Nothing is Linear About Open Access Initiatives: Promoting OA at a New Research Institution

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Jennifer King Matthews and Christine Davidian, "Nothing is Linear About Open Access Initiatives: Promoting OA at a New Research Institution" (2017). *Proceedings of the Charleston Library Conference*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5703/1288284316655>

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Abstract

Every campus appears to be “in the know” when it comes to open access, yet many of us “in the trenches” at our university libraries know that not to be the case. Often what is closer to reality is that there are many pockets of disparate knowledge on campus that need to be harnessed and reconciled in order to truly develop a program that benefits the whole. This poster will describe Rowan University’s current Open Access (OA) and Open Educational Resources (OER) initiatives that conference attendees may use as templates for programs at their institutions.

Rowan University’s recent designation as a Carnegie Classification R3 research institution has been a catalyst to propel the university libraries’ many robust, burgeoning OA/OER initiatives. The Campbell Library at Rowan University has been actively working to promote open access in a variety of ways, actively working with both deans and university administration to promote OA projects. We will describe the many efforts that have been established through collaborations and partnerships that have been new for our community. Additionally, we will illustrate some of our outreach events as a way to highlight the topic campus wide.

Initiatives to be highlighted include recruiting faculty and student publications for Rowan University’s institutional repository, the addition of OA enhancements to the library website’s discovery services, addition of OA and OER content to the libraries’ website, ongoing education and outreach efforts for faculty and students, including access to resources such as the SPARC website, Open Textbook Network, Open Science Framework, and instruction on the difference between good and bad open access journals.

Major Changes at Rowan

Rowan University has undergone several major changes to its institutional structure over the last several decades. With the significant donation of \$100 million from Henry M. Rowan to establish and fund the College of Engineering in 1992, a culture of expansion and growth developed. This growth mindset led to the eventual acquisition of two medical schools, the Cooper Medical School at Rowan University (CMSRU), an allopathic institution, and Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, an osteopathic medical school, in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Following these mergers, the institution began to expand exponentially by adding several doctoral programs and increasing enrollment from 10,000 students to over 16,250 in the past three years. This enrollment also required the hiring of 176 new tenure track faculty and a goal to hire an additional 100 faculty. From its origins as a teacher’s college, the institution has evolved into a newly designated R3 research university with a strong emphasis in STEM education and disciplines.

Open Access Initiatives

As the university has grown, so has the need for access to resources. This pressing need began to include discussions about open access and what it would mean for Rowan University faculty, students, and researchers. The Rowan University Libraries, therefore, have worked with several entities on campus to develop an Open Access Initiative to increase awareness of these publishing and research opportunities. The initiative began with the development of the Institutional Repository collections, which include researcher profiles, selected works, research data sets, as well as open access articles, ETDS, OER books, and other scholarly works. As this collection grew, the library developed a LibGuide on OER explaining what is available to the university and how open access works. In June 2017, Rowan University Libraries hired its first scholarly communication and data curation librarian with a focus on working with the Institutional Repository team and partners across campus. One of these partners was the Office of Research, particularly their Office of Proposal Development, which assists faculty

with their grant funding. Concurrently, Rowan University Libraries has joined SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) and DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals) and expanded their services to the faculty and students through the library liaison program. Finally, the libraries have worked with their internal marketing and outreach coordinator to develop programs focusing on open access, especially during Open Access Week.

Challenges

The challenges for Rowan have been typical for a growing institution. Several departments on campus do not recognize open access journals as acceptable scholarship for tenure requirements. The question regarding reliable metrics for how open access journals are used both internally and externally also clouds the tenure picture. Additionally, multiple conversations have had to be held with faculty and administration alike to combat the aversion to the “pay-to-play” model for these subscriptions. Faculty are unaware of the fees for resources since they have typically been absorbed by the library and freely distributed within the campus network. The requirement to pay for access to these journals at the time of article submission has been a learning curve for many.

Next Steps

Now that the scholarly communications and data curation librarian has arrived, collaboration with other entities on campus, such as the Office of Research, will become more streamlined. With her arrival, Rowan University Libraries launched an Open Access Fund for scholars across campus. Work with the Office of Research includes ongoing promotion of the Institutional Repository and sessions during new faculty orientation. The scholarly communication and data curation librarian is also working to coordinate joint workshops with the Office of Research, Institutional Repository team members, and liaisons to inform the campus of continuing Open Access Initiatives. There are also efforts to create a new open access journal for the Cooper Medical School at Rowan University (*Cooper Medical School Journal of Community Health*), as well as the inclusion of subscriptions to the DOAJ, DOAB, Open Textbook Network, and Cabell's. Individuals from the library are also participating in efforts to support open educational resources through programs such as TAP (Textbook Alternative Program) on campus and to include capstone papers and posters in the Institutional Repository, Rowan digital works.