An Open Access Policy at Texas A&M University

Authors: Faculty Senate Research Committee and TAMU University Libraries, 4/11/2018

What is an Open Access Policy?

Open access scholarly literature is "digital, online, free-of-charge, and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions"[1]. An *Open Access Policy* reserves rights for TAMU faculty and employees to make their articles freely available to the public in an open access repository. This is possible when TAMU authors automatically grant a non-exclusive copyright license to the University prior to any later agreements authors may make with publishers. An OA policy doesn't control where TAMU authors publish or require them to pay open access fees to publishers in order to comply.

Open access policies directly support the mission of land grant universities by making publically supported research openly available. Universities around the world have created Open access policies to share their research so that society has equitable access to published scholarship. These policies generally allow authors to archive a copy of their publication in an institutional repository or published in an open access journal, in ways that help address both the *price barriers* and the *permission barriers* that undermine global access to the products of a university's scholarly and creative work. Over six hundred universities and research institutions worldwide, including more than half of our peer institutions (as defined by Vision 2020), have an open access policy[2].

The Faculty Senate Research sub-committee recommends that TAMU adopt an Open Access Policy. An open access policy at TAMU would be managed by the TAMU Libraries, who would provide the support to TAMU authors so they can archive an open access copy of their publication in our institutional repository so that the burden on the authors would be minimal. We are proposing the Faculty Senate as a whole vote on a resolution to recommend that the President's office implement such a policy.

What are some Benefits of Open Access Policies?

- Increases citation rates for researchers who publish openly[3].
- Meets the emerging public access mandates of federal funding agencies and many nonprofit organizations[4].
- Improves access to new knowledge that directly supports economic innovation, a range of governmental and non-governmental services, and levels the playing field for researchers in developing countries.
- Help address long term and key issues with the costs associated with scholarly publishing.

Common Questions Raised About Open Access Policies

How will the policy function? The University Libraries will identify new TAMU-authored publications, notify TAMU authors and provide authors an easy method of uploading the right versions of papers into our institutional repository. The University Libraries will also maintain the records of authors seeking a waiver for the policy. Once curated in our institutional repository, the articles are discoverable by Web search engines and the publication is accessible to all.

Do I have to participate? No, TAMU authors have the option to 'opt –out' of the policy by requesting a waiver. For example, certain high impact journals with release restrictions (e.g. Science and Nature) can be special cases where open access isn't desired.

Will an Open Access policy control where I publish? No. Open access policies don't determine where authors publish and always include an option to request a waiver or embargo, if required by a publisher.

[1] Suber, P. *Open Access*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2012. Epub.
[2] Registry of Open Access Repository Mandates and Policies (ROARMAP): https://roarmap.eprints.org/
[3] Tennant JP, Waldner F, Jacques DC *et al*. The academic, economic and societal impacts of Open Access: an evidence-based review [version 3; referees: 3 approved, 2 approved with reservations] *F1000Research* 2016, 5:632 (doi:10.12688/f1000research.8460.3)
[4] http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/02/22/expanding-public-access-results-federally-funded-research

Won't publishers push back against these policies? Most do not. The University of California system has tracked which publishers requested waivers. Since 2013, the four most requested waivers were from, *Nature*, *Science*, *PNAS*, and the *American Roentgen Ray Society*[5]. Many journals even specifically allow some types, though typically not all types, of open access.[6]

How does this relate to the 'open access' publishing fee journals charge? Some journals are open access journals where the journal is supported by author publication charges instead of library subscriptions. While these journals are one option to make TAMU research open access, this is not required for an open access policy. An open access policy makes a preprint version of the article accessible on TAMU institutional repository, OAKTrust.

How does this relate to the public posting by authors on personal webpages and social networking sites (e.g. Research Gate, Mendeley, Academia.edu, etc…)? In current practices most authors assign their copyright to the publishing journal. Posting on a public website might be in violation of that journal-author agreement. The open access policy would allow posting of our research for non-commercial use on a Texas A&M University website or our institutional repository

How does this affect my interaction with the journal? Nothing changes from the author's perspective. You can even still sign the journal's copyright agreement, since that does not affect the University's claim of non-exclusive copyright license prior to any later agreements authors may make with publishers.

Is this Allowed / Legal? Yes. The University has always had the right to retain non-commercial use copyrights but has never exercised this right for this purpose.

Does this apply to all creative works? Not at this time. The recommended implementation is to apply this policy only to future journal publications where one of the coauthors is a TAMU employee.

Do I lose ownership of works I create? No. An open access policy does not transfer ownership, which will remain with Faculty authors under existing University policy[7]. There may be some changes to this University policy or an additional University policy document to address the implementation of an open access policy. The specifics of those changes are beyond the scope of this senate committee recommendation.

How will this be implemented? The faculty senate will recommend to the President's office the creation of an open access policy committee including all relevant stakeholders, including: faculty, library, legal, and administration. The goal of this committee will be to create a policy similar to those of our peer institutions.

Open Access Policies at TAMU Peer Institutions   (see http://vision2020.tamu.edu/peer-institutions)

Peer University	Open Access Policy Status
University of Texas	None
University of California System	http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-policy/
University of Michigan	None
University of North Carolina	None
University of Wisconsin	None
University of Florida	http://fora.aa.ufl.edu/docs/75//2012-2013//OAUF-policy%20and%20info.pdf
Georgia Institute of Technology	http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/faculty-handbook/5.5-policy-open-access-faculty-publications
University of Illinois	http://www.senate.illinois.edu/sc1512.pdf
University of Minnesota	None
Ohio State University	None
Pennsylvania State University	https://libraries.psu.edu/services/scholarly-publishing-services/open-access-publishing
Purdue University	None

[5] https://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-policy/publisher-communications/
[6] http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.php
[7] http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/17.01.99.M1.pdf