Faculty Senate Approves Policy to Expand Public Access to UA Research

University Relations – Communications
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UA faculty will now be asked to submit the final accepted manuscripts of their scholarly articles to the UA Campus Repository [1], under an Open Access [2] policy passed by the Faculty Senate on Monday.

University Libraries [3], along with Faculty Senate [4] leadership and the Office of the Provost [5], will be responsible for implementing the policy, which says that faculty members will grant the UA permission to make the final accepted manuscripts of their articles available in the library's online Campus Repository – a digital collection of a variety of UA publications, including dissertations, yearbooks and others. The repository is accessible to anyone.

The policy, which aligns with the University's land-grant mission, came from a suggestion for how faculty as a whole could expand access to their scholarly and research outputs. A task force was put together to create the language for the policy.

"The Faculty Senate Task Force on Open Access took a comprehensive approach, thoroughly researching how our peer institutions are addressing this important topic," said Lynn Nadel, chair of the faculty and Regents' Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science. "They also considered the impact on our University's reputation and the benefit to the scholarly community at large. I think this explains why their thoughtful recommendation received broad-based support from their senate colleagues."

The UA joins 58 other universities in the country that have implemented open access policies, including the University of California system, Oregon State University and Harvard University.

The policy does not impede faculty members’ abilities to publish their work in the journal or scholarly publication of their choice. It simply allows the article manuscripts to be shared on a community level after they have been accepted. The UA’s Campus Repository will honor publisher embargoes that indicate when the manuscript versions can be made publicly accessible.

Because UA Libraries already manages the UA Campus Repository, library staff members will take on the responsibilities of tracking faculty articles, requesting the manuscripts from faculty authors and keeping the repository updated, including downloading statistics for the article manuscripts.

A tracker similar to an RSS feed will be used by the library staff members to see when a faculty member has published an article. Library staff will then email the faculty member to ask for a copy of the manuscript, or the faculty member can directly submit the manuscript to the Campus Repository online.

“This progressive step democratizes access to knowledge the same way that the land-grant universities themselves democratized access to tertiary education,” said Shane Burgess, editor of the open access journal BMC Genomics, vice president of veterinary sciences and Cooperative Extension, and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences [6]. "The more eyes, the greater the innovation that benefits our global society."

The policy outlines the expectation that faculty submit their own manuscripts to the Campus Repository, although they can opt out of the policy by submitting a waiver that is easy to request and will automatically be granted.

Although the University Libraries will be responsible for implementing the policy, any future changes to the policy will have to go before the Faculty Senate to be passed.

University Libraries also will provide a report to Faculty Senate on the impact of the policy after three years.

For any questions on the policy, contact Daniel Lee, director of the office of copyright management and scholarly communication, at leed@email.arizona.edu [7]. You can also visit the policy's FAQ [2] web page.

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