Library Open Access Statement

The Noreen Reale Falcone Library supports and aspires to promote Open Access publishing as the preferred approach to documenting and distributing scholarly research conducted at Le Moyne College as widely as possible. The Harvard Open Access Project defines open access:

Open access (OA) literature is digital, online, free of charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. It makes research easier to find, retrieve, copy, share, reuse, search, crawl, mine, and preserve. This benefits everyone, inside and outside the academic world, such as researchers, teachers, students, librarians, doctors, patients, journalists, non-profits, businesses, policy-makers, voters, and curious minds. It enhances discovery, widens scrutiny and discussion, and maximizes the return on our investment in research. (Harvard Open Access Project. 2016)

For 350 years, scholarly publishing has benefited from a culture of sharing where authors create their works for impact rather than remuneration. For most of that time, journal publication has been the province of scholarly societies. To sustain their print publication efforts, scholarly societies would produce and sell subscriptions to their journals. They, in turn would ask authors to assign copyright ownership to the society, so that royalty payments could be avoided as a way to simplify administration and to reduce costs. In many cases, especially where high-quality graphics were required, they also asked authors to pay page compositing costs. In the 1950s and 60s, many societies transferred their publication operations over to commercial publishers. Commercial publishers retained the tradition of asking authors to assign copyright, although they often subsidized or eliminated page fees. By controlling the distribution of scholarly works through copyright ownership, commercial publishers could gradually increase journal subscription prices.

Economists use the term “moral hazard” for the phenomenon of overconsumption of a good by a consumer who is insulated from the good's cost. … The “consumers” of scholarly articles (the readers, typically faculty, students, and researchers at universities and other research institutions) are insulated from the cost of reading, that is, from the subscription fees paid by the institutions' research libraries. The expected result—inelasticity of demand and hyperinflation—can be amply seen in the statistics of serials costs paid by research libraries. (Shieber 2009, e1000165)

The availability of scholarly works through the internet now means that access need no longer be constrained by the artificial scarcity imposed by print journal subscriptions. With the transition from print to digital format, costs of production have decreased. With near ubiquitous access to the internet, we are able to share perfect copies with a global audience, and distribution costs have decreased to virtually zero.
Open access as an alternative to the traditional journal subscription model requires several changes to how articles are treated by the journal publisher and the author.

1. The first prerequisite is that the article be published online in a digital format, such as PDF, LaTeX, HTML, or similar, which has no digital rights management (DRM) software attached to it. This is already largely the case with most online journals, commercial or otherwise.

2. Secondly, the author needs to retain ownership of copyright (not assign it exclusively to the publisher), so that the author as well as the publisher have a say in how the article is distributed. Publishers, of course, still need to be able to publish the article in the context of the journal, but this addendum to the author publication agreement effectively means that the author can publish a version of the article (although usually not the version formatted and branded for publication in the journal) on their own or the College website. One proviso that the College might wish to impose is to be given permission to act on the author’s behalf as a distribution channel. The easiest way to accomplish all of these aims is for the author to assign the article a license, preempting copyright, that stipulates how it may be distributed and reused. Creative Commons licenses exist precisely for this purpose and authors have a number of options in deciding what terms to apply.

3. Thirdly, the author’s version of the article must be made accessible without cost to the reader. Creative Commons licenses, at a minimum, typically stipulate that attribution to the author be retained. Readers may make use of the article for various purposes, so long as that use complies with the terms of the license agreement. Generally, this means that the article may be read, quoted and cited by the reader without requiring permission from the author, the author’s institution, or the journal publisher. Licenses may also contain additional language that the article may not be sold or republished except by the author.

Funding for Open Access

Open access journals remain at a disadvantage compared to traditional subscription-based journals. Colleges and universities are still the predominant market for subscription journals and funding is still allocated by libraries (responding to the needs and desires of its patrons) to support subscription journals. If cost-recovery is an issue for an open access journal, the business model most frequently used is to charge article processing fees (APF) to pay the cost of peer review, editorship, page compositing, and administrative details (web hosting, preservation, advertising, etc.). These fees, which are hidden or subsidized in subscription charges in the subscription model, must now be borne by the author, either with or without reimbursement by the college or a funding agency. Some grant-giving organizations, especially government agencies which mandate that funded research be published open access, build the APF into the terms of the grant. In unfunded research, the means by which the College might reimburse these fees has not been fully explored.
The College’s Role

The Library urges the Provost and the Academic Senate to formulate an Open Access Policy for the College. The Harvard Library Office for Scholarly Communication has authored a “Model Open Access Policy” document that provides boilerplate language for writing one for Le Moyne. (Harvard Library Office for Scholarly Communication 2015) Two central provisos of such a policy are:

1. That all faculty in the College are mandated to publish in open access publications unless it can be established that there are no OA options or funding requirements stipulate a non-OA publication.

2. That the College, most likely through a partnership of the Provost’s Office and the Library, establish an institutional repository (IR) and that faculty be required to submit a copy of their work to be housed there. Authors should be allowed to set an embargo on access to a given work for a reasonable time period (6-18 months), if there is just cause.

The Falcone Library also expresses its support for increasing support by the College to reimburse open access journal article processing fees. As long as journal subscriptions must be maintained, it is difficult to simply shift money around in library collection budgets to support APFs, so such funding must come from elsewhere. Discussions about support for APFs, however, will have the best chance of successful resolution only after the College adopts an Open Access Policy.

For an Open Access Policy to succeed, the College should also have provided funding for hosting and staffing of an Institutional Repository where faculty and student work can be showcased and promoted. The Library can offer expertise and advice for the set up of the software and the technical knowledge of the workflow required to catalog and publish author works in the repository.

Academic Integrity

Open access does not exist to circumvent scholarly integrity; this is a common but unsubstantiated fear expressed by some faculty. The same ethical norms apply, as does the potential for misuse, for both open access and traditional publishing. The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) publishes “Codes of Conduct” and “Best Practice Guidelines” that encompass both traditional and open access publishing practices. (Committee on Publication Ethics 2016) Jeffrey Beall publishes an ongoing list of publishers and journals that he has identified as engaging in so-called predatory publishing practices. (Beall 2012)
Bibliography


