

Report of the Senate Select Committee on Scholarly Communication

1. Community Foundation and Charge

In September of 2019, the Faculty Senate created a Select Committee on Scholarly Communication to deliberate and report on current issues in the publishing ecosystem and the dissemination of scholarly research. Specific issues identified included how publishers are influencing, and at times inhibiting, the production of and access to information resources and exploring the emerging opportunities to form partnerships and so-called transformative agreements with publishers. Other identified cognate issues included open access models, questions of copyright and retention of authors' rights, privacy, and, more broadly, evolving, new, and experimental models for publishing and the production and dissemination of information. Broadly disseminating within the Penn community a common understanding of the scholarly resource landscape and developments within it was to be one objective. The committee was empowered to delve into practices of the faculty in their various roles in scholarly production (e.g., as authors, editors, reviewers). In the background was the question of whether it is desirable that the Penn Libraries or the University itself should have a strategy for responding to any of these developments, and, if so, what that strategy should be. Most of these topics can be viewed primarily from the perspective of individual faculty members but there might also be the question of how, as a University, we can support broader diffusion of information resources developed and managed at Penn, not the least of these standing faculty scholarship.

This is a very large agenda. Individual topics within it are themselves large, complex, and dynamic. Our objective in this first substantive report was to give a preliminary report to the Senate on context, identifying issues, and to offer the Senate an opportunity to form and give its own views on basic issues and priorities. That is a task which necessitates a document much longer than the usual telegraphic list of activities and conclusions. (This already long document is issued without footnotes. Readers seeking further reading should write to the committee chair.) The committee chair, two senior officials from the Penn Libraries, and the director of Penn Press will be present at the Senate meeting to hear the discussion and to respond to questions about which they have relevant expertise. The Senate or the committee or both can decide after that what the appropriate next steps for the committee might be. These could certainly include either deeper probing or formulating concrete proposals regarding issues raised here and exploration of cognate issues not yet addressed. The committee certainly sees more work that could be done.

Members of the standing faculty made up most of the committee's membership list (reproduced at the end of this report). But the committee benefited greatly from a broader membership. The Penn Libraries is the part of Penn most directly confronting the issues this memorandum has identified and most obliged to make decisions in real time. Its professional staff are not only themselves deeply engaged with its issues but also in active communication with their counterparts in other universities and major research libraries. The committee has been very grateful for the participation of Jon Shaw, Associate Vice Provost and Deputy University Librarian, and Brigitte Weinstein, Associate Vice Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communications, for their assistance in organizing outside presentations and their knowledgeable and thoughtful contributions to our discussions. We also needed expert knowledge from time to time from the inside the publishing world and the very active commitment to our work of Mary Francis, the director of Penn Press, often yielded helpful perspective and deeply informed observations and feedback.

2. Meaning and Uses of Scholarly Communications and Some Brief Context

The term "scholarly communications" will be used in this report to mean reports of research results and papers, essays, and monographs circulated for comment prior to formal publication, as well as articles in conference proceedings, refereed learned journals, and monographs of the traditional sort. Whether some cognizance ought to be taken of less formal means of written and visual communication with a wider public audience is a question we leave for others or another occasion.

For the first century and more of research universities in the United States, the main vehicles for such communications were oral and in print. Seminars and conferences were often an initial setting for the conveyance of new information and ideas, but the contents of these were casually screened at most. Journals and, latterly, conference proceedings were

typically published by learned societies and monographs by university presses. Publication, particularly in journals and monograph form, usually happened only after expert referees reviewed the materials and offered comments, and the authors were obliged to respond as a condition for ultimate publication. Universities relied on publication records, sometimes supplemented with internal reviews and letters from external experts, in their internal tenure and promotion decisions, in evaluating possible lateral appointments, and in setting compensation. Scholarly communications vehicles thus played two roles: they facilitated knowledge transmission and they also served as a basis of institutional assessment and action.

Two further details are important in what follows. First, much if not all of the time and effort involved in refereeing and editorial functions required for journal publishing on this model were either simply donated as a matter of professional responsibility by the individuals in question or quietly underwritten by their universities. (Monograph refereeing was traditionally compensated with several hundred dollars' worth of other books the press published or a cash fee roughly comparable to the books' wholesale value.) That said, however, non-trivial direct costs of production and distribution remained. These were traditionally defrayed by modest submission fees and by subscription income, with members of the learned society paying a relatively modest fee and institutional subscribers paying a much more substantial one. (The counterpart for monographs was payment by the trade at wholesale prices or, if the books were purchased by members of the public directly from the publisher, the higher official retail price or perhaps a discounted version of that [e.g. a convention or author's discount] still above the wholesale price.) Second, whatever entity published the works in question typically held or insisted on being assigned the copyright. These rights were often not zealously enforced; and even when they were enforced, the fees charged for further use were generally modest. But the property rights in law were real and using them to limit access was ultimately seen as necessary for raising the funds required to defray the costs of publication.

3. Changes in the World of Publishing (both on the supply side and the demand side i.e. the OA movement)

The most obvious of these changes may be consolidation in the production of learned journals and changes in their ownership structure. Learned societies began as vehicles for communication and intellectual exchange amongst their members and their publications continue in that role. The societies are generally and understandably not-for-profit organizations. But the costs associated with publication have to be covered somehow. The fixed elements of such costs could to a substantial extent be shared across publications. A for-profit enterprise willing to assume those costs across publications could exploit the resulting economies of scale to lower its unit costs of publication and share some of the resulting economies with the societies in the form of lowered unit prices or periodic transfers of surplus to the society which could then use the funds to subsidize other worthy activities. A number of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial-minded publishing firms, and even university presses saw the opportunity and, starting in the 1970s, began to offer to publish and distribute on contract. Many learned societies agreed to such arrangements and some even sold journals to such publishers. Consolidation among commercial journal publishers accelerated rapidly in the 1990s and the landscape is now dominated by five commercial firms and a smaller number of university presses. (Commercial firms operate on a significantly larger scale than university presses. See Table 1.) Some publishers—chiefly, though not exclusively, commercial ones—saw a further opportunity. They recognized that some fields were under-served by existing journals and in effect created new journals which they owned. Some of these were priced very aggressively, at least for institutional subscribers. Libraries might have resisted subscribing, but publishers counted on intra-institutional users to essentially force the libraries to stump up. Some figures may provide helpful context to this discussion of pricing. The Penn Libraries pay annual subscription fees as low as \$50 for society-published journals and as much as \$5,000 for a high-end non-profit-published one. The fee for a commercial journal can run as high as \$50,000 a year. The first of these may be cross-subsidized. But there is no reason to think that the expenses involved in producing the third of these are anything like ten times those involved in producing the second. Overall pricing by commercial firms

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eventually began increasing at unsustainable rates and this trend has been a source of deep concern to university librarians for some time now for reasons discussed below.

Table 1: Approximate number of learned journals currently published by the leading commercial and university presses

Springer Nature	3,000+
Elsevier	2,900+
Taylor & Francis	2,700+
Wiley	1,600+
Sage	1,000+
Oxford University Press	450+
Cambridge University Press	380+
University of Chicago	80+

Sources: Publisher websites

The coming of the World Wide Web turbocharged these developments. The publishers, who were better positioned than the learned societies to invest in information technology infrastructure, offered both electronic dissemination of current issues and an online archive. Many customers short of storage space welcomed the alternative—they could, after all, always store downloaded individual articles to which they wanted immediate access in pdf form on some local hard-drive. But all this offered opportunities to publishers which were more problematic from the perspective of institutional subscribers. The publishers began to offer subscriptions to libraries (and so to the libraries' users) of broad or tailored bundles of journals in so-called Big Deals. These were generally multi-year contracts with capped annual price increases over the life of the contract. But the caps and ex-post increases generally far exceeded predicted or actual inflation rates. It would be an exaggeration to say that institutional subscribers were obliged to take everything in the bundle if they wanted to take any of it but it is an exaggeration which captures the spirit of the bundling and especially the pricing: publishers were in this business to make money. (Elsevier's adjusted operating profit margin for both 2019 and 2020 appears to have been above 37%. The figure hasn't dropped below 30% in thirty years.)

It may be helpful to situate the preceding discussion and figures in the context of the Penn Libraries' expenditure. Penn spent 48% of its acquisition budget last fiscal year on journals. Current subscriptions accounted for 38 of the 48 and the remaining 10 went to backfile and archive expense. Of the spend on current journal subscriptions, 63% went to the Big 5 firms. Big 5 price inflation can force the Penn Libraries to confront very difficult choices.

At least one of the developments mentioned above was supported significantly from the side of the demand for publication. As European national governments began to force European university systems to compete for funding, the universities began to put new pressure on their faculty members, tenured as well as untenured, to publish their work regularly. This left faculty members scrambling for outlets. There were also pressures to have work appear in the most prominent venues. Submissions to major journals in particular increased markedly. For many journals, acceptances and publication lag times also increased. The commercial publishers often offered societies larger numbers of issues per year as part of an argument in favor of raising prices to subscribers. This seems sometimes to have created problems for the journals' editors when the larger issue counts were disproportionately larger than the increased flows of high-enough quality manuscripts coming in over the transom. Special issues on themes proposed by volunteer issue editors proliferated in a species of outsourcing paper acquisition and editing. Sometimes these Special issues were populated via open calls for papers; sometimes they were curated from start-to-finish.

A second demand-side development had deeper sources. Overseas national funding bodies comparable to the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health in the United States began discussing in 2018 whether they should insist that publications supported by their funding be available to all interested parties. This was the beginning of the open access movement. In some versions of these funding body initiatives, publication in journals that were not themselves fully open access was to be prohibited. Many STEM researchers (though not all—mathematics is certainly one notable exception) are encouraged or sometimes even required to use money from their grants to support the costs of pub-

lication of their work. Since the bodies in question ultimately financed their grants with public funds, open access was an understandable position, whatever else, either on the basis of first principles (the public paid for this research and it is entitled to know what the researchers found) or on the basis of wanting to avoid padding the margins of the commercial journal publishers. Some large-scale private funders of medical research such as the Wellcome Trust and the Gates Foundation also took this position and the whole program, known as Plan S and discussed in somewhat more detail below, went into effect on January 1, 2021. But as noted above, publication, whether on a for-profit or a non-profit basis, continued to involve costs. If publication is to happen, those costs would have to be paid by someone. (The publishers put this point more obliquely, and perhaps coyly, when they responded by speaking in terms of the model's sustainability. Hedging their bets, they also began developing programs to explore other possible revenue streams to be had from their archives.)

The issues discussed in this section bear most directly on faculty members conducting research in the natural sciences and some of the social sciences and in medically-related fields (at Penn in the Perelman School of Medicine, the School of Veterinary Medicine, and the School of Dental Medicine). Journal article publication plays a more secondary role in some social sciences and, above all, in the humanities. There, the distinction of much of the work published in the marquee journals notwithstanding, the main printed vehicle is the scholarly monograph. The economics of monograph publishing have also been increasingly unfavorable in recent years. The overall picture has broadly been as follows. Sales to individuals have declined as have sales to institutions. Retail prices have been raised to maintain cost coverage. Two prominent reasons sales to individuals have decreased are the increasing feasibility of searching and even accessing monograph content digitally and the increasing precarity of faculty employment terms as more and more teaching traditionally done by tenured or tenure track faculty is done by poorly paid and poorly supported adjuncts. Libraries have generally had fixed or declining resources (at least in real terms) available to fund their overall acquisition budgets. The declines sometimes are due to strictly intra-university resource allocation decisions (or struggles) and sometimes, particularly in the case of public universities, to declining state support. Journal and Big Deal bundle subscription prices have been rising and there have been vociferous constituencies against simply cancelling subscriptions, even those which are egregiously aggressively priced and whose prices increase year after year. In a situation like this, something had to give; and so some previously generously supported activities or acquisitions have had to be less well funded. Libraries that once understood it to be their job to routinely acquire copies of all serious monographs in areas they covered now would feel obliged to be more discriminating even had the prices of monographs not in fact been rising (which they have: see below). Sometimes libraries have protected their users against the worst effects of this increased discrimination by entering into inter-library lending schemes such as Borrow-Direct (a Penn Libraries-initiated and originally essentially an intra-Ivy League consortium, now also including Chicago, Duke, Johns Hopkins, MIT, and Stanford, which provides books from other member libraries far more quickly and conveniently than traditional inter-library loan). It may be worth noting that this is an even worse development from the perspective of publishers, since the success of such programs seemed likely to have a permanent rather than a transitory effect on sales.

4. Significance of the Changes to this Point for the Standing Faculty

It is difficult to concisely assess the impact on faculty members of research universities of the increase in the number of journals. Individual subscriptions to commercially published journals are sometimes remarkably expensive; but faculty members who might want to consult them generally count on their university library or some cognate institution to maintain a subscription. It is presumably easier to find a publication venue somewhere, all else equal; and to the extent that journal contents are scanned or abstracts indexed, presumably knowledge of these papers contents diffuse effectively. It is, on the other hand, not at all clear that publication in newer and less high-status journals is as helpful in obtaining grant support or making an impression on referees or promotion and tenure committees, both situations in which some dossier reviewers may not

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be familiar with either the candidate's publications or the standards of the periodical in question.

The problems we identified above regarding journals have become much worse in recent years at less well-resourced universities, both in this country and—especially—abroad, with the aggressive subscription pricing which followed on publisher consolidation. This is apparently not a major problem in countries with university systems funded by central governments, such as the public university systems in major European countries, since they have generally been in a position to negotiate with the commercial publishers collectively and represent collectives large enough and solvent enough to be able to conduct that negotiation from a position of some strength. The general situation in the Global South and even at less well-resourced public and private institutions in the United States seems, on the other hand, to be very different.

The problems concerning scholarly monographs are even more profound. The leading presses publish fewer titles than they used to. The availability of subventions of publication costs has become an issue on a scale utterly unknown in the pre-tenure days of senior members of the standing faculty. Grants in scientific and social scientific fields often include funds to support publication. But humanities faculty members typically have smaller research budgets than faculty members elsewhere in the University and rarely have grants that might cover publication expenses on any scale. In a world in which tenure decisions are taken to be strictly meritocratic, it would be an uncomfortable state of affairs if private financial resources were necessary to get otherwise perfectly meritorious books into print and place their authors into a position in which they could even conceivably be successful tenure candidates. This could perhaps be dismissed as just an unfortunate fact of life at badly resourced institutions. It would be hard to justify an institution as resource-rich as Penn casually taking such a position.

5. *Developments Canvassed, Past and Potentially Pending, Concerning Scholarly Monographs*

It may be simplest to address the monograph problems first. Online publication of monographs would certainly evade some of the cost issues. But sustained efforts on the part of, e.g., a serving President of the American Historical Association, do not appear to have led to any widespread acceptance of the idea that refereed online publication of monographs is as valuable as traditional physical publication. One might, from the perspective of academic society, have hoped under the emerging circumstances for more generous university press budgets. (After all, most university presses were initiated to publish works of their university's faculty and other—in Oxford's memorable phrase—"unremunerative works.") Unfortunately, the trend is in the opposite direction. Universities with presses that make profits on any really significant scale seem anxious to spend the money (and particularly in the cases of Oxford and Cambridge, UK tax law makes giving the universities the choice to do this particularly attractive). Universities with more economically marginal presses (even, for example, wealthy Stanford) have recently been publicly casting a skeptical eye on the subsidies they have been paying out of central administration funds. It is not at all clear how to address this problem for, e.g., all assistant professors in the humanities. Closer to home, the only viable choices bearing on our own junior faculty appear to be, in effect, tacitly raising tenure standards (and perhaps biasing them in favor of junior faculty in fields with widespread external grant support and publication subsidies) or supporting all of our junior faculty by establishing some mechanism to fund any required subventions in an equitable fashion. The former seems repugnant to the values of the University. The latter would not be out of the spirit of the University's general approach to junior faculty—we have exacting standards, but we try hard to hire extraordinarily able people and then in various ways try hard to give them conditions during their assistant professorships in which they have a real chance to prove themselves. Developing a mechanism that would be effective without being wasteful would require not just resources but also careful design. If the Senate has views on this, the committee would like to know what they are. If the Senate thinks the idea of subventions worth pursuing, working on details might be a suitable future task for the committee.

6. *Developments Canvassed, Past and Potentially Pending, Concerning Journals and Journal Publication*

The situation concerning journals is far more difficult. The price inflation deriving from concentrated commercial ownership of journals was itself moving towards crisis. A new factor exacerbated the problem. The traditional contracts at the onset of the online age involved the university library paying and access restricted to some population connected to the university (the possibilities including faculty and staff, current students, alumni, etc.) The publishers were able to estimate likely usage and charge accordingly (at least according to their profit-maximizing lights). The coming of the web initially changed this, mainly by facilitating access to alumni physically remote to the university. But the pressures for open access upended this essentially stable situation. Publishers still wanted to be paid for access, and if that access was to involve people not already paying for it through a contract between the publisher and some institution of their own, the publishers wanted to be paid more. The old subscription arrangements would place that burden on libraries which, more or less by construction, wouldn't necessarily have any connection to the new readers. The libraries were already resource-constrained and did not foresee their Universities wanting to fund such incremental charges. If that were indeed the case, the arrangement the publishers wanted would simply be untenable.

Alternative varieties of open access, it should be said, were mooted. Platinum OA involved immediate free availability with reuse permitted and without any period of embargo. (This, of course, essentially ignored the cost issue or counted on some external benevolence, institutional or personal.) Gold OA looked like platinum but with costs to be covered through article processing charges (APCs), payable by the author(s), the institution(s) employing the author(s), or the research funders. Bronze OA involved free reading on the publisher's website. Green permitted self-archiving by the author or the funder, either on websites of their own or in an open repository. (This is essentially a samizdat version of Platinum. [It may be worth remembering that samizdat publishing was not costless. Green open access also involved someone bearing the costs.]) There were others, but this will give some sense of the variety.

Progress seems to have proceeded on two separate tracks. One took shape as the so-called "Plan S" mentioned previously. This was initially put forward by Science Europe, the association representing the interests of major European public research performing and funding organizations, and later joined by the Wellcome Trust and the Gates Foundation. This demanded a rapid transition to completely open access and forbade publication of funded research in non-OA journals. It created a great deal of controversy, not least from those who had their own reasons to prioritize publication in prestigious non-OA journals and those who performed their research in teams that were only partly funded by the signatories to Plan S. The plan also gave great pause to learned society publishers, who did not feel they could shift the costs to their members. It caused some societies to consider selling their publishing assets.

The other track ran through contracts between publishers and individual libraries, library systems, and consortia. Major journal publishers have offered a variety of contracts of their own design in response to these research funder pressures. The publishers' proposals were generically known as "transformative deals," the transformation being the shift away from subscription-based access towards some variant of full open access. They all involve the publishers having less control over who reads what they publish and less ability to charge readers, or the institutions representing them, for access. The transformative agreements therefore, unsurprisingly, all involve finding someone else to pay: they are, in essence, contracts focused on paying to publish rather than paying to read. Since the initiative for open access might come from the authors of only some papers, one form of these agreements, known as "read-and-publish," involves continuing subscription fees but allowing payments for open access to specific articles. The other common form is known as "publish-and-read" and in this, all the fees were for publication, i.e., APCs. Reading access itself was to be unlimited.

There is intricate detail to these agreements, all of it subject to the commercial calculations of the publishers. Should all the publisher's journals be on this basis or only some? Should any journals be allowed themselves

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to be mixed mode, with pay-to-publish articles being freely available and the others not? Should there be some obligation for the full terms of the contract to be disclosed publicly? The libraries, in effect representing the universities and all of the universities' constituencies, of course wanted in both cases to avoid an outcome in which the new-form agreements resulted in an increased flow of fees to the publishers. (Sometimes they seem to have attained this, sometimes not. It is also worth noting that if the library party to an agreement is a consortium, the costs of "publish-and-read" might fall on institutions whose faculty do more research disproportionately to readership.) There is also the question, generally one for the universities rather than the publishers, of how the APC fees are to be funded if the authors cannot charge them directly to research funds (as would generally be the case, as previously noted, in the humanities). Should the money come from the library's budget as such? Ought it to come from the individual faculty members? Their departments or division of the university? The university proper? Idiosyncratic features of the structure of individual universities' finances and budgeting might have significant influence on what seems to be the most appropriate scheme. This is a second topic which might be suitably assigned to a future committee task list.

A larger question also arises. These transformational agreements are designed to be transitional, a sort of stopgap until a fully open access model is in place. If Penn comes to have views about the form of open access best suited to its collective values and to the variety and composition of its faculty, how might it best advance those views? The University of California system, as we will see below, is large enough to negotiate effectively with the commercial publishers. Penn, acting alone, is not, though we, for example, contract for our Elsevier journals through participation in the NERL (NorthEast Research Libraries) consortium, whose membership includes most of the largest research libraries in North America (Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Penn, Stanford, etc.). What sort of attitude would the Senate like the University to have regarding collective action in these matters? And should collective action be confined to collective action negotiating with the present set of publishers? Would the Senate like to see exploration of the possibility of universities or some other not-for-profit entity or entities becoming publishers of peer-reviewed learned journals?

7. *Stop Press: The UC System's Deal with Elsevier*

For most of the committee's lifetime, it was not only unclear how the journal-funding uncertainty would resolve but was also unclear with drama. These events have recently resolved a bit and this review will summarize the developments.

The University of California system represents a very large account for leading commercial publishers. It also estimates that it generates nearly ten percent of all U.S. research output. In part for that reason, it was particularly well-situated to consider whether the pricing power of the big publishers might be in decline. (One reason this might have been in de-

cline is yet another consequence of the digital world: the various forms of pre-prints circulate much more easily and quickly. In some fields, once the refereeing is done and the paper accepted, the actual publication chiefly matters for the details of formal citation.) UC decided to try to take more control of the structure and cost of its deal with the Dutch giant publisher Elsevier, one of the world's largest scientific publishers. It sought to replace its subscription deal with a publish-and-read contract and had specific price goals in mind. Elsevier was unwilling to agree and on February 28, 2019, UC announced that it would terminate its subscriptions to Elsevier journals. It had alternative third-party means of obtaining articles piecemeal from Elsevier journals, at a reasonable cost, at least in the short run. This seemed unlikely to be the end of the relationship but it certainly was a powerful statement to both Elsevier—a number of senior executives left the firm—and other universities and possible consortia.

Negotiations apparently continued. On March 16, 2021, UC announced that it had negotiated a four-year publish-and-read agreement with Elsevier, integrating reading access and open access publishing. The essential element of the open access part is that all research with a UC lead author published in any Elsevier OA or hybrid journal will be open access by default. University researchers will have access to all Elsevier journals. UC takes the view that this will both support its research activities and make its outputs globally accessible. The agreement is very complex, but to give some sense of the structure, the libraries will pay a fee for the open access, capped at \$10.7 million for the first year and growing at 2.6% per year. (The reading access rights are to be gratis.) Approximately 4,400 articles are expected in the first year. The \$10.7 million is to be funded via APCs. The APCs for the first year for the anticipated number of articles would be a maximum of \$2,449. UC Libraries will pay the first \$1,000 of this. The expectation is that the research funds of the author or authors will cover the rest but if this is infeasible, the UC Libraries will cover the rest. UC seems pleased with the agreement in terms of both dissemination objectives and overall spend. Elsevier is doubtless relieved to get its revenue stream back. It is surely also pleased that UC will pay for open access to UC articles without obliging Elsevier to lower subscription costs to third parties to recognize the UC subsidy—perhaps a small matter now but a potentially large one if the model is copied widely. It will be stuck with the agreement as a model it can expect to be a basis for negotiations with other generally smaller actors, but it seems to have concluded that this is a model it can live with. (To put a tentative number to one part of a Penn comparison, a rough estimate of the number of Elsevier articles with Penn authors these days would be around 2,000.)

8. *Possible Interim Actions at Penn*

The issues described above have been the subject of widespread discussion across American academia and in the research university library community. For example, the Faculty Senate of the UC System eventually produced the following fairly elaborate "Declaration of Rights and Prin-

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principles to Transform Scholarly Communication” statement of principles it would like to see in 2018 <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/committees/ucolasc/scholcommprinciples-20180425.pdf>.

The Iowa State University Library produced the following in 2019: https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=coss_reports

The need for concise decisions is not yet upon us but probably will be within the next two to three years. Forewarned is forearmed and since some of the issues are ultimately decisions for the University administration, it would probably be wise for the Senate to work out its own views well in advance of needing to speak or be left out of the decision-making.

It might also be observed that the Penn Libraries has to deal with many of these issues on a day-to-day basis. It is also responsible for negotiating contract terms with publishers and the contracts have their own schedules. Whatever the process and pace involving College Hall decision-making turns out to be, it might be helpful to provide the Libraries with a general framework of principles on an interim basis. We would welcome the input of the Senate on the wisdom of developing such a framework. One possible starting point for discussion—though no more than that—might be the following:

I. Prioritize non-profit and learned society and academy-led scholarly publishers over for-profit and commercial publishers.

II. Prioritize publishing models that allow equitable participation in the dissemination of scholarly research.

III. Support sustainable broad, equitable, and open access to scholarly research.

Note that there are concrete steps that both members of the standing faculty and Libraries could take to implement principles like these. (This is an important point: if the ideas behind open access seem important or even if change seems to be coming regardless of what we feel, action on the part of the individual faculty members as well as University institutions like Penn Libraries may be in order.) Faculty authors could choose to publish with a non-profit, society- or academy-led publisher instead of a commercial one. Libraries staff could aid authors in identifying non-profit venues for publication. Faculty editors could transition society and other publications out from under commercial publishers. Libraries staff members could assist such editors in transitioning from commercial publishers in identifying community-based infrastructure and funding. Penn Libraries could increasingly finance society—and academy-led publications over commercial ones. Promotion and tenure committees could, as a matter of policy, affirmatively recognize the supplementary advantage of publication with non-profit publishers. Faculty authors could choose to publish their research open access. Libraries staff members could aid authors in identifying open access options for publication. Penn Libraries could finance open access publications in accordance with the three principles.

All of this might come about, of course, in a completely decentralized

way. If such principles meet with general approval, on the other hand, there might also be a role for leadership from College Hall. Another possible future task for the committee might be to explore and assess the merits of such an initiative and possible details, all in the context of the particulars of the Penn faculty and student community and the situation of the University.

9. Conclusion

We hope this report gives the Senate at least a preliminary sense of the scope of the problems the evolving scholarly communications landscape poses. We hope that the time allocated for discussion of it and any subsequent discussions or correspondence that may occur will elicit views on what aspects of them the Senate would like to see further explored and whether positive proposals would be in order in some future report. Finally, concerning matters on which decisions have to be made on an ongoing basis, we hope that the Senate can give the Penn Libraries its thoughts concerning the framework in Section 8.

Members of the Senate Select Committee on Scholarly Communication 2020-2021

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