Minutes of the Senate Library Committee
Meeting of January 21, 2020
3:00 PM to 4:00 PM
via Zoom

<u>In Attendance</u>: Mark Lynn Anderson, Lauren Collister, Carrie Donovan, Barbara Epstein, Jonah McAllister-Erickson, Seungil Kim, Clark Muenzer, April O'Neil, Mary Rauktis, Katie Richmond, Lucy Russell, Ken Salzer, Leah Santorine, and Marc Silverman.

Excused: Reid Andrews, Jeff Aziz, Gary Kohanbash, and Kornelia Tancheva.

**1.** Approval of minutes from December 10, 2020 meeting of the SLC.

**2.** Anderson introduced ULS scholarly communications librarian Lauren Collister as the new co-chair who will serve until the end of the calendar year. Collister replaces Committee member Carrie Donovan who finished her year-long term as co-chair in December.

**3.** Anderson announced that faculty member Andrews is on research leave for the term and that he had spoken to Andrews about the possibility of the new pro-tem co-chair serving as a voting member during his absence. Andrews was enthusiastically supportive of such an arrangement, reported Anderson. Anderson also related that he discussed this possibility with Collister and that she was amenable to serve is such a capacity; he then asked those Committee members in attendance for comments, questions, or concern. Receiving none, he then asked if the Committee was supportive of this substitution. Support was unanimous.

**4.** Anderson asked Collister to speak to the Committee about her perspectives on Open Access (OA) advocacy and the current state of support for OA scholarly publishing. Collister described the uneven situation facing different disciplines with respect to Article Processing Charges (APCs), those fees publishers charge to remove paywalls from individual articles. She noted that while some disciplines have APC funding built into their budgeting, there's often little or no grant support for the humanities. She noted that Europeans dealt with this situation more effectively since funders typically write OA publishing support into their grants. The unevenness of support for OA publishing adversely affects a large number of scholars, particularly early career researchers and graduate students. Collister noted that the issue is a question of equity, and there remain the situation that those PIs who obtain prestigious grants are the one's who continue to garner the most grants going forward, with money begetting money.

Collister also describe existing and functioning alternatives to such a model such as the Open Library of the Humanities (OLH) to which Pitt subscribes, a non-profit publisher in the humanities and social sciences that operates at low cost for international subscribing institutions. Authors who publish through OLH have no APCs. She further described ways or partnering with or subscribing to OA publishers and journals, and she discussed developments in book publishing such as Punctum Books that publishes transdisciplinary monographs electronically on demand as open access works. Collister stressed that supporting these various OA entities that are seeking to demonetize the dissemination of knowledge is an important and effective means of OA advocacy and that publishing in such venues can have substantial scholarly and popular impacts. She also noted that professional journals can pursue OA and maintain their status as the premier publication in their field, as she noted the importance of the entirely OA journal *Glossa* in her own field of linguistics.
O'Neil Asked a question about the costs of OA and how funding works in terms of both APCs and transformative agreements, wanting to know if there's a relation between exclusivity and impact. Additionally, Muenzer wonder whether groups of scholarly authors might develop alternative

publishing universes that preserve prestige or centrality in their respective fields, asking what *Glossa* does to retain its reputation. Muenzer continued to wonder if different disciplines might need different system to achieve such goals. He also asked if there was a difference between budgeted production costs and "processing fees." Finally, he suggested that the University should live up to its commitments to Open Journal Systems and provide funding.

Collister replied to these questions and comments in turn, noting that a "universe of authors" can certainly achieve high impact. Impact gained through the large for-profit publishers requires payment for impact privileging those authors and institutions who can pay APCs and disadvantaging those who remain behind paywalls. As far as production costs, Collister noted that publishers such as Springer claim that processing fees are production cost but she and other provided instances of enormous cost that were clearly tied to increasing profits. Collister noted how Latin and South America have been more effective in pursuing OA since the universities budget more money for OA scholarly publishing. Muenzer asked if discussion have ever been undertaken at Pitt for this type of funding. Collister noted that Pitt already subsidized its publishing quite heavily.

Silverman described how law schools around the country work with a different model, where each publishes two or three law reviews, some general and other specialized. These journals are edited by groups of law students, around twenty-five per journal. Nothing is peer reviewed and when produced in print the cost is relatively cheap. Most reviews have the current issue available on their websites, while other offer very inexpensive subscriptions. The students who work on these reviews gain academic credit and professional development. Muenzer noted that Pitt faculty currently do this sort of trenchwork for free. Silverman also described how the SSRN Press (Social Science Research Network) to quickly is widely used to disseminate drafts and preprints of research quickly and for free, and Collister also pointed to our similar participation in the non-profit scholarly network Humanities Commons. Silverman noted the use of SSRN download data in hiring decisions and evaluations.

Anderson asked whether emphasizing instances of inequity or exclusion is more or less effective than demonstrating both the possible prestige and impacts of OA publishing in advocacy and educational outreach to faculty. From her experience, Collister was fairly certain that stories of increased impact are more compelling than describing injustices. The process is identifying those groups you want to reach and then modeling behavior, crafting a message about how seeking OA publishing for research helps one's career rather than hurts. Anderson noted that this describes faculty commitments to individual career rather than to a community. Collister acknowledged this conundrum but emphasized how if distinguished scholars commit to OA principles, such commitments can have a great effect. She said that inserting language valuing OA publishing in documents used for evaluation and promotion can also be an effective means to create awareness and commitment to OA, mentioning the National Academies of the Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine as an example. Faculty commitment to OA is tied to the whole question of Open Science. Muenzer noted that the way in which departments, schools, programs, institutions, and foundations might or should value work developed toward OA has been an ongoing conversation for a long time.

The meeting ended at 4:04 PM.

Minutes compiled and submitted by Mark Lynn Anderson
Corrected and approved in committee, February 18, 2021.