

SPECIAL REPORT
of the
RESEARCH LIBRARY COUNCIL
concerning
A RESOLUTION ON SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

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Access to scholarly literature is vital to all members of the academic community. Scholars and their professional societies and associations share a common interest in the broadest possible dissemination of peer-reviewed contributions. Unfortunately, the business practices of some commercial publishers of journals are contrary to these interests and threaten to limit the promise of increased access that digital technologies inherently provide. Development of library collections is more and more constrained by the rising costs of journals and databases. Faculty, librarians, staff, students, and university administrators must all take greater responsibility for the scholarly communication system.

BACKGROUND

In 2001, the UMass Amherst community began the scholarly communication conversation by inviting Jean-Claude Guedon, David E. Shulenburg, and Heather Joseph to speak to the dramatic increase in journal prices and to the new developments in scholarly communication such as BioOne. These scholarly communication colloquia continue as the Digital Quadrangle series co-sponsored by the University Libraries, Office of Research, Center for Teaching, and Graduate School. The Director of Libraries has given presentations to both the Faculty Senate and Deans Council regarding the status of the library budget vis a vis dramatic increases in acquisitions costs and possible visions for the future of the library.

On February 9, 2006, the Faculty Senate held a Committee of the Whole session entitled “Research and Publication in the Digital Age: Dealing with the Elsevier Phenomenon” at which Jay Schafer, Director of Libraries, Bruce Wilcox, Director of the University Press, and Professor Robert Rothstein, representing the Research Library Council, spoke at length about multiple facets of changes in scholarly communication. Full details of this session are available through the Faculty Senate minutes at http://www.umass.edu/senate/fs/minutes/2005-2006/minutes_648_02-09-06.pdf. On May 18, 2006, the Faculty Senate passed the special report of the Research Library Council concerning “The Implementation of a Digital Institutional Repository at the University of Massachusetts Amherst” which has led to the establishment of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst under the leadership of the University Libraries. The move toward the use of ScholarWorks is UMass Amherst’s effort to help faculty manage their intellectual property assets and self-promote their work. These campus efforts parallel similar efforts by faculty governance bodies on other university campuses. Please refer to the Association of Research Libraries scholarly communication site for more information. <http://www.arl.org/sc/faculty/index.shtml>

The resolution that follows is the natural next step to encourage faculty, librarians, staff, and the administration to address the changing landscape of scholarly communication in ways that will provide both broad and open access and preserve that scholarly work for the future.

RESOLUTION

The Research Library Council recommends that:

WHEREAS the University of Massachusetts Amherst's longstanding commitment to the free and open publication, presentation and discussion of research advances the interests of the scholarly community, the faculty individually, and the public, and

WHEREAS the costs of commercially published scholarly journals are continually rising at rates greater than the rate of inflation and higher than the rate of UMass Amherst budget increases, and

WHEREAS the activities of the publishers of these journals directly depend upon the continued participation of faculty at UMass Amherst and similar institutions acting as editors, reviewers, and authors, and

WHEREAS a lasting solution to this problem requires not only interim measures but also a long range plan, and

WHEREAS publication in open access journals and repositories is an increasingly effective option for scholarly communication,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the University of Massachusetts Amherst Faculty Senate:

1. Encourages faculty to become familiar with the pricing and business practices of journals and journal publishers in their specialty, and to support journals and publishers whose pricing and accessibility policies promote broad and continuing access to scholarship.
2. Urges faculty, especially tenured faculty, to exert a positive influence on the direction of scholarly publishing through the choices they make in the submission of papers, the commitment of time to refereeing activities, and participation in editorial work.
3. Encourages faculty and UMass Amherst to support new models for scholarly publishing, including open access journals and archives, disciplinary and institutional repositories and other approaches that enhance the broad dissemination of knowledge while preserving peer review and excellence in scholarship.
4. Urges faculty to consider carefully the copyright provisions of their contracts with publishers, in order to allow them greater freedom to disseminate their work and thereby maximize the impact of their scholarship.
5. Calls upon the UMass Amherst faculty and administration to consider these issues in the evolution of the promotion and tenure system.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate endorse the recommendations of the Research Library Council and encourage faculty, librarians, staff, and administrators to be supportive of new and innovative models of scholarly communication and utilize these options whenever possible.
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