

A variety of strategies and funding approaches are required to accelerate the transition to open access. But in all, authors are key



*More than two decades of work towards liberating scholarly publishing from paywalled constraints has left many within the scholarly community exploring ways to accelerate the transition to open access. Not all institutions or author communities will agree upon which strategies or funding approaches to undertake, and nor do they need to. But whichever strategy is pursued, having university faculty lead the charge represents the most effective way forward. **Rachael G. Samberg, Richard A. Schneider, Ivy Anderson and Jeff MacKie-Mason** share the University of California's range of open access policy and advocacy materials, and highlight some potential next steps that may be of use to faculty and author communities.*

Within the University of California's (UC) ten-campus system, we are guided by a [mission](#) to serve society by discovering, transmitting, organising, and preserving knowledge. The current subscription-based academic journal system — which charges institutions unsustainable costs to read and provide access to global scholarship, including works produced by our universities' own authors — impairs our ability to serve this mission. In a recent [Call to Action](#) for change in journal negotiations, the UC [Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee \(SLASIAC\)](#) endorsed the desire to end the system of journal subscriptions and transition to one that meets dual needs: controlling institutional costs in gaining access to scholarly literature created by others, while ensuring free, immediate, and open access (OA) to the publications created by our own scholars.

Multiple stakeholders, multiple strategies

Our scholarly information advisory committee is not alone at UC in seeking more meaningful progress toward OA. More than two decades of work toward liberating scholarly publishing from paywalled constraints has left many within the scholarly community exploring ways to accelerate the transition. We believe that doing so requires multiple stakeholders within the scholarly publishing ecosystem to pursue a variety of strategies and funding approaches. In April 2018, the UC libraries identified and analysed the constellation of potential funding strategies as a menu of reinvestment options, which we published as the "[Pathways to OA](#)" toolkit. As we [have discussed elsewhere](#), the toolkit takes an impartial approach to analysing the potential impact of each of these funding strategies. The aim is for institutions (including our own) to start evaluating which strategies they wish to pursue as they shift their funds away from subscriptions.

The pathways toolkit also supports decisions by the ten UC campus libraries to jointly pursue opportunities at scale. The UC libraries have already announced their intention to pursue one such collaborative experiment: to undertake a limited number of offsetting pilots. Offsetting is a transitional strategy to OA that caps institutional spending on a publisher's subscription package while centrally administering and subsidising the cost of hybrid article processing charges against a total agreed-upon spend, such that the net effect transitions spending away from subscriptions and toward OA article publication, without higher institutional costs.



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Not all institutions or author communities will agree upon which of the funding strategies laid out in “Pathways” to undertake. Nor do they need to. We have already [noted](#) that some UC campuses have expressed concerns that “flipping” from a subscription-based model to charging article processing fees hands over too much market influence to publishers. Others have suggested that implementing a system in which the flow of research funds gives authors “skin in the game” to make publishing decisions, competition among publishers will increase, lowering processing charges. Many of us also believe that academy-owned infrastructure should be an essential component of any open access transformation. Indeed, even within a single institution, multiple strategies may be appropriate to satisfy the needs of different author communities and disciplines.

Regardless of which strategies our campuses pursue, at the core we collectively support directing campus monies away from subscriptions and toward open access publishing. The “Pathways” documents aim to help authors, research libraries, and organisations around the world make their own choices based on their own understanding of community needs.

Faculty leading the charge

Underlying all of the strategies we are pursuing is also the simple truth that [faculty-driven efforts are a potent universal strategy](#) for OA transformation. The SLASIAC [Call to Action](#) went a step further, describing faculty as a *sine qua non*:

“UC faculty are the central stakeholders in the UC research enterprise and the principal contributors to the scholarly communication ecosystem; transformation must support their fundamental interests, and without faculty support transformation cannot succeed.”

The faculty are not just essential, but they can also be very *effective*. Within the UC system, faculty drove the adoption of the academic senate [2013 open access policy](#) supporting Green OA deposits of author post-prints, and have led past threats of boycotts of publishers for unfair practices including exorbitant price increases. Now, faculty are at the helm again: our system-wide faculty senate library committee ([UCOLASC](#)) recently released a [Declaration of Rights and Principles to Transform Scholarly Communication](#) to guide our libraries when negotiating with publishers. Among other things, these rights and principles counsel against signing any agreement that paywalls UC authors’ work, fails to credit an institution back for hybrid APCs paid by affiliated authors, or interferes with transparency about the agreement’s own terms.

UCOLASC believes that if adopted, these principles can transform the system of scholarly communication from one that remains unaffordable and closed, to one that is more sustainable, fair, transparent, and open. Moreover, UCOLASC created and unanimously endorsed these 18 principles to advance the public mission of our institution; to accelerate our long-standing effort to make our research and scholarship as freely and widely available as possible; and to make sure that our institution spends taxpayer money in the most ethically, morally, and socially-responsible way when entering into agreements with commercial publishers.

Our faculty are dissatisfied with publishers who continue to go to great lengths to restrict the rights and academic freedom of authors, and they are committed to building new models that give faculty more control over the fruits of their labour. With this in mind, UC plans to push for terms and conditions in publisher agreements that are transformative and closely aligned with our short and long-term goals for scholarly communication.

Working hand-in-hand with faculty

While it may seem that the University of California has released an alphabet soup of documents on achieving OA recently, each of these statements addresses different elements of our overall approach, reflecting the voices of our various stakeholders. We have also published these documents to reveal our processes, in the hope that other institutions and communities may find these resources equally valuable in leaving a closed-access publishing landscape behind.

Because authors' voices are central to all funding strategies, we wish to highlight a few potential next steps that may be of use to faculty and author communities:

- Consider whether the [Declaration of Rights and Principles](#) guiding journal negotiations may be of interest to your author community or organisation. As an editorial board member or in your role within a scholarly society, you are well-positioned to influence how your own journal's publications are made available.
- *Connect with your institution's library or research office* to contribute your voice to how subscriptions are negotiated, or for assistance in helping your editorial board or society journals find sustainable OA publishing models.
- *Participate in OA strategy development.* Learn more about what "Pathways" strategies your libraries are pursuing. If you are an academic committed to helping your own institution, organisation, or scholarly society transition its subscription expenditures or publishing activity toward open access, we invite you to have your voice heard and engage in action-focused discourse at the [Choosing Pathways to OA](#) working forum this October in Berkeley, California. (Registration closes in early August, and remaining spots are limited.)

Going the final distance on the road to open access will take substantial collaboration among a confluence of diverse stakeholders and strategies. The time has come for all of us to proceed swiftly with concrete steps to redirect current spending away from paywalled literature and accelerate what has already been more than a decade of effort to achieve OA. This is what the University of California's various documents propose, and what our concrete actions are attempting to accomplish and encourage.

For ease of reference, we have compiled a selection of UC's OA policy and advocacy materials, including those referenced in this post:

- [Faculty senate and presidential policies](#) mandating the open deposit of research articles.
- UCOLASC [Declaration of Rights and Principles to Transform Scholarly Communication](#) for negotiating journal licenses with publishers.
- SLASIAC [Call to Action](#) to help achieve OA through upcoming journal negotiations.
- UC Libraries [Pathways to OA](#), a unified conceptual and strategic framework to guide future actions.
- Commitments to robust open access publishing capability via the California Digital Library's [eScholarship](#) platform.
- UC campus declarations of intention to repurpose subscription funds via the [OA2020 initiative](#).

Note: This article gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the LSE Impact Blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [comments policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.

About the authors



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Richard A. Schneider is Associate Professor at UCSF. He is a developmental biologist and his lab studies how the skeleton gets patterned. A goal of his work is to devise novel therapies for regenerating skeletal tissues affected by birth defects, disease, and trauma. Rich's work has also helped elucidate the role of development in evolution. For the past 15 years, Rich has been vigorously engaged in issues related to scholarly communication and open access. He has spent multiple terms serving as Chair on both the UCSF (COLASC) and the UC System-wide Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) of the Academic Senate, and he led the effort to develop and pass an Open Access Policy for UCSF Faculty in 2012. In addition, he helped create a UC System-wide Open Access Policy in 2013 and a Presidential Open Access Policy in 2015. Most recently, Rich spearheaded the effort by UCOLASC to devise and endorse [18 principles](#) to make scholarly communication more open, fair, transparent, and sustainable when applied by UC during license negotiations with journal publishers.



Ivy Anderson is Associate Executive Director and Director of Collections at the California Digital Library, where she oversees a broad range of shared collections activities on behalf of the ten-campus University of California system. Ivy is probably best known for her work in content licensing and scholarly communications. She was co-Principal Investigator on the [Pay It Forward](#) project, which examined the viability of a large-scale transition to open access for major North American research institutions, and currently chairs the Governing Council of [SCOAP3](#), a global open access initiative in high energy physics. Before coming to the CDL in December 2005, Ivy was Program Manager for E-Resource Management and Licensing at the Harvard University Library, where she developed and managed a shared licensing programme on behalf of Harvard's many libraries.



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