

Minutes of the Senate Library Committee
Meeting of February 21, 2022
10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

In Attendance: Mark Lynn Anderson, Reid Andrews, Jeff Aziz, Renae Barger, Mark Bernstein Lauren Collister, Charlotte Johnson, Susanna Leers, Diana Khoi Nguyen, Lucy Russell, Ken Saltzer, Karen Shephard, and Bianca Shieu.

1. The Committee welcomed its newest co-chair, pro-tem member Karen Shephard, Information Services Librarian at Barco Law Library. Shephard will serve as co-chair through December of 2022.

2. The Committee then discussed its current state of a new Committee mission statement that has been under revision for two months. Some minor changes came up in discussion with respect to how the draft statement should address the University libraries' support of community engagement, as well as to whether a mission statement is aspirational or contractual. In the end, a finally agreed upon version was voted on and passed with seven voting member voting for the new mission statement and one abstaining. The new mission statement of the Senate Library Committee reads,

The Senate Library Committee discusses the policies, procedures, and services of the University libraries, making recommendations to assure that the evolving research, teaching, and community engagement needs of all members of the University community are fully supported. The Committee's mandate extends to promoting the contributions and value of libraries and library workers to the mission of the University.

3. The rest of the meeting was given to open discussion following a report by members of the Committee who were present at the February 15 meeting with Vice Chancellor John Wallace to discuss the Committee's proposal to establish a funding stream in support of faculty hires under both the Latinx initiative and the larger Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well Being Cluster Hires [see appendix]. Faculty Senate President Robin Kear had taken the proposal to Wallace in January for response, and present at the February meeting besides Kear were Committee members Anderson, Collister, Shephard, and Senate Vice President Kanthak. Anderson, Collister, and Shephard reported on their shared disappointment at Wallace's disinterest in pursuing the proposal as written, citing as his main concern that the promotion of open access publishing and open scholarship projects to junior faculty would endanger their tenure prospects, maintaining that open access, while a laudable idea, was better pursued by more senior scholars who were at less risk in publishing in venues that Wallace regarded as less prestigious and less rigorous.

Despite the efforts of all who were present at the meeting to explain that rigor and open scholarship were not in any way inimical, as well as that the supposed diminished prestige of open scholarship was only the result unfounded academic chauvinism, Wallace remained unmoved. Anderson expressed his own view that Wallace was subject to a generalize institutional condescension to librarians that Anderson had witnessed widely expressed on campus and even quite openly in the Faculty Assembly. He also noted how Wallace sought to

conflate open access with social media, referring to the latter as “lightweight” and free, though lauding scholars such as Pitt history professor Keisha Blain whose popular Twitter feed he sees as having important public impact.

Collister and others who had attended the meeting noted that Wallace seemed supportive of the idea of making scholarship more publicly available broadly, and he cited the publications of the Rand Corporation as an example making rigorous scholarship more widely accessible, though he seemed to think of Rand reports as “free.” Besides the idea of supporting making prestigious academic scholarship (pay-walled?) more public facing and accessible beyond the academy, Wallace also seemed supportive of open scholarship promotion to senior scholars, and so some Committee members thought there might be future opportunities there to promote open scholarship.

Leers commented that one might understand why Wallace might promote senior scholars as better candidates for open scholarship initiatives given his positions on the subject; she also noted that law journals are more or less universally open access, while Shephard reported that major publishers of law books are trying to offer different forms of licensing toward increasing access. Barger commented on the change in the culture of Open Access in Health Sciences with the enormous expense of publishing in journals such as *Science* and *Nature*.

It was decided to return to the discussion of how we might go forward with a reformulated proposal for the promotion of open scholarship at the University.

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 AM

Minutes compiled by Mark Lynn Anderson, co-chair
Minutes approved in meeting of March 22, 2022

APPENDIX

Senate Library Committee Proposal on Support for Open Access Creation by Faculty Hired Through the Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well Being Cluster Hires, 2022-2025, and the Latinx Cluster Hire, 2019-2022

The Senate Library Committee (SLC) recommends the establishment of a dedicated funding stream to support and encourage faculty hired through the Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-being Cluster Hire and Retention Initiative, as well as faculty employed through the Latinx Cluster Hire, in producing research, resources, and creative work as openly accessible content. The SLC sees such funding as supporting the vision of these initiatives “to conduct research, educate students and engage in service designed to eliminate racial disparities in the social determinants of equity and to improve measures of well-being in the Pittsburgh region, nationally and across the globe.” Open access to the products of this vision is not only consistent with the initiatives’ aspirations for social and cultural impact, but essential for their full realization. To this end, we are proposing the establishment of a funding source exclusively available to faculty hired under these two initiatives that could be applied for whenever open access to the creative, educational, or scholarly work of these faculty members is enhanced by such support. We think the existence of such support will not only increase the social impact of faculty work, but also enhance the recruitment and retention of faculty who contribute to the University’s commitments to diversity and equity of access.

For the purposes of this proposal, “open scholarship” refers to the free, immediate, online availability of the products of research, coupled with the rights to use these products fully in the digital environment. “Products of research” is construed broadly, and may include published articles or monographs, pre-publication drafts or reports, conference materials, data sets, code, digital projects, and more work associated with research and scholarship. Another term, “open access,” is a term often used specifically for publications associated with open scholarship projects.

Extensive research has revealed open scholarship is associated with increases in citations, media attention, potential collaborators, job opportunities and funding opportunities (see [McKiernan et al., 2016](#), for a summary of examples, and [SPARC Europe, 2015](#), for a summary of citation advantage specifically). By supporting faculty in making their work openly available, we help them tap into these opportunities.

Funding for open scholarship can support the labor and materials needed to prepare and make available research works. Some examples of how the funding may be used include, but are not limited to: fees for software or hosting platforms that make content available, e.g. storage costs for large datasets; hourly or contract fees for assistants to clean and describe materials for sharing; compensation for archives that curate and house materials; creation of educational materials based on the open scholarship project; purchasing equipment or tools that facilitate the creation of openly available materials.

Because article processing charges (APCs) remain a common expense of open access publishing, we recommend that a portion of any allocated funding be dedicated to offset reasonable APC

expenses, and that such funds be administered by the Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing as an additional portion of their “Author Fee Fund” annual budget for processing requests by faculty for payment of APCs, except that this portion of the annual budget would be exclusively reserved for requests from faculty members recruited through either the Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well Being Cluster Hire or the Latinx Cluster Hire. Otherwise, this APC funding would follow the same parameters of the Author Fee Fund including funding caps and eligibility criteria.

Yet, because we seek to establish support of open scholarship more broadly, we recommend that a larger portion of funding be made available as grants to support faculty projects that either will incur expenses in producing open scholarly and artistic products or that contribute to the cause of promoting and establishing free public access to and use of research and creative expression. Ideally, such funding would be applied for through a review process of submitted proposals to a review committee created under the auspices of the Office of Research with consultative support from the University Research Council and scholarly communications librarians from the University libraries. Such a committee would make recommendations to the Provost for funding priorities and funding levels. We recommend that, unlike existing internal funding opportunities at the University, a twice-a-year review calendar for proposal submissions, since more frequent opportunities to apply for support is more responsive to the needs of faculty who often encounter both the possibilities for making their work publicly available and the costs of doing so at disparate moments in the creation and presentation processes.

Like the funding of APCs for faculty hired in the Race and the Social Determinants of Equity and Well Being initiative and the Latin X cluster hire, the biannual grant competition would be solely available to these same faculty members, necessitating a means of identifying these faculty for both soliciting proposals and for their acceptance and review. We recommend a funding pool of \$75,000 a year for five years, with \$15,000 each year reserved for paying APCs and \$60,000 a year available for funding grant proposals.

Unlike the current Open Education Resource Grants program maintained by the Office of the Provost which has comparable iterations of OER funding at other institutions for purposes of benchmarking, no such targeted faculty support for open scholarship currently exists elsewhere as far as we know. This would be an innovative funding program in support of open scholarship. We suggest that assessments of such support be conducted annually, beginning in the second year of the initiative, through a review of grants awarded and reports on outcomes solicited from the previous year’s awardees. Such a review could be carried out and coordinated by the Office of Research in collaboration with scholarly research librarians.

01/25/22
The Faculty Senate Library Committee