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Paige Mann
University of Redlands

Jennifer Beamer
Claremont University Consortium

Sonia Chaidez
Whittier College

Darren Hall
Occidental College

Amanda Makula
University of San Diego

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Paige Mann, Jennifer Beamer, Sonia Chaidez, Darren Hall, Amanda Makula, and Lev Rickards

CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS

MAY 2020 REPORT

Paige Mann, University of Redlands

Jennifer Beamer, Claremont Colleges

Sonia Chaidez, Whittier College

Darren Hall, Occidental College

Amanda Makula, University of San Diego

Lev Rickards, Santa Clara University

OVERVIEW

Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) was established in 1986 to develop resource-sharing among the libraries of private academic institutions in Southern California. Since its inception, SCELC has evolved to include all of California and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation representing over 100 member institutions and over 200 affiliate institutions.¹ *Campus Conversations on Scholarly Communications*, funded by a [SCELC SPIF grant](#), was created by the [Scholarly Communications Committee \(SCC\)](#) as a mini-grant program to foster institutional dialogue.

CC grants, up to \$800 per library, encourage SCELC member and affiliate libraries to engage diverse constituents across institutional units on topics about licensing contracts, open access, or other scholarly communication topics. This dialogue is needed to address complex issues such as price increases, library budgets, market dominance, social justice, accessibility, sustainability, and relevance. This program was facilitated by Paige Mann (STEM Librarian and Scholarly Communications Librarian from the University of Redlands) and Jennifer Beamer (Scholarly Communications Librarian from the Claremont Colleges) with the support of the SCC and the SCELC Office. Recipients of the 2019-2020 Grant are listed below.

- Sonia Chaidez, Instructional Technologist, Whittier College
- Darren Hall, Academic Technology Specialist, Occidental College
- Amanda Makula, Digital Initiatives Librarian, University of San Diego
- Lev Rickards, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Scholarly Communications, Santa Clara University

These individuals share their work and reflections which were impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. This report ends with recommendations and next steps for SCELC and SCELC libraries.

¹ <https://scelc.org/about>

WHITTIER COLLEGE: CREATING AN OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES LEARNING COMMUNITY

Sonia Chaidez, Instructional Technologist

SUMMARY

Whittier College applied for a SCEL C SPIF grant to help kick-start a series of campus conversations on learning about open educational resources. The motivation for this grant application came as we learned that our campus administration was committing to finding solutions for [college affordability](#) given 85% of our students receive financial aid. As a campus community, we are especially concerned about the rising costs of textbooks and accessibility. This grant facilitated the creation of an open educational resources working group which includes a team of faculty, staff, librarians, and students. Over the course of the academic year, this team discussed options for open access (OA) and opportunities to adopt open textbooks and other affordable learning resources.

EVALUATION

With the goal of gathering input from our campus community to make informed decisions on strategies to adopt open educational resources, we created information sessions, workshops, and events for the 2019-2020 academic year.

FALL SEMESTER

In the fall, we kicked off our open educational resources (OER) initiative during Open Access Week (October 21-27) by hosting a series of [events](#) that included an [informational webinar](#) on open educational resources and a film screening of “[The Internet’s Own Boy](#).” We also announced our OER Initiative at a campus-wide faculty meeting and our working group met to discuss topics on [OER adoption](#) and case studies.

We were fortunate to have a student, with a Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) fellowship, who is passionate about open access, join our student working group. This student advocate helped us by leading two student focus groups that were helpful in getting the word out about OER. The student focus groups were also opportunities for students to give us feedback on the cost of textbooks. These sessions generated great buzz around the subject. Ultimately, our student newspaper ran a [cover story](#) about these student meetings on OER.

SPRING SEMESTER

At the start of spring, we hosted a faculty [workshop](#) on OER and open textbooks. We highlighted our findings from the multiple campus conversations we captured from the fall semester including a [faculty survey](#) that was distributed by email. 26 faculty members responded to our survey and about half of that number said they use OER in their courses. The other half of faculty who have never used OER said they were interested in adopting OER. We shared results from our student focus groups and faculty were not entirely surprised by the feedback our students gave on the costs of textbooks; stating that students did not always buy the required textbooks because they could not afford them. This is also reflected in our library’s heavy borrowing of course reserves. In the fall, our statistics show that course reserve checkouts totaled 1,109.

At the faculty workshop, we also debuted our new [OER Libguide](#), we looked through several websites like OpenStax and OER Commons and we asked faculty members to speak about the open textbooks they currently use in their courses.

Grant funds were used to cover the costs of purchasing food items to host our OER working group events and student focus groups. Grant funds were also used to give our faculty stipends to attend OER workshops and learning events. Overall, our OER initiative has been well received throughout our campus!

REFLECTION

This grant provided us with the stepping stones to begin our second phase of our OER initiative which includes offering stipends to faculty who are ready to begin the adoption of open textbooks and other OER in their courses. Our plans were to use the remainder of the grant funds to continue OER learning and exploration by attending the Digital Initiatives Symposium at the University of San Diego in late April. Although the Covid-19 pandemic shut down many events, it has given us an opportunity to reflect how OER can be beneficial especially in times when we have to move to emergency remote teaching. As our campus pivoted quickly to online teaching, faculty learned that many of their students relied on the single physical textbook copy on reserve. Teaching and learning materials that are in digital formats and can be readily accessed without paywall restrictions can remove yet another barrier in granting access to education for all.

Whittier College thanks the SCELSC Scholarly Communications Grant Committee and staff for this opportunity.

OPEN OXY: FRAMING OPEN RESOURCES THROUGH A SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS AT OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

Darren Hall, Academic Technology Specialist

Thanks to the SCELIC Campus Conversations on Scholarly Communications Grant for 2019-2020 academic year, Occidental College was able to launch a program under the banner of *Open Oxy: Framing Open Resources through a Social Justice Lens at Occidental College*. This report will discuss what we have been able to accomplish under the auspices of this program, both in terms of identified objectives as well as ancillary effects, as well as goals that remain to be fulfilled. The conclusion will outline future steps for continuing the program and growing the culture of Open at Occidental College.

The initial goals of the Open Oxy program as enumerated in the grant proposal were to:

- Introduce faculty to basic and practical aspects of OA / OER
- Devise a plan to roll out OA / OER best practices and support across campus
- Create a comprehensive LibGuide for supporting OA / OER

Within this framework we further hoped to achieve through a series of four conversations and guest speakers to:

- Establish an understanding of what OA / OER / OSS are and what they mean for the campus community
- Introduce faculty to OA / OER / OSS as a social justice imperative
- Highlight the fiscal impact of the OA movement on the Library and Center for Digital Liberal Arts (CDLA) budgets and, by extension, how this affects the availability of resources and services overall
- Work through strategies for integrating open resources into the curriculum
- Promote the OA / OER publications and related support services available from the Library and the CDLA

PROGRAM

The program started in the Fall Semester with an introductory meeting attended by a pre-selected cohort representing different disciplines along with one of our Associate Deans. The lively conversation was anchored by some common readings and focused on what the implications are for a move toward Open for different campus stakeholders as well as what it means to frame the issue through the lens of social justice.

Our second event was a guest speaker presentation by Heather Joseph, Executive Director of SPARC, entitled *How Open Educational Resources Make College More Equitable and Inclusive*. The event was open to the entire campus community. Despite an unconventional early start time (8:30am), around 20 people attended. In addition to a large contingent from the Library/CDLA, there were also a couple of bookstore employees, faculty from a variety of disciplines, an Associate Dean, and, most notably, the Dean of the College. Joseph was an engaging speaker who invited conversation, and several faculty in attendance commented on how informative the event was for their understanding of OER.

Our remaining formal programming for the grant was regrettably cut short by the transition in the Spring Semester to remote teaching and learning. While we technically could have held our planned meetings, including a guest speaker presentation by James Glapa-Grossklag of College of the Canyons, remotely, the need for all involved to focus on the immediate challenges of our new circumstances meant that the Open Oxy work would have to be put on hold for the remainder of the semester. Fortunately, Glapa-Grossklag has agreed to give a presentation in the Fall 2020 semester, either in person or virtually depending on what the situation is like.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Despite not being able to hold all of our planned conversations, this year's Open Oxy programming did achieve a number of important goals. Most importantly, it has raised awareness about OA and OER among faculty and some key administrators. It was apparent through the dialogue that faculty who participated in the conversations see the connections between a culture of Open and social justice. Ideally, these initial inroads with a select group of faculty will have a multiplier effect and reach more faculty through their own interactions. Moreover, there is increasing institutional support for continuing the work that was started this year. The new College Librarian, who started after the grant was approved, is extremely interested in seeing Oxy's commitment to Open grow and participated actively in the program. In addition, we have received enthusiastic support from the Dean of the College. To this end, professional development funding was made available to allow me to pursue the Open Textbook Network (OTN) Certificate in OER Librarianship. Occidental College also became an affiliated member of SPARC just prior to Heather Joseph's visit to the campus, and we enrolled in the pilot year of the Authors Alliance Partner Program. The updates from these influential advocacy organizations have been shared with participants in the Open Oxy group and as well as a growing list of interested faculty.

In addition, while not formally a part of our original Open Oxy program, because of faculty interest, we started a Faculty Learning Community on OER development and will be continuing to offer more such FLCs in the future. These will be opportunities to guide faculty towards finding appropriate OER for their courses, modifying them as needed, and re-designing their courses to include them.

OUTSTANDING GOALS AND NEXT STEPS

Some of the initial program goals are still in progress. A collective approach for developing a plan for implementing OA / OER best practices and support across campus did not come to fruition during our conversations. That notwithstanding, the culmination work product of the OTN Certificate in OER Librarianship is to develop a plan for an OER program, so that is something that is actively under development. I will be incorporating the viewpoints gathered from Open Oxy conversations into the plan. In addition, while we still have not yet published a LibGuide on the topic, there are many very well-developed guides at other institutions published under Creative Commons licenses, so building on those will expedite the eventual publication of our own guide this summer.

One of the big challenges moving forward will be finding ways to implement a plan in a world of shrinking budgets in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. Nothing is certain at this point, but it seems very likely that funding for things like mini-grants to faculty to develop OER will be very hard to come by. Indeed, the Dean has already indicated that to the extent that such funding becomes available, it will only be through

a process of “repurposing” funds that were designated for other things. What the pandemic has made abundantly clear, however, is that the case for OER has never been stronger. Thanks to the SCELIC Campus Conversations grant we were able to lay the groundwork for this ongoing work.

USD OPEN ACCESS CAMPUS CONVERSATION COHORT: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS

Amanda Makula, Digital Initiatives Librarian

DESCRIPTION

The Open Access Campus Conversation Cohort at the University of San Diego, held throughout the fall of 2019, was composed of faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines who expressed interest in discussing topics and issues related to open access and the scholarly publishing system. The series was generously funded in part by a grant from the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC).

Objectives of the series were as follows:

- Foster discussion among faculty on scholarly communications topics in order to develop awareness and understanding
- Build community among participants in order to cultivate collaboration and mutual support around issues in scholarly communications
- Galvanize participants to advocate for innovation and advancement in scholarly communications, at their institution and in their discipline, in order to effect positive change

Cohort participants were recruited through a Google poll and by email invitations, and they brought different levels of experience with open access. For example, one of the members had participated in our library's OER initiative, which awards a stipend to a faculty member who replaces a traditional textbook or teaching materials with OER. Another had made extensive use of our institutional repository, Digital USD, for open sharing of their publications. Cohort membership was flexible in that any faculty members who wished to "drop in" as their schedule allowed were welcome to do so, and meetings were publicized in advance through various campus channels.

Our first meeting was held on Sept. 23, 2019, during which participants enjoyed refreshments and shared their experiences with and questions about open access, alongside a discussion of two recent articles about developments in the field. A related event was held on Oct. 21, 2019: a campus viewing of the SELC-hosted webinar, "[OER Programs at Private Liberal Arts Institutions](#)," in which two cohort members, librarian Alejandra Nann and faculty member Drew Talley, were presenters. The next meeting in the series consisted of a catered lunch and an interactive presentation by Heather Joseph, Executive Director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), a leading international organization in open access efforts. Heather's presentation was met with great enthusiasm, and a lively discussion followed her formal remarks. A combined total of nearly fifty people attended these events, including the Chair of the Faculty Senate, deans, and directors.

Additional events were planned for the spring of 2020 but had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. This included the annual Digital Initiatives Symposium (DIS). I had planned to fund registration to the DIS for non-librarian faculty members of the cohort, as the symposium brings experts and leaders in scholarly communications to our own campus for hands-on workshops, keynote addresses, lightning talks, panels, concurrent sessions, and user groups.

OUTCOMES

Attendees at the fall events followed up with me to deposit their scholarship in the institutional repository (Digital USD), asked me to consult on publication contracts, talked with me about launching an OA journal, and requested additional resources to learn more.

Following Heather Joseph's presentation, the Chair of the Faculty Senate met with me and the Dean of the University Library to discuss the formation of a committee charged with exploring Open Access policies at other institutions and whether USD might adopt one itself; I was asked to serve as co-chair of the committee and I accepted. I was also invited by the Provost to serve on a newly formed "Task Force on Engaged Scholarship." Both the task force and committee were originally scheduled to launch in spring 2019, but unfortunately, due to the pandemic, this work has been delayed.

Despite these successes, I recognize that much work remains, both at USD and beyond. According to a recent international study on researchers' opinions and behaviors related to OA, two-thirds of respondents are still not familiar with any of the eleven most common OA tools and initiatives.² This finding is reflected at USD, where some faculty have limited OA knowledge or they hold common misconceptions. The Open Access Campus Conversation Cohort at USD helped establish a foundation for greater OA awareness and engagement among members of our campus community, but it is only one in a series of efforts of outreach and advocacy for a more open and equitable system of scholarly communications.

DISSEMINATION

The Open Access Campus Conversation Cohort at USD was publicized internally via the faculty and library newsletters, print postcards created for the series, and a dedicated page on the "Open Access Libguide" I maintain. It will also be shared as part of a SCLC webinar on June 2, 2020, and as part of SCLC Colloquium if that event is held virtually.

Moreover, I have an accepted chapter titled "Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort" in the forthcoming ACRL Scholarly Communications Cookbook edited by Brianna Buljung and Emily Bongiovanni. The chapter details the series, provides practical guidance on how librarians can adapt the program to their own institutions, and includes acknowledgement of the SCLC grant.

CONCLUSION

Many thanks to SCLC for their generous support of this series at USD and other recipient schools, and thank you to Paige Mann for facilitating communication and planning efforts among the recipients! Although the series was cut short due to the pandemic, it generated lots of interest and attention, and it helped nurture the seeds of open access on our campus. I am confident that we will be able to build on our initial efforts during the coming academic year and beyond.

² <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/researcher-survey-2019/>

OPEN ACCESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

Lev Rickards, Associate University Librarian for Collections and Scholarly Communications, Santa Clara University

With the help of the Campus Conversations grant, Santa Clara University Library convened a Faculty Learning Community entitled “Open Access and Social Justice at SCU” during the Winter and Spring quarters of the 2019-2020 academic year. We envisioned the FLC as an engine that would engage an increasing number of faculty over time. Once a few cohorts move through the FLC, we hope to have a critical mass of faculty who are supportive of OA goals and ready to commit to a campus-wide OA policy. In addition, we hope to gain greater clarity about the campus’ appetite for changing or canceling big deals, and even identify those professors who sit on editorial boards for journals that might want to flip to open. For this first round, our objectives were more modest – we hoped to increase faculty engagement with open access, connect open access to SCU’s Jesuit values, and develop strategies for gaining faculty and administrative support around transforming SCU’s participation in the scholarly communication system. These initial goals were accomplished to varying degrees and were significantly affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

PREPARATION

In preparing for this series of conversations, we benefited greatly from a spike in interest following the cancellation of UC’s Elsevier deal in 2019, and follow-up presentations the Library made to Faculty Senate. We also had a number of conversations with Eileen Elrod, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development, to get her perspective on content, timing, and capturing faculty interest. We really appreciate the AVP’s support. She was especially interested in the connection between open access and rank and tenure requirements, even offering to moderate a panel on the topic.

A formal invitation was circulated to faculty as part of the monthly Faculty Development announcements. We also directly reached out to faculty that we already knew were interested, either from the Faculty Senate presentations or by searching Web of Science for SCU-affiliated authors who publish OA. The initial invitation included a short sign-up form. Once we had an initial group, we circulated a poll to figure out when to meet. We settled on a lunch-time meeting, with food provided by the Library. Faculty Development hosted the meetings in their lab space, which is located in the Library building.

WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED

Our original intention was to host five FLC sessions, while possibly bringing in a speaker and/or hosting a panel. Prior to the Governor’s shelter-in-place order, we held two sessions. It seems unlikely that we will meet in person, but we intend to hold a campus-wide webinar addressing the benefits of open access and open textbooks for online instruction.

CONVERSATION #1: INTRODUCTION TO OPEN ACCESS

This conversation centered on exploring why OA is valuable to faculty and to society at large. We also explored OA’s alignment with Jesuit values. The conversation revealed an unexpected reason that faculty choose to publish OA: speed. Because OA journals are purely online, faculty believe they have a faster turn-around time. When there’s an upcoming deadline - e.g. tenure review - faculty may choose to publish OA to quickly gain an additional publication in their CV.

Regarding Jesuit values, the conversation also flagged something we had overlooked in our focus on social justice. While justice is a core value of Jesuit institutions, an equally strong emphasis is placed on education. Faculty saw open access as directly related to providing meaningful education to all.

An additional outcome was that a participant from the Sociology department decided to flip their undergraduate student journal to open access, publishing through our institutional repository. And for facilitators, we recognized our own tendency to pump the faculty for information. We resolved to avoid treating future sessions like a focus group, ensuring that participants gain valuable tools and information that they can take back for their own practice.

CONVERSATION #2: ECONOMIC MODELS FOR SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING

In the second session, we discussed different economic models for both paywalled content and open access. This highlighted faculty frustration with the scattershot approach of some startup OA publishers. There is a sense that some of the newer publishers, while not predatory *per se*, were not approaching authors and reviewers with enough thoughtfulness. Participants described being invited to edit or submit to OA journals that were only tangentially related to their field of expertise. This highlighted the need for librarians to support faculty in identifying OA publishers that adhere to high standards of quality. There may be OA publishers who aren't technically predatory but simply don't have the depth of knowledge and disciplinary awareness to build out a set of relevant peer reviewers. Also, we discussed institutional repositories at depth. Some faculty were surprised that publishers permitted pre-prints to be posted on an IR and didn't realize that they could negotiate publication terms with publishers. Participants also received a copy of the SPARC Author Addendum.

Our third month was interrupted by the pandemic. We anticipate that the FLC will not meet for the remainder of the academic year, and that in its place we will hold one campus-wide webinar on the topic "Open Access, Open Textbooks, and the COVID-19 Pandemic".

CONCLUSION

The landscape around OA and scholarly communication is changing. There are real questions about whether we should pursue transformative agreements with the major for-profit publishers, or whether this will lead to increased lock-in, funneling hard-won open access monies right back into big deals. This is not an area where the library should act unilaterally – and in fact Santa Clara's experience suggests that we have many allies among the faculty. But we need to have more conversations to build a common vision, and the grant is directly assisting these efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

In May, SCEL C's Board of Directors will discuss the possibility of funding CC grants directly through its annual budget. If this occurs, the program will likely be adapted to address broader SCEL C priorities to be reflected in the forthcoming [strategic plan](#). In support of these changes, those involved with this year's program offer a few recommendations.

- **Increase the benefit from \$800 to \$1000.** \$800 was an awkward number to communicate in programming material.
- **Diversify CC Committee membership from across SCEL C committees.** This year's members were drawn entirely from the Scholarly Communications Committee. Representation from the Product Review Committee, Resource Sharing Committee, may stimulate dialogues across a broader range of scholarly communication topics—e.g., acquisitions, instruction, systems, bibliodiversity, social justice.
- **Revise the language in the call for proposals.** Submissions were overwhelmingly from academic institutions in California, and work may be needed to engage and recruit participation from other types of institutions and beyond California.

On June 2, SCEL C librarians are encouraged to attend the CC webinar. Grant recipients will present their work, offer insights, and answer any questions. SCEL C libraries are encouraged to consider what campus conversations need to happen at their institutions and to apply for a CC grant. Although the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact our institutions, this impact is providing glimpses of possible futures that require meaningful dialogue across departments, institutions, and communities. Corporations like Follett and Ex Libris are emailing librarians with suggestions on how to spend CARES Act monies; [research and scholarly publishing](#) are being expedited and shared openly; [barriers to content](#) are being lifted; and [copyright restrictions](#) are being challenged.

Budget concerns have prompted a [call for bibliodiversity](#), and may accelerate interest in open educational resources, so-called "inclusive access" programs, and [automatic textbook billing](#) processes. As technology becomes more embedded in research, teaching, and learning, institutions may need to engage librarians when drafting institutional contracts that can either address or overlook concerns over [surveillance](#), [accessibility](#), and [inequities](#). Alternatively, libraries may wish to discuss ongoing concerns such as [Big Deal cancellations](#), transformative agreements, and federal considerations of [open access](#) and [open data](#). Either way, libraries have an array of topics with which to engage their parent institutions. In addition, the recently conceived online forum, [SCEL C Channel One](#), may be a useful space in which SCEL C librarians might brainstorm ideas with CC grant recipients.

The Campus Conversations Subcommittee of the Scholarly Communications Committee thanks SCEL C for fostering institutional dialogues through the SCEL C SPIF Grant Program.