

The Ad Hoc Committee’s work will be prioritized by the group to keep interests aligned with the priorities of the Senate. The Committee may review some of the current topics and engender greater collective awareness of the issues involved. The Committee may delve into practices of the faculty in their various roles in scholarly production (e.g., as authors, editors, reviewers) and consider how, as a University, we can support greater dispersal of information resources developed and managed at Penn.

The Committee shall have power to present reports and recommendations on any matter relating to scholarly communications to the Senate. The Committee shall be governed in its responsibilities and procedures by rules established by the Faculty Senate. The Committee’s work will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Senate Executive Committee.

Interim Report

The Committee began meeting early in the academic year and is still in an information-gathering phase of its work. The plan from the Committee’s inception has been to produce a first formal report in Spring 2021, and the Committee still expects to do so. As an interim report to the April 15, 2020, meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), Daniel Raff (Associate Professor of Management and Committee Chair) organized a brief oral introduction to the problems the Committee is studying and to the ways in which libraries are responding. The Committee committed from the start to work closely with Penn Libraries professional staff with expertise on relevant matters. The relationship is proceeding productively: the Committee’s work program this year has been entirely confined to journal publishing, and this is a domain in which the Libraries’ staff expertise is broad and deep. In the SEC presentation, Professor Raff spoke first to provide some brief economic context, after which Brigitte Weinstein (Associate Vice Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communication) and Jon Shaw (Associate Vice Provost for Libraries and Deputy

University Librarian) spoke at greater length on the issues as these present to the Libraries and to the Association of Research Libraries consortium, of which Penn is a member.

Professor Raff began with some scene-setting. The most important framing facts are simple. Journals began being produced by learned societies but have increasingly become accessible only through commercial publishers. The prime motivation of the leading commercial publishers is profit rather than the diffusion of knowledge, and they act in a strategically sophisticated way. Digital modes of access to content, the aggressive acquisition and proliferation of titles, and opportunities these offer for bundling and general revenue extraction have only strengthened the publishers’ bargaining position when negotiating contracts with university libraries and university library systems. Penn relies to an important extent on publication activity in evaluating faculty performance, particularly for tenure and promotion decisions. This induces a demand from the Standing Faculty for access to learned journals over and above what its members might require in the natural course of their own research. These needs make our own negotiating situation more, rather than less, difficult.

Ms. Weinstein then articulated four major issues present in the current scholarly communications system. The first issue concerns the unsustainable costs required to support the current model of scholarly publishing, particularly regarding the terms sought by the for-profit commercial publishers. The issue is not just the crude one of funding but also the ramifications of resources displaced in order to pay the journal publishers’ fees, the real value of one journal versus another, the true costs involved in producing a journal, and the extent to which those true costs are in alignment with what Penn is asked to pay. Ms. Weinstein noted, to give a sense of proportion, that the Libraries’ subscriptions from the five largest commercial publishers of journals (i.e., Elsevier, Sage, Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley) alone currently consume 30% of the Library’s entire annual acquisition budget.

The second and third major issues facing scholarly communications concerns limitations on access to Penn scholarship. Because of the high cost of access to paywalled scholarly periodicals, there are limitations to the audience that can afford to read Penn scholarship. Worse, the problem exceeds less well-resourced institutions and independent individuals in the United States and the industrialized world: many institutions and individuals in the Global South have no practical means of accessing such journals and their faculty are therefore badly constrained in their ability to stay informed about scholarly discussion in their disciplines.

The final issue concerns inequity in the ability to publish. This issue has emerged as an unintended consequence of many attempts to address the other issues. Funding models for Open Access publishing that operate on a pay-to-publish basis, such as article processing charges (APCs) that authors pay to publish an article Open Access and transformative agreements that develop this approach on a much larger scale, are increasingly prevalent. The high costs associated with these funding models are simply unattainable for many authors (particularly—though far from exclusively—in the Global South), thus precluding them from active participation in scholarly discussion within their disciplines.

As the University considers the many approaches it could take to influence any of these issues, it should consider two variables: speed and cost. How quickly does Penn wish to influence any of these issues? And how much are we willing or not willing to pay to influence them? It is imperative that we identify the appropriate balance to strike between these variables as we chart our path forward.

Mr. Shaw then surveyed the ways in which other libraries and universities across the country are addressing these issues. He focused in particular on the ways in which peer academic libraries are shifting their activities to influence the scholarly landscape. He shared a Toolkit developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (<http://acrl.libguides.com/scholcomm/toolkit/>) which offers examples that expand upon efforts:

- Building libraries’ collections to strategically support scholarship and positively respond to economic challenges of traditional scholarly publishing;
- Assisting faculty with optimizing the impact of their research;
- Utilizing the right of fair use, and advocating others to do the same, in order to promote preservation, access, use and discovery of materials in

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research and instruction;

- Educating authors on their intellectual property rights and assisting with the interpretation and amendment of publication contracts;
- Facilitating compliance with funder public access mandates;
- Developing and managing institutional repositories for the purpose of collecting, showcasing and augmenting discovery of institutional research output; and
- Advocating for open access to scholarship when appropriate.

It was in his view critical to understand how peer libraries are engaging with faculty, shifting from functioning solely as a repository of physical objects like books and bound journal volumes and as an access point for journal backfiles and other databases to working directly with the faculty, formally and collaboratively (the “together rather than independently” approach), both regarding the use of library materials and influencing and advancing scholarly communications more broadly over the whole of the research-through-publication lifecycle via library-mediated workflow management systems.

The forces and configurations implicated in the outset of the Committee’s charge are complex and dynamic. The Committee this year has begun to explore them and the ways Penn might best respond. We will continue to do so for at least the coming year. We will submit a more extensive report a year hence for SEC discussion and for possible consideration of recommendations SEC might wish to make. We will advise in that report whether we think there is further work for the Committee as such to pursue and, if so, what that work might be. Our goal in the coming year or in some longer term is to assist SEC in developing a plan or at

least a basic position from which scholarly communications issues can be addressed as they arise. Arise they surely will.

Members of the 2019-2020

Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarly Communication

- Jerry Jacobs (Professor of Sociology)
Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Faculty Senate Chair-Elect and Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication)
Lewis Kaplan (Professor of Surgery at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the Veterans Administration Medical Center)
Steven Kimbrough (Faculty Senate Chair and Professor of Operations, Information and Decisions)
Eileen Lake (Professor of Nursing)
Rebecka Peebles (Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia)
Kathy Peiss (Roy F. and Jeannette P. Nichols Professor of American History)
Daniel Raff (Associate Professor of Management), *Chair*
Beth Simmons (Andrea Mitchell University Professor of Law and Political Science)
Non-voting members:
Mary Francis (Director of the University of Pennsylvania Press)
Aishwarya Pawar (GAPSA representative, Cell and Molecular Biology Ph.D. candidate)
Jon Shaw (Associate Vice Provost and Deputy University Librarian)
Brigitte Weinstein (Associate University Librarian for Collections)

Report of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on the Institutional Response to the Climate Emergency (CIRCE)

Committee Charge

CIRCE was established in December 2019 for the purpose of facilitating discussion of all aspects of global warming and climate change as they pertain to faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. Specifically, CIRCE will consider the following categories of faculty interest as they pertain to the climate emergency at Penn:

- Education, including classroom instruction as well as extra-curricular educational activities
- Research, including as well scholarship, practical expertise, and artistic expression
- Operations of the University, including decarbonization, energy efficiency, and sustainability
- Flourishing of community, both within Penn, and between Penn and its regional and international stakeholders

Sub-Committee Organization

It was recognized in its formulation that the charges to CIRCE could not be completed successfully by a single committee. As a result, three subcommittees were formed, specifically: Operations, Research & Education, and Community & Policy. Different types of work were pursued by each subcommittee, so the report is divided into sections for each of them.

Operations

The Operations subcommittee developed four recommendations.

1. Updated Climate and Sustainability Action Plan (CSAP)

We recommend that the administration prepare and publish an updated Carbon and Sustainability Action Plan to reflect the effects of the Solar Power Purchase Agreement (Solar PPA) and the Air Travel offsets announced by the President and to clarify the strategies, challenges, and achievements in each of the seven sections of plan. Recommendations for five of the sections are addressed in this section, while the other two are addressed by the work of the Community & Engagement and the Research & Education subcommittees.

The updated plan should explain exactly how the main campus will achieve carbon neutrality by 2042, making clear the pathway to the “100 x 42” goal mentioned in the report. It should show all the categories of campus emissions and the effect of each initiative over time. The data used to prepare the plan should be made available to the Penn community as part of the plan, including all consumption data and the carbon emissions factors for different categories of admissions. The data will provide incentives for improvement among the schools and can help students and faculty in progress projects to reduce emissions.

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Many of the recommendations address the awareness and visibility of the carbon reduction initiatives. Despite the significant ambitions of the plan, there is uneven awareness of its goals or achievements, even among those interested in the topic. There is also a great deal of untapped potential for individual action across the campus. The current plan is largely implemented from the top down through the formal administrative mechanisms available to the teams in facilities and purchasing, and the committee recommends that for the next phase of planning that the campus community be more engaged in reduction efforts.

Utilities and Operations

The updated plan should explain the sources of campus utilities, and the role played by the new Solar PPA for electricity and the purchase of summer steam for chilling. All energy use, emissions, and offsets should be fully reported.

The university should consider a solar installation within the main campus, to make the achievement of the new Solar PPA more visible.

Physical Environment

Energy use and emissions should be reported for each campus building or facility, with major renovation and efficiency initiatives listed. This will both inform the campus about efficiency achievements and provide information for new initiatives to reduce emissions.

The plan should explain the energy and carbon performance standards for all new buildings and all renovations, benchmarking them against national standards.

The University should join the “2030 District Challenge” promoted by Green Building United, reporting energy use for all its campus buildings. The CSAP 3 goals already exceed the goals of that challenge, and Penn’s participation would help provide momentum and leadership to the plan.

Waste Minimization and Recycling Goals

The updated plan should explain the carbon emissions associated with each form of waste, especially the tradeoffs between landfill and waste to energy.

Waste and recycling types and quantities should be reported for each campus building. The University should evaluate mechanisms for reporting waste and recycling quantities for all administrative units as part of the Green Office program.

The changing market for recycled materials has complicated single stream recycling and highlights the importance of the ongoing waste re-

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