

Minutes of the Senate Library Committee
Meeting of November 19, 2020
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM
via Zoom

In Attendance: Mark Lynn Anderson, Reid Andrews, Jeff Aziz, Carrie Donovan, Barbara Epstein, Jonah McAllister-Erickson, Donovan Harrell*, Seungil Kim, Gary Kohanbash, Clark Muenzer, Mary Rauptis, Katie Richmond, Lucy Russell, Ken Salzer, Leah Santorine, Marc Silverman, Kornelia Tancheva, and Frank Wilson.

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1. Revision and unanimous approval of minutes from October 15, 2020 meeting of the SLC.
2. Anderson announced that pro-tem member Kathryn Gardner (Biological Sciences) is leaving the committee as she prepares to take position at another institution next academic year.
3. Anderson reported briefly on an item brought before the Faculty Assembly at its November 4 meeting by Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee (TAFC) members Abbe de Vallejo (Medicine) and Elizabeth Mulvaney (Social Work). At issue is the existence of a preferred journals list that is used in one of the University's unnamed schools, a list that is considered within the unit as pertinent to annual reviews and promotion of junior faculty, as well as for the granting of summer support and course release. In a document circulated to FA members, the use of such a list was said to seemingly "be based on the belief that such publications allegedly can improve the way this school is perceived in its sector and by peer institutions." The document also listed several concerns around the restraint of research and academic gatekeeping that have been expressed by the members of TAFC. Discussion at the Faculty Assembly amplified these concerns but with no definite outcome or decisions made, as only feedback on these issues was sought at this time. Anderson said he asked if any of the journals on the preferred list were open access publications, to which Mulvaney replied that it hadn't occurred to them to determine the subscription and access status of these titles.
4. Discussion then returned to the committee's continuing interest in pursuing further open access (OA) at the University, perhaps advocating for a University policy. Committee members had read selected OA policies from different institutions prior to the meeting, including the recent policy instituted at Penn State, but also policies or policy advocacy documents from the University of Minnesota, the University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Michigan.

Silverman commented on a potential issue concerning the broadness of these many of these policies' claims to the rights of *all* published writing by faculty members, ostensibly including writing and editorial work they might do "off the clock" as part of interest in areas outside of the professional expertise that defines their university roles. McAllister-Erickson commented that the recent controversy over the IP policy at the University could easily create confusion about OA requirements and thus there would be the need for extensive outreach in order to overcome resistance. Andrews said that while he is a proponent of OA, in reading through many existing policies he was struck by the language of a "world-wide, non-exclusive license" and was concerned how this had the appearance of a broad assertion of rights over authors' works that would cause concern.

Tancheva suggested that looking at the language of these policies' claims is misleading since what is important is the encouragement of faculty to retain their rights as authors from the publishers. Rauktis observed how we needed to also talk about the current DEI charge of the Faculty Senate and how we had previously sought to include structural inequalities as part of our promotion of OA. Muenzer proposed that we might need to produce a document of some type, a sort of white paper on social justice as seen through the perspective of OA advocacy, something that declares the need for faculty to educate themselves about OA and one's relation to an information ecology. Tancheva mentioned that sometimes social justice issues get framed as a question of the relation between the global north and the global south, with the former seen as the privileged benefactor of the latter, a construction that can easily smack of cultural imperialism. Anderson agreed that condescension was always of danger when identifying needs and then seeking to address them without the input of all involved. Andrews mention how some journals in the discipline of history have adopted OA and how some South American countries pursued OA because their authors and publishers wanted audiences in the north to read their work.

McAllister-Erickson claimed that the only substantial advantage to an institutional OA policy is the way it relieves individual authors from having to negotiate with editors and publishers. Tancheva mentioned how publishing in physics has achieved gold OA with widespread open-access publications in the discipline, and she noted how that academic community had embraced this. She and Epstein also mentioned various developments in medical publishing including NIH's free-to-read project, as well the governmental public access mandate with agencies like the FDA, the CDC, and others progressing toward more rapid open access publication and better labeling, with Tancheva wondering if these advance might reverse after the pandemic has subsided. Epstein also mentioned the importance of making data and data sets openly and immediately available.

5. Anderson briefly reported on the open Town Hall held earlier in the day with University administrators, mentioning that there were a pair of anonymous questions about University libraries. One questioner asked, "Why are libraries open to patrons while infection rates surge? Shouldn't the university be prioritizing keeping our students and librarians safe by closing them and allowing only no-contact pickup of materials?" Vice Provost Joseph McCarthy responded, "The libraries play an important role in allowing our students a space to quietly engage in their studies. It is really critical that we retain some spaces for students who do not have ready access to internet (or a quiet place) outside the university." A subsequent questioner asked why the libraries will remain open after undergraduates have left, with Vice Provost of Graduate Studies Amanda Godley responding that there were graduate and professional students as well as clinical researchers who needed access to libraries over the break. Silverman mentioned that the Barco library was closed to all but law students and that they are working effectively with a small number of employees. Epstein reported that HSLs was restricted to the operating hours of Scaife Hall and that they were still working effectively with reduced staff and with ongoing safety and cleaning procedures and protocols for staff and patrons.

The meeting ended at 5:06 PM.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson
Minutes approved in committee on December 10, 2020