Open Access Reporting, Oversight, and Enforcement Mechanisms at Western Illinois University

Three mechanisms exist for reporting of scholarly and creative activity at Western Illinois University (WIU):

1) the annual submission for the Author Recognition Reception,
2) the annual report of faculty and academic support professionals’ accomplishments (i.e., WIU’s Professional Achievement Award [PAA] process), and
3) the Graduate School’s Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Submission Process

Each of these existing university processes were considered as a possible means through which an oversight mechanism could originate.

**Author’s Database and Recognition Reception** - Each spring, the WIU Libraries host the annual Author’s Recognition Reception. To prepare for the event, authors are encouraged to submit information about their publications and other scholarly & creative activity, which is then incorporated into the WIU Author’s Database. Several librarians also search databases to find articles written by WIU Faculty. To comply with the Open Access Policy, authors could be asked to submit a pre-print or post-print of their work to a repository as part of the submission process and, in doing so, opt-in to the repository. In cases that authors elect to opt-out of the policy, they could document the publication (i.e., provide bibliographic information) and request that the open-access policy be waived on a work-by-work basis.

**Professional Achievement Award (PAA)** – At WIU, all faculty and academic support professionals submit an annual report of their accomplishments, including scholarly and creative activities. These annual reports (e.g., PAA reports) are reviewed by the Department Personnel Committee and the Department Chair and include information on the activity’s significance as well as citation information for any resultant publications. These reports are then forwarded to their College’s Dean who, after further review, sends them on to the Provost. At some point in the review process, someone could be assigned to ensure that a pre-print or post-print of the work was also submitted to the open-access repository (i.e., opt-in) or a request that the open-access policy be waived on a work-by-work basis (i.e., opt-out).

**Graduate School’s Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Submission Process** – Prior to graduation, many WIU graduate students upload electronic copies of their theses or dissertations to an online database maintained by ProQuest. At the time of submission, students could be asked to opt in or out of the Open Access Policy and associated procedures or request an embargo so that they could pursue a patent or formal publication. Greater detail regarding the Graduate School’s ETD Submission process is described at: [http://www.wiu.edu/graduateStudies/thesisAndDissertation/submission.php](http://www.wiu.edu/graduateStudies/thesisAndDissertation/submission.php).

Of these mechanisms, linking the Open Access Policy to the Authors Database and Recognition Reception is preferred. Linking the Open Access Policy to the annual activity reports or Professional Achievement Award (PAA) systems could create problems by muddling two disparate systems with differing goals together. In addition, if it ends up that an Open Access
Policy for the entire State of Illinois is adopted, the system that is used to collect information should apply to all institutions and should not be linked, directly or indirectly, to systems that are used for personnel evaluation, productivity assessment, or to determine employee compensation.

One major barrier to linking the Open-Access reporting mechanism to the existing Authors Database and Recognition Reception is that this system is currently limited to WIU authors who are faculty, academic professionals, or staff. It would be necessary to modify the mechanism so that external organizations and students would be able to contribute and opt-in to the repository. In addition, all authors, including students submitting theses and dissertations, should be able to opt-out of the Policy and associated procedures or request an embargo so that they, as desired, would be able to publish their research through traditional means or to apply for patents. Authors should also be able to rescind an initial election to opt-out out the Policy and subsequently opt-in to allow them time to explore fully potential traditional publication or patent options.

Despite a clear need to overcome this barrier, the Authors Database and Recognition Reception may be a good starting point to implement procedures needed to comply with an Open Access Policy. Authors from state agencies, people working on collaborative projects, and other organizations/groups may need to work through another Illinois university to access the repository in a similar way.

Respectfully Submitted

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