

Cornell University Faculty Senate Endorses Resolution on Open Access and Scholarly Communication

(Ithaca, NY, May 17, 2005) The Cornell University Faculty Senate endorsed a resolution concerning scholarly publishing at its meeting on May 11, 2005.

The resolution, introduced by the University Faculty Library Board, responds to the increasingly excessive prices of some scholarly publications and encourages the open access publication of scholarship.

Sarah E. Thomas, Carl A. Kroch University Librarian, thanked the University Faculty Library Board for their energetic engagement on behalf of increasing dissemination of scholarship through open access. "Cornell faculty have been leaders in speaking out on behalf of reasonably priced scholarly journals, and their efforts have had a world-wide impact," she said.

The resolution urges tenured faculty to cease supporting publishers who engage in exorbitant pricing, by not submitting papers to, or refereeing for, the journals sold by those publishers, and by resigning from their editorial boards if more reasonable pricing policies are not forthcoming.

Examples of Cornell faculty and librarians who have already taken action include:

Eberhard Bodenschatz, professor of physics, who became the editor in chief of the New Journal of Physics, a successful open access journal. The journal is financed by author charges, is free for all readers through the world-wide web, and provides a less-expensive, high quality scholarly alternative.

W. Brutsaert, W.L. Lewis professor of civil and environmental engineering, publishes his work in society journals. He notes most commercial journals do not levy page charges and states "this is a seductive tactic for academic authors, who are invariably strapped for research funds. But it is definitely a poisoned gift. The pricing structure of many commercial journals has gotten so totally out of hand that many libraries can no longer afford to subscribe to them. As a result, authors who continue to give preference to commercial over society journals will go increasingly unread by their colleagues."

Karen Calhoun, Associate University Librarian for Technical Services, recently resigned as assistant editor for the journal Library Collections, Acquisitions and Technical Services because of publisher Elsevier's pricing policies; she also chose to seek publication of a scholarly article in a different journal.

The resolution follows and is available via Cornell University Library's scholarly communication Website: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/scholarlycomm/resolution.html>

Cornell Faculty Senate resolution on scholarly publishing, passed 11 May 2005

Resolution from the University Faculty Library Board Concerning Scholarly Publishing

WHEREAS Cornell'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 certain publishers of scholarly journals continually raise their prices far above the level that could be reasonably justified by their costs, and

WHEREAS the activities of these publishers directly depend upon the continued participation of faculty at Cornell 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 Senate calls upon all faculty to become familiar with the pricing policies of journals in their specialty.¹

The Senate strongly urges tenured faculty to cease supporting publishers who engage in exorbitant pricing, by not submitting papers to, or refereeing for, the journals sold by those publishers, and by resigning from their editorial boards if more reasonable pricing policies are not forthcoming.²

Reaffirming and broadening the proposals discussed during its meeting of December 17, 2003, the Senate strongly urges the University Library to negotiate vigorously with publishers who engage in exorbitant pricing and to reduce serial acquisitions from these publishers based on a reasonable measure of those subscriptions' relative importance to the collection, taking into account any particular needs of scholars in certain disciplinary areas.

The Senate strongly encourages all faculty, and especially tenured faculty, to consider publishing in open access, rather than restricted access, journals or in reasonably priced journals that make their contents openly accessible shortly after publication.³

The Senate strongly urges all faculty to negotiate with the journals in which they publish either to retain copyright rights and transfer only the right of first print and electronic publication, or to retain at a minimum the right of postprint archiving.⁴

The Senate strongly urges all faculty to deposit preprint or postprint copies of articles in an open access repository such as the Cornell University DSpace Repository or discipline-specific repositories such as arXiv.org.⁵

DISCUSSION

This matter has been before the Senate previously. On December 17, 2003, the Senators present unanimously supported the Cornell University Library's efforts to control spiraling acquisition

costs by tough negotiations with certain journal publishers who were exploiting their market power.

Since that date the underlying problem of certain publishers charging excessive prices for subscriptions has continued, driven by stock market forces that demand ever-higher profits. At the same time, these journals could not even exist without the faculty who submit papers and act as editors and reviewers.

The resolution has been helpful to the Library in resisting the price increases and in protecting its acquisition budgets, so that funds are not transferred from other disciplines to pay the excessive prices from certain publishers. However, this is still a severe problem.

As regards copyright, faculty should realize that documents sent to authors by publishers to transfer copyright are often negotiable. Many publishers have alternative copyright arrangements for those who do not want to transfer copyright. See also Footnote 4.

Also over the past few years, open access journals and repositories have emerged as an important extension of or alternative to conventional journal publication in many disciplines, though far from all.

Definition of open access from Peter Suber's web page - "Open-access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions."

4/11/05

1 See, e.g., <http://oap.comm.nsd.org/10most.html> (listing 2005 prices of journals in various disciplines);
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/scholarlycomm/scholarlycommunicationtoolkit/faculty/facultyeconomics.htm> (providing general journal price info).

2 See, e.g., <http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/addendum.html> (discussing what faculty referees and editors can do to change journal policies).

3 See, e.g., <http://www.doaj.org/> (listing peer-reviewed open access journals);
<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/do.htm#faculty> (providing advice and sources for open access publishing); <http://www.library.cornell.edu/scholarlycomm/>(same);
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/scholarlycomm/scholarlycommunicationtoolkit/toolkit.htm> (same);

4 See, e.g., <http://www.arl.org/sparc/author/addendum.html> (providing a form to use to retain necessary rights);
<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/scholarlycomm/scholarlycommunicationtoolkit/faculty/facultyauthorcontrol.htm> (providing model agreements and negotiation advice) . See also <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php?stats=yes> by Project SHERPA (<http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/>)(listing journals that permit such archiving without special arrangement).

5 See, e.g., <http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/foa/do.htm#faculty> (describing methods and results of open-access archiving);

Cornell University Library is one of the 10 largest academic research libraries in the United States. Comprised of twenty libraries, it offers close to 8 million printed volumes, more than 60,000 journals, and access to more than 150,000 electronic publications and databases.