Open Access Committee  
Subcommittee on Question 8  
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Question 8. What are the differences between academic and publishing practices as it pertains to different fields; and in what manner should these differences be reflected in an open access policy?

I. METHODOLOGY

In order to assess these questions we gathered information across both the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses. On the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses we spoke to 30 department chairs, DPC chairs, and faculty members including 10 departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, 8 departments in the College of Education and Human Services, 6 departments in the College of Business and Technology, and 6 departments in the College of Fine Arts and Communications.

The representative faculty/department chairs were asked to respond to the following questions:

A. What factors influence academic publishing in your discipline?

B. What influences the selection of a publication medium (journal/book/audio/video, etc.)?

C. What influences your choice between an open access medium or a traditional access publication medium?

D. What issues do you foresee with a possible mandated open access policy of scholarly publications/products?

E. What issues might arise for faculty in your department/discipline with a possible university repository for open access publications?

II. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW RESULTS:

A. Factors that influence academic publishing within the disciplines at WIU:

Promotion and tenure requirements are the most critical factors that influence publishing at WIU. The highly structured review process for retention, promotion, and tenure at WIU plays a key role in influencing academic publishing. But beyond that we found that many scholars perceive academic publishing as necessary for recognition in their fields. In some departments, such as Philosophy and Religious Studies, English and Journalism, History, and others, faculty members primarily utilize a sole author approach that allows for significant name recognition in their fields. They feel that this name recognition draws students to the university, to their departments, and to their classrooms. In other disciplines, such as the natural and applied sciences, social sciences, education, many business and technology fields, and some of the fine arts departments, academic publishing is largely a collaborative effort among colleagues, some within the same department, some with colleagues in other departments, and often with colleagues from across campus, across the state, and often around the country. Faculty members in these disciplines feel the team approach helps them to advance in their fields, attracts greater funding from grants or foundations, and also serves as a pipeline for students.
into their programs of study. Faculty members in some departments utilize academic publishing as a critical part of the educational process, as students are included in their scholarly endeavors and serve as coauthors on their publications. Overall, we found that there are different needs and value systems for different disciplines relating to academic scholarship.

B: Factors that influences the selection of a publication medium:

In discussions about publication mediums, we found that there are some faculty publications in journals in every department we visited at WIU, including art history and music history journals, and journals in set design and technical aspects of stage production in Theater and Dance. In some disciplines the faculty members prefer to publish books, either as fiction or nonfiction, rather than journals articles. In disciplines that are rapidly changing, such as the computer sciences, in-progress conference proceedings publications are more common, and are valued equally with journal article publications. Also, some departments have scholarly products that have a unique audio, visual, and/or 3-D component that is essential to understanding the work.

However, the biggest factor by far that influences the selection of a publication medium among all departments at WIU is the peer review process. Other factors that were cited by faculty included “the fit” of the publication outlet with the research and the “difficulty” of having the paper accepted into the outlet. Nevertheless, all department chairs and DPC chairs cited the peer review/referee process as the single most important factor when asked about their perceptions of both standard and newer forms of publication. Whether the publication medium is a journal, a book, or a conference proceedings it must be one that undergoes a critical review by external members of the discipline prior to its acceptance for publication. Every department chair and DPC chair to whom we spoke indicated that evaluation of the scholarship includes an evaluation of the publication medium (journal, book, proceedings, etc.) for its refereed status, its rejection rate, and its stature in the field.

C. Factors that influence the choice between an open access medium or a traditional access publication medium:

When reviewing factors that influence a choice between open access medium and traditional access publication medium, there was at first a tendency among faculty in many disciplines to confuse open access with those that are electronically available via library subscriptions or through memberships with a professional organization. While many traditional print journals are electronically available they are not free and open to the world, as often the publishers rely on library subscriptions or organization membership fees to offset the costs of the publications. In many disciplines some journals offer authors an open access choice for their publications but charge a significant fee to recoup their loss of revenue. According to those interviewed there is tremendous variation in the availability of reputable open access journals among the various disciplines. In some departments, such as Philosophy and Religious Studies and Business, there are selected journals for some sub-disciplines that are widely regarded as peer reviewed quality publications, and often very few or none offer the author an open access choice. In some sub-disciplines of philosophy it was further stated that to publish outside the traditional journals casts aspersions on the reputation of the scholar by other members of the discipline. As a further explanation, respondents from departments, such as Marketing and Management, indicated that open access publications often have a high acceptance rate and are subsequently perceived to be of low quality by peers. On the other hand, in other departments, such as Theater and Dance, there are many main steam open access journals that are highly regarded juried publications, some of which are supported entirely by advertising.
Overwhelming most senior faculty, DPC chairs, and department chairs tended to equate the newer electronic only journals with a perception of lower quality and some with a complete lack of peer review. Many disciplines have had to deal with the issue of vanity publications that disguise themselves as peer reviewed journals (predatory publications). Therefore, a great deal of effort is required to investigate the refereed status of a journal whenever a faculty member publishes in a newer journal. We spoke to many department chairs that have had to tell a junior faculty member that a publication would not be counted in their evaluation as it had not properly peer reviewed. This builds great distrust of many of the newer electronic only journals by senior faculty and department chairs.

Even when the issue of peer reviewed status of a journal is separated from the open access aspect of a journal many department chairs feel that the quality of an electronic-only medium is lower than that of a traditional journal. They feel that traditional journals have page limitations which require the journal editors to accept only the highest quality work, or work of greatest interest, while electronic-only journals have no such page limitations. Also, it was stated by some that the vast proliferation of new electronic-only journals “pretty much guarantees that one can get almost anything published somewhere”. Although all of the department chairs interviewed sited peer review as crucial, many expressed worry that the quality of peer review may be declining. In some departments the perception of lower quality of electronic-only journals is prevalent among senior faculty more than junior faculty. However, in those departments junior faculty members were also acutely aware of the negative perceptions of electronic-only journals currently held by many senior faculty and administrators. Many junior faculty members stated that despite their personal acceptance of the newer journals, they avoid such journals because they feel that many DPC members, CPC members, department chairs, and deans likely hold some negative perceptions of these journals. The junior faculty members expressed concern that the negative perceptions held by some administrators, especially those of other disciplines, may impact their evaluations for retention, promotion, tenure, and PAA awards. These concerns are primarily based on assumptions they make based on the disciplines of the administrators in question.

The faculty and department chairs interviewed in the interdisciplinary fields expressed concerns about the unbiased peer review process of journals in small highly specialized fields with a small community of scholars. At the same time these faculty expressed an effort to avoid “catch-all” journals, especially the newer ones, as the broad journal titles are often sign of a predatory journal. Faculty members in the interdisciplinary fields spoke of a preference to publish within a single traditional discipline in highly recognized publication outlets. However, faculty members in interdisciplinary fields that form a bridge between two fields, such as law enforcement and economics, or military science and ethics, also expressed concerns about the peer review process in those traditional journals, often stating that “the reviewers often view the article from only one side”.

D. Possible issues with a mandated open access policy of scholarly publications:

While most faculty and administrators agreed with the philosophical notion of free availability of information for the purposes of research, most expressed deep concerns about the possibility of a policy which mandates faculty publications be open access. These concerns include:

1. Intellectual property and fair use issues. Faculty in several departments work under contract, or in collaboration, with a company to evaluate a herbicide or pesticide, or in drug development, or computer program development, or to design a production set, video, or a group of photographic images, etc. for the company. Exceptions must be
included in any open access policy for sponsored research and scholarship to deal with intellectual property issues. Also, safeguards would be needed to ensure the fair use of images from the visual arts and communications disciplines. Often faculty members in some disciplines create scholarly products, publish portions of their work to a limited audience, and then utilize these published portions to foster collaborations or to gain funding for larger projects. Concerns were raised that a policy which mandates an open access of publications and/or products would inhibit these efforts to gain external collaborations and/or funding.

2. Program assessment concerns in the Curriculum and Instruction. Faculty members in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction expressed deep concerns that state and discipline specific assessment and accreditation bodies will utilize open access information to evaluate their programs. They stated that in the past state assessment and accreditation committees have utilized course syllabi and other information posted on departmental web pages to assess and evaluate educational programs. As these assessments may impact state accreditations and/or program certifications the Department of Curriculum and Instruction endeavors to limit the open access of information that has not undergone extensive review. Care must be taken to consider not just the validity of the information posted in an open access format but also how it may be utilized politically in a competitive discipline to impact program certifications.

3. Financial issues with open access. In many disciplines traditional print journals are electronically available, but are not free and open to the world, as most publishers rely on library subscriptions or organization membership fees to offset the costs of the publications. In many disciplines there are a few reputable journals that offer authors an open access choice for their publications but charge a significant fee through an author/department pay model in order to recoup their losses from subscription fees. Faculty members in many disciplines were not aware of an author/department pay model for open access; however, once explained, their responses were overwhelmingly negative. Many faculty saw paying to publish one’s work as self-promotion and in conflict with the peer review process. In the humanities faculty members in particular equated author/department-pay models to vanity presses, while those in the fine arts equated it with advertising. Faculty in some disciplines in the natural sciences and economics were somewhat accustomed to page charges, however. Even the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences for the U.S.A. requires page charges from authors, depending on the number of color images included in the manuscript. In general most WIU faculty members felt publication charges would compromise academic integrity. Many department chairs raised publication charges as an issue and stated that an author/department-pay model would discriminate against smaller institutions in the state, and would also discriminate against departments with fewer resources, such as grants and donors.

4. Limitations of academic freedom. Almost all of the department chairs and faculty felt that any policy that required faculty to publish/disseminate their research in an open access forum would limit their academic freedom to publish in many of the journals in their discipline. In some disciplines few or none of the quality journals/book publishers have a mechanism to allow open access. In other disciplines, such as the natural sciences, some of the traditional high quality publications allow open access as either gold open access (immediately available in open access) or green open access (available as open access after 1 to 2 years). Both options require a substantial fee to allow the publisher to recoup losses from fewer library subscriptions. Gold open access
requires a higher fee than green open access. Many journals in the health and social sciences also accommodate a mandate by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to make all work supported by NIH funding available in open access format on pubmed.gov within 24 months after the initial publication date. However, even in the natural sciences not all journals make copyright provisions for this style of green open access. Many of the WIU faculty members, including most of the disciplines, feel that their academic freedom of where to publish their work would be partially or severely limited by a policy that requires open access of scholarly publications. Some further suggested that as many journals in their discipline would not accept publications from state institutions with such an open access policy, faculty recruitment would also be impacted.

5. **Perceived impact of open access policy on scholarly reputation.** In some departments the faculty indicated that the respected journals in their field do not have an open access option. Some indicated further that a stigma is attached to scholars in their field who publish outside the acceptable respected journals. Some faculty members expressed worry that a policy mandating open access publishing would create a “brain drain” in the state, indicating that the top minds in the field would leave the state, and further the recruitment of top level scholars as faculty members would also be impacted. Others indicated that a great deal of training must be undertaken to change the current mindset in regard to open access publishing, not just at WIU, but also within the discipline.

6. **Issues with the evaluation process.** Although WIU has a highly structured evaluation system for retention, promotion, tenure, and PAAs there are variations among the different departments of how different publication mediums are counted in their department criteria. Some rapidly changing fields, such as Computer Sciences, count an in-progress scholarship medium, such as a refereed conference proceedings publication, as equivalent to a final journal publication, while other departments do not count in-progress work. Most departments have a weighted system for counting in-progress work. Also, some departments have department criteria documents that specify a requirement for traditional print journal publications, and other department criteria describe open access publications as vanity presses.

E. **Issues with a possible university repository for open access publications:**

In looking at open access policies of several international universities and government agencies, such as NIH, many utilize an institutional open access repository mechanism, rather than relying on open access journals. These institutions seek permission from the publishers and only post open access copies of faculty publications when they acquire permission to do so. When this process was described to the representative WIU faculty and department chairs who were interviewed, the following issues were raised:

1. **Issue of either hosting an incomplete institutional repository or creating limitations on academic publishing practices:** Several department chairs stated that publishers in their disciplines often do not allow post print archiving of the information they publish by the author, and so they would be unlikely to provide blanket permission for a manuscript to be included in an open access institutional repository. In a recent survey reported by SPARC (http://www.sparc.arl.org) only 57% of surveyed publishers stated they give permission for post print archiving. Some department chairs indicated that journals in some disciplines are less likely to allow post print archiving an institutional repository, and therefore an institutional repository would show little or no
research activities from some departments, and more from other departments. They expressed fears that such an incomplete picture may impact funding.

On the other hand if an institutional policy were established which requires the faculty (during negotiation of copyright transfer) to utilize an author addendum that allows the author to retain rights, so that the article can be archived in an open access institutional repository, many publishers would not agree to the addendum. This would lead to institutional limitations on academic publishing. In some disciplines the faculty indicated such a requirement could be a severe limitation to their research careers and progress toward tenure.

2. **Intellectual property issues.** Faculty members in several departments raised the issue of intellectual property. Some work under contract of a private company that requires confidentiality. Other faculty members publish portions of their work to only a limited audience, and then utilize these published portions to foster collaborations or to gain funding for larger projects. Many faculty mentor graduate and honors students on thesis projects that are portions of a larger faculty research project funded by a grant or contract. Exceptions would be needed for faculty who wish to protect their intellectual property rights to specific research.

3. **Supplementary information and data set inclusion issues.** In many disciplines faculty are expected to provide supplementary information to the publisher when a manuscript is published. This is especially true in the sciences. Supplementary information includes spectral, chromatographic, and crystallography data, as well as DNA or structural information, and in some cases detailed experimental conditions. Questions were raised as to whether or not the supplementary data (which is generally not published but is made available to the reader by the publisher only upon request) should be included in an institutional repository. If supplementary data from the science disciplines is included, the question can then be raised should data sets, utilized by the social sciences, business, finance economics, marketing, and many other disciplines, also be included? In many departments faculty rely on pre-existing data sets (rather than new experimental data) to generate research publications. In some cases the data sets are freely available from government sources, but in other disciplines the data sets must be purchased. Faculty and department chairs both in Geography and Management and Marketing indicated that their faculty form specific collaborations with colleagues in other states in order to share data sets that are not available to them at WIU. Such collaborations would be jeopardized if an open access institutional repository required the inclusion of data sets. Also, many data sets must be kept confidential by IRB requirements.

4. **Technical issues:** Some disciplines have scholarly publications/products that are more than text, charts, graphs, and figures. Some require moving images and/or audio while others would best be represented as 3-D models.

5. **Management of the institutional repository.** Several department chairs expressed concerns about how an institutional repository would be managed. The faculty and department chair in Computer Sciences were especially concerned about who would be required to set up and maintain such a repository. Another issue raised was the inclusion of in-progress work, such as conference proceedings. In some departments conference proceedings make up the majority of the faculty research efforts, especially in the disciplines that are rapidly changing. Other faculty stated that in-progress work should not be included as it is not as useful to the reader/researcher as a finished product.
However, a few faculty members felt that the inclusion of open access to in-progress work could “help scholars build reputations in the field, even if they do not directly affect retention, promotion, and tenure.”

Questions were further raised as to the development of an approval process for inclusion of work in the institutional repository. Should any publication, including those in vanity presses, be included in the institutional repository? As many predatory journals do not screen manuscript submissions for plagiarism and/or false information, or in some cases even poor grammar and punctuation, how would the inclusion of such publications reflect on the institution? What are the legal ramifications to the institution? How would such publications impact students who may utilize the repository as a source of information about WIU and its programs? Additionally, some faculty expressed concerns of how accreditation bodies, or political action committees may exploit information posted on an open access repository to forward their causes, and possibly criticize WIU or some of its programs. How would the information posted, and/or possible comments made regarding the information posted, affect donations to the programs at WIU? One department chair stated, “There is a reason our campus releases information to the media only through a central office”.

6. **Faculty evaluation issues.** Some administrators and DPC chairs expressed concerns about if an approval process were established for faculty publications to be included, would possible acceptance of a given publication in the institutional repository imply its acceptance in the faculty evaluation process. If so, this would circumvent the established DPC and department chair evaluation process as it pertains to scholarship. Even if a clear distinction is drawn in the minds of the administration, some faculty members will still likely utilize acceptance of a publication in an institutional repository as an argument for its acceptance by the department in a promotion and tenure decision. Similar arguments have already been seen for faculty publications that had been given some credit in PAA documents. If an approval process is established for an institutional repository, and a faculty member submits a questionable publication that is not approved for inclusion in the repository, will there be a mechanism in place for the faculty member to contest the decision or file a grievance, as they currently do for similar PAA issues?

7. **Suggestions regarding an institutional repository.** Some faculty and department chairs interviewed questioned the ultimate purpose of an open access policy. Some asked if the purpose of an open access policy is to inform the public about how institutional support is utilized for research endeavors, while others felt the purpose is to create a free research tool for others in the discipline to utilize to aid them in their own research.

If the purpose of an open access policy is to better inform the public about university research then perhaps only “broader Impact statements” (such as is posted by the National Science Foundation) should be included on an institutional repository with links to the actual publications (if open access is permitted) or to the pertinent journal web sites (if online access is available). Also included should be links to any open federal databases that contain information in the publication. A “broader impacts statement” is a description of the purpose of the research in layman’s terms including a description of the broader public benefit or impact that may be derived from the research. The National Science Foundation (NSF) requires every grant application to include a 1 page “broader impacts statement” which is posted on a site open to the public.
If the purpose of an open access policy is to provide a free resource for scholars to utilize then perhaps the institutional repository should contain the abstract of the publication and include highly significant data and relevant conclusions. The abstract should also contain a link to a PDF of the complete publication (if open access is permitted) or to the pertinent journal web site (if online access is available). Again, links to open federal databases that include information in the manuscript should be included. Another option is to host “green open access” to full manuscripts. This is similar to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) research site, pubmed.gov. Pubmed.gov is a searchable repository of publications resulting from work supported by NIH. Abstracts of journal/book with key words are included in the repository. Each abstract includes a link to the open access manuscript (if more than 24 months since the publication date or if open access is available) or to a link to the journal web site (table of contents) that published the article. If the reader/researcher has an institutional library subscription or organizational membership that allows access to the journal he/she can download the PDF from the journal web site. If the reader/researcher has no access through their institution or organization he/she can access enough information to decide if the article will be useful and to allow an interlibrary loan request to be made.

III. FINAL SUMMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

After speaking to numerous department chairs and faculty on both the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses we wish to make the following remarks of summation based on the opinions expressed by the interviewees:

- There is a significant variation in the research/scholarship needs and value systems for different disciplines, and that the disciplines are in different stages of incorporation of electronic communication into their scholarly publications/products.

- Maintaining academic integrity through a rigorous peer review/juried publication process is essential in all academic disciplines. Vanity publications must be avoided at all costs.

- Negative perceptions of open access journals are prevalent in many disciplines and a change of mindset will be difficult to make in the near future. It will likely require some time and “changing of the guard” before significant improvements can be made in perceptions of open access journals for these disciplines. The issue of predatory publications greatly complicates and slows the acceptance of open access journals.

- Faculty members in all disciplines at WIU feel very strongly that a university policy should not be implemented that limits the freedom of faculty members to submit their scholarly work to journals of their choice.

- An institutional open access policy may recommend faculty utilize open access mediums whenever possible, however the use of open access journals should NOT be mandated.

- The university should facilitate the use of open access journals through funding. The university now pays most of the cost of peer review journals, through library subscription fees and faculty salaries. They should continue to fund the cost of utilizing peer reviewed journals by funding open access publications as the disciplines move in that direction.
If an institutional repository approach is utilized as part of an open access policy great care should be taken in the management of the repository, including consideration of all implications and impacts to the various disciplines. To that end, the decision to include information in the repository, or to provide complete open access to the publication, should be left to the authors (with departmental, publisher, and sponsor permission), similar to the way *Research Gate* hosts research information and open access publications.