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## Faculty Perspectives on Open Access: A Multidimensional Analysis of Open-Access Usage and Library Relationships at an R2 Institution

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Faculty Perspectives on Open Access: A Multidimensional Analysis of Open-Access Usage and Library Relationships at an R2 Institution

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The focus of this study is the broad impact open-access (OA) publishing has on all aspects of faculty members' work (including publishing habits, research activities, and teaching) and on faculty relationships with the library.

**Methods:** An online survey addressing the impact of OA publishing on faculty and on their relationship with the library was administered to full-time tenure-track faculty at an R2 institution. Responses were analyzed by disciplinary unit, and themes were developed from faculty qualitative responses.

**Results:** A majority of faculty respondents had experience with OA publishing, with payment of article processing charges (APCs) to OA publishers, and with the use of OA materials in research and teaching. Many faculty respondents reported a substantial impact of OA on their research, teaching, and authorship, but expressed concern with the funding of OA publishing fees, with the quality and reputation of OA journals, and with the ethics of the OA business model.

**Discussion:** Faculty respondents demonstrate differing levels of familiarity with OA materials in all three roles. Overall, they are more receptive to OA materials as readers and researchers and more demanding about the quality, impact, and cost of OA publishing as authors.

**Conclusion:** Despite recognition of the benefits of OA materials, faculty respondents express concern over the cost, quality, and ethics of OA publishing. Faculty respondents also indicate a desire for the institution to provide funding for OA publications and rely on the library for expertise in locating, evaluating, and utilizing OA publications.

**Keywords:** open access, article processing charges, APC, faculty survey, faculty authorship, faculty research, faculty teaching, faculty/library relationship, qualitative data analysis

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## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. The survey results can support differentiated library outreach on the use of OA materials to academic units.
2. The library must continue outreach and programming to establish a baseline level of understanding of OA materials in all aspects of faculty work across academic units.
3. The survey results can support discussion with university stakeholders about challenges and potential solutions for the funding of OA publishing.

## INTRODUCTION

In a traditional model of scholarly publishing, access to knowledge is restricted to readers affiliated with institutions that can afford to subscribe to journals from academic publishers. In contrast, open-access (OA) publishing is a business model that permits free access for all readers to the published article. Various models are used to replace revenue from paid subscriptions, including institutional memberships, community-driven funding, transformative agreements to transition journals from closed to OA, or an article processing charge (APC), a publishing fee charged at the time of publication to make the article immediately available upon publication. The majority of OA articles are now being published in journals that require an APC (Borrego, 2023; Pollock & Michael, 2023). These fees are paid by the author(s) either via monies from grant funding, from their institutions' OA accounts, or individually out of the author's research or personal budget.

OA publishing has grown exponentially in the last twenty years, impacting all disciplines (Demeter et al., 2021). From 2020 to 2021, OA publishing grew 21%, with 43% of articles published in the last 5 years being published through OA options (Olejniczak & Wilson, 2020). The number of journals that utilize the APC model has also grown rapidly, particularly among the major commercial publishers (Solomon & Björk, 2016; Dudley, 2021; Butler et al., 2024).

One driver of this rise in OA publishing is the increase in public access mandates by research funders (both governmental and private). The August 2022 memo, *Ensuring Free, Immediate, and Equitable Access to Federally Funded Research* from the United States White House Office of Science and Technology Policy mandated that all federally funded research publications be OA by 2026 (White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, 2022), and several federal agencies have implemented earlier effective dates for their policies (National Institutes of Health, 2025). While researchers are not required by funders to pay a publication fee and can deposit their work in an open repository to satisfy public access requirements, several large

publishers have begun requiring payment of APCs by authors who need to comply with federal policies (Lee, 2025).

While OA publishing has been partially successful in improving access to scholarly articles for readers not affiliated with a subscribing institution, the reliance on APCs to fund publication has created inequities among faculty in the dissemination of their research (Greussing et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2023). Since most faculty need to publish to obtain tenure and promotion, and in some fields are required to publish in specific venues, unfunded and lesser-resourced authors are particularly vulnerable, since the inability to publish could have a detrimental effect on their careers (Segado-Boj et al., 2022; Dudley, 2021). A 2020 study by Olejniczak & Wilson of U.S. research institutions confirmed that “Participation in APC OA publishing appears to be skewed toward scholars with greater access to resources and job security” (p. 1429).

The researchers have observed distress among faculty, particularly after the library’s OA fund was dissolved, and desired to gather specific data about how OA publishing is impacting the campus and its faculty. This study focuses on the broad impacts OA publishing is having on all aspects of faculty members’ work, from their publishing habits to research activities and teaching. The researchers were particularly interested in how APCs and funding for OA publishing are affecting researchers’ choices at our institution, and how these issues may impact faculty views of and reliance on the library in the future.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The breadth of literature on OA publishing is vast. Many articles discuss faculty perceptions and acceptance of OA, and some explore faculty perspectives on APCs specifically. Contemporary articles frequently draw on sources that are more than ten years old. Sources relevant to this study explore faculty attitudes toward OA publishing in the United States, the differences in attitude and behavior between disciplines, and the use of OA publications in various faculty roles.

### Attitudes

For more than twenty years, researchers have been asked for their opinions on OA publishing (Rowley et al., 2017; Dalton et al., 2020). With APCs becoming the dominant funding mechanism, particularly among the major publishers and born OA publishers (Solomon & Björk, 2016; Dudley, 2021; Butler et al., 2024), faculty authors are also asked for their opinions about publishing models (Segado-Boj et al., 2022; Tenopir et al., 2017).

Faculty have come to understand the advantages of OA in principle (Scott et al., 2023). Yet many remain skeptical of OA publication, particularly given the ongoing issues of “predatory” publishing behaviors and the current explosion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Bergstrom & Ruediger, 2024; Palmer, 2024). Faculty are more cautious about OA publishing and have more negative viewpoints than post-doctoral researchers and graduate students, particularly when considering tenure and promotion (Dalton et al., 2020; Tenopir et al., 2017). The 2021 Ithaka Faculty Survey also showed that younger faculty are more accepting of a future where OA models replace traditional scholarly publishing (Blankstein, 2021).

There is a conflict between faculty acceptance of the importance of OA and their publishing behaviors (Li et al., 2022; Scott et al., 2023). Even faculty who in the past were grant-funded expressed concern about the ability of all researchers to publish without paying a fee (Scott et al., 2023). Most faculty authors care more about the journal not having a fee to publish than they do about the content being freely available to readers (Blankstein, 2021).

In seeking out a publishing venue, faculty authors have consistently prioritized journal attributes of prestige/reputation, “fit” with the research topic, and wide readership by peers (Scott et al., 2023; Tenopir et al., 2017); OA status of the journal has not been a priority (Li et al., 2022; Tenopir et al., 2016). The importance of impact factors in the decision of where to publish continues to decline, as reported in the most recent Ithaka Faculty Survey (Blankstein, 2021). Researchers will publish OA even with an APC if the journal is deemed high quality (Cook & Smith, 2017; Doney & Kenyon, 2022; Pilato & Tran, 2020).

Those who hoped that OA publishing might lead to greater equity in research access are increasingly aware of a shift of inequities from readers to research authors (Scott et al., 2023; Tenopir et al., 2017). Unfunded and less-resourced researchers lack the necessary funds to publish in their chosen journals, disenfranchising lesser-resourced institutions and less wealthy countries (Borrego, 2023; Segado-Boj et al., 2022). Overall, faculty authors indicate that they favor OA replacing traditional models and wish to see the same publishers remain (Blankstein, 2021).

## Disciplines

Discussion of faculty perceptions of OA is concentrated in the science, medical, and health disciplines, where OA publishing has a more extended history and more publishing activity. Faculty in these fields often have funding, so they have greater capacity to pay for OA publishing, which impacts their participation in (and their perceptions of) OA, in general. In contrast, faculty authors from the humanities and social science disciplines are often unfunded, and faculty from these groups typically respond in low numbers to research surveys

seeking their input on OA. These groups also have mechanisms for scholarship different from traditional journal articles, such as books, book chapters, conference presentations, and digital humanities projects.

Many studies confirmed a connection between faculty OA publishing habits and their discipline, with researchers in the science and health disciplines more likely to publish OA (Ayeni & Willson, 2022; Heaton et al., 2019; Li et al., 2022; Olejniczak & Wilson, 2020). Biological and biomedical sciences were found to have the highest levels of participation in OA publishing (Olejniczak & Wilson, 2020). Social scientists and humanities faculty favor journals that do not have a publishing cost (Blankstein, 2021).

Some disciplines express more concern about the quality of peer review for OA journals, which impacts their support and controls their publishing behaviors (Pilato & Tran, 2020). Interest in broadening dissemination varies by discipline. Those groups interested in reaching policy makers and practitioners (e.g., the health sciences and other professional fields) express greater concern for the reader benefits (Odell et al., 2017) than groups publishing in areas perceived to be of less interest outside of academia (Dalton et al., 2020). Nelson & Eggett (2017) investigated the motives of a group of chemistry faculty who paid fees to publish in hybrid OA journals and found that, although mandates (from funders, institutions, or governments) were the primary reason for publishing OA, authors also saw a benefit in having their research publicly available. It remains unclear whether researchers who choose to publish OA are motivated by self-interest or by altruism (Heaton et al., 2019).

### **Paying for APCs**

Olejniczak & Wilson (2020) conducted a large study of PhD-granting institutions in the United States; they found that faculty publishing in OA journals that charge APCs are more likely to be from American Association of Universities member institutions, advanced in their careers, male, and from the STEM field. Access to a funding source significantly predicts attitudes toward paying an article processing fee (Segado-Boj et al., 2022). Faculty authors find it challenging to secure funding through multiple sources, and the majority of faculty authors will not choose to publish OA if they have no funding (Borrego, 2023; Pilato & Tran, 2020; Segado-Boj et al., 2022). Many researchers describe article processing charges as a pay-to-publish model that is a “global threat to Science,” with the newest, youngest researchers holding the most negative opinions of APCs (Segado-Boj et al., 2022). Yet, as the recent Ithaka Faculty Survey revealed, younger researchers express strong support for OA publishing in general (Blankstein, 2021).

Research authors turn to grant funders, their institutions, or their department to pay APCs before considering the library as a funding source. They resoundingly refuse to pay out of pocket (Doney & Kenyon, 2022; Segado-Boj et al., 2022). However, surveys of researchers who include international faculty have found that some faculty do pay publishing fees using their personal funds (Heaton et al., 2019; Segado-Boj et al., 2022).

The amount researchers are willing to pay towards OA publishing differs depending on where they get the money to cover the cost (Tenopir et al., 2017). The acceptable cost of an APC varies by discipline, with arts and humanities authors wanting to pay little to none, and science and medical faculty willing to accept higher publishing fees (Tenopir et al., 2017). Estimating the total annual cost paid for APCs by individual medical researchers in 2019, Ellingson et al. (2021) reported median annual APC payments of \$191 for “general” researchers and \$2,900 for “high-impact” researchers, with one researcher paying as much as \$34,676 in one year.

There are differences between disciplines in how faculty see OA publishing being funded going forward, with humanities and social science faculty receptive to the library playing a role in supporting OA infrastructure, and science and medical faculty looking toward research funders and institutional research offices for publishing support (Blankstein, 2021).

### **Use of OA in nonauthor roles**

Few studies have asked faculty about using OA literature as readers or instructors. Faculty voice more skepticism as authors than as readers. They question the quality of the peer-review process and express concern over what they feel is vanity publishing—paying to play, yet they give less thought to OA when accessing articles to read or use in their research endeavors (Greussing et al., 2020; Pilato & Tran, 2020; Dalton et al., 2020).

The role of early versions of manuscripts (pre-prints, unpublished, or author versions) in the faculty research process has not been fully explored. Researchers from Illinois State University studied this question and found significant differences across disciplines in the acceptance and utilization of these forms of research literature, with most faculty not trusting anything that is not published using traditional peer-review methods (Scott et al., 2023).

Investigation of how faculty incorporate OA materials in their instruction generally focuses on the use of open educational resources (OER; educational materials that are both freely available and licensed for reuse, adaptation, and redistribution) and not on OA articles and books. However, investigating the use of OER for instruction is beyond the scope of this review and research project. Studies reflect an increasing faculty awareness and use of OER; these sources also reveal that faculty do not differentiate between OER and OA materials, and have come to

consider any zero-cost materials used in the classroom as OER (Bell, 2024; Bond et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2022).

## Literature summary

OA publishing is now part of the publishing landscape across disciplines. Prior research has been published on important aspects of how faculty view OA, including disciplinary differences in adoption as authors and attitudes towards APCs. Other aspects of OA material use by faculty remain understudied (e.g., use of OA materials by faculty in non-author roles, or the influence of OA adoption on faculty relationships with the library). Our study seeks to increase the understanding of understudied aspects of OA publishing and the use of materials in our local context, to better meet the research and curricular needs of our faculty and students.

## METHODS

### Research questions and survey development

The research questions of interest were:

- RQ1-3: What impact has the growth of OA publishing had on faculty at our institution, considering their distinct roles of author (RQ1), researcher (RQ2), and instructor (RQ3)?
- RQ4: How do faculty fund their OA publishing, and what funding challenges do faculty encounter?
- RQ5: How has the growth in OA publishing impacted faculty relationships with the library, and how important to faculty will library support for OA publishing be in the future?

An online survey was drafted to gather anonymous feedback from faculty on these questions. Survey respondents were provided a working definition of OA publishing as “any version of literature or scholarship materials made freely available online...but excluding open-source software.” A series of questions was generated in both multiple-choice and free-text formats covering the topics of OA impacts, the effect of OA publishing on faculty/library relationships, and APC funding methods. A multiple-choice question to capture the faculty member’s unit affiliation (school or college) was also included. The survey instrument is presented in [Appendix A](#).

Application was made to the university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review of the research protocol; the review determined the research to be “not human subjects research” and therefore not within the IRB’s purview.

**Survey sampling and distribution**

The target population for the survey was the full-time tenure-track faculty at Oakland University. Since an up-to-date email list for these faculty members was available, the survey was distributed via Qualtrics to all 500 elements of the target population. The survey remained open for a 2-month period, and faculty received weekly email reminders prompting completion during the survey period. Of the 500 surveys distributed, 209 responses were received, representing an overall response rate of 42% including partial responses. The distribution of respondents by unit is shown in [Table 1](#).

Unit	Faculty	Responses	Response rate
College of Arts & Sciences (CAS)	232	85	37%
School of Business Administration (SBA)	61	12	20%
School of Education and Human Studies (SEHS)	43	12	28%
School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS)	65	22	34%
School of Health Sciences (SHS)	36	21	58%
School of Music, Theater and Dance (SMTD)	26	3	12%
School of Nursing (SON)	20	9	45%
University Libraries (UL)	13	4	31%
Other	4	2	50%
No Unit		39	
All units	500	209	42%

**Table 1.** Survey responses by unit (school or college)

**Survey analysis**

Quantitative responses were described statistically and visualized in tabular and graphical formats. The quantitative variables were treated as categorical, and tests of independence (chi-square or Fisher’s exact) were run to look for a significant association between variables. In some cases, subcategories (e.g., smaller academic units) were merged to achieve expected values in cross-classification tables necessary for the validity of the tests ([Cochran, 1954](#), p. 420). Ratings of impact and importance were collected on a 5-point scale from low to high, but in

some cases these ratings were recoded to a 2-point scale (“substantial” corresponding to medium or higher rating, and “not substantial” corresponding to a rating below medium) to enable further analysis.

The data was imported into a qualitative data analysis tool to enable exploration of themes in the free-text responses. Themes in the qualitative data were identified using a method outlined by Byrne (2022) in their worked example of a contemporary approach to reflexive thematic analysis described by Braun & Clarke (2019).

## Limitations

The survey population in this study was not generated using random sampling methods (instead comprising all elements of the target population) and was subject to substantial levels of nonresponse. No attempts were made to weight responses to compensate for nonresponse bias at either the question or element level. Tests for independence of categorical variables are calculated and reported, but conclusions are limited to the responding faculty and cannot be drawn about the target population or strata of the target population.

## RESULTS

### RQ1: Faculty impact of OA publishing—author role

76% of faculty across all units reported having experience with OA publishing in their role as authors. The highest percentage of positive responses (considering units with a minimum of five respondents) came from the School of Engineering & Computer Science (95%), the School of Health Sciences (90%), and the School of Business Administration (83%), as shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

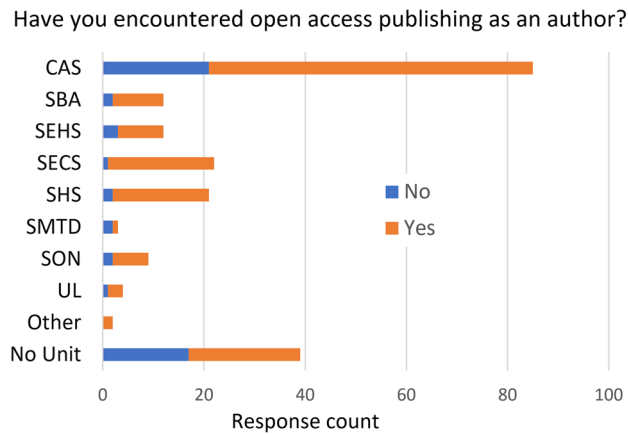
Faculty who admitted experience with OA authorship were also queried about the nature of their experience. As shown in Figure 2, a majority of respondents in the School of Engineering & Computer Science, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Education and Human Studies, and the College of Arts/Sciences had experience with publishing OA works, and many faculty in these units also reported paying APCs.

Table 3 presents the level of impact that OA publishing had on faculty authors. 72% of faculty across all units rated this impact as “substantial” (i.e., at least medium impact). Units that showed high percentages of faculty reporting substantial impact of OA publishing on authors include the School of Engineering & Computer Science (90%) and the School of Health

Have you encountered OA publishing as an author?

Unit	No	Yes	Yes
CAS	21	64	75%
SBA	2	10	83%
SEHS	3	9	75%
SECS	1	21	95%
SHS	2	19	90%
SMTD	2	1	33%
SON	2	7	78%
UL	1	3	75%
Other	0	2	100%
No Unit	17	22	56%
All Units	51	158	76%

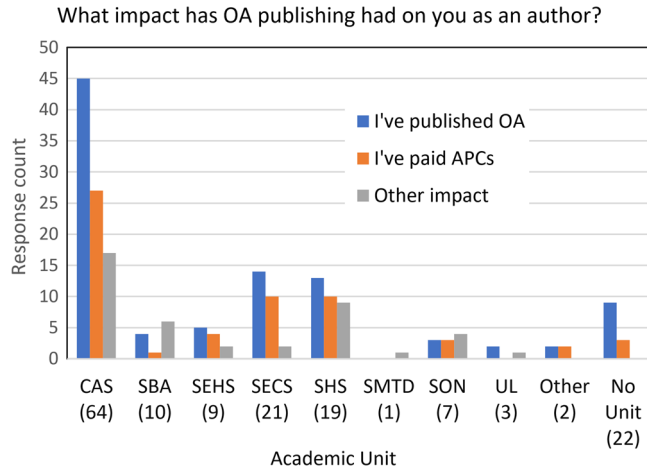
**Table 2.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as author, by unit



**Figure 1.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as author, by unit

Sciences (84%); conversely, the School of Business Administration showed a lower percentage (30%) of faculty reporting substantial impact of OA in the author role.

A chi-square test of independence on the data of [Table 3](#) indicated a significant association between academic unit and “substantial” impact of OA on faculty authors based on an alpha value of .05,  $\chi^2(5, N = 143) = 14.02, P = .015$ . Shaded rows in the table indicate where academic units were merged to ensure that at least 75% of the expected values in the



**Figure 2.** Nature of OA publishing impact on faculty authors, by unit (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents from each unit)

Please rate the impact that OA publishing has had on you as an author

Unit	Low	Low/medium	Medium	Medium/high	High	Total	Not substantial impact	Substantial impact
CAS	11	9	16	16	12	64	20	44
SBA	4	3	1	2	0	10	7	3
SEHS	2	1	3	2	1	9	3	6
SECS	0	2	12	4	2	20	2	18
SHS	2	1	1	7	8	19	3	16
SMTD	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
SON	0	0	1	4	0	5	0	5
UL	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	3
Other	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2
No Unit	1	3	2	2	2	10	4	6
All Units	21	19	38	38	27	143	40	103
All Units	15%	13%	27%	27%	19%	100%	28%	72%

**Table 3.** Faculty rating of OA publishing impact in the author role, by unit (Shaded rows were merged for the test of independence)

cross-classification table are  $>5$  (a condition for validity of the chi-square test with this number of sub-categories). Academic units with observed values of rated impact higher than expected included the School of Engineering & Computer Science and the School of Health Sciences;

those with observed values lower than expected included the School of Business Administration and the College of Arts/Sciences.

Analysis of qualitative survey responses resulted in the identification of four themes related to OA impacts on faculty authors, as shown in [Table 4](#).

Themes: OA impact on faculty authors
Theme 1: OA cost or funding concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid OA publication due to costs (26)</li> <li>• OA costs limit research dissemination (16)</li> <li>• Lack of funding for APCs (8)</li> <li>• Other cost or funding concerns (7)</li> </ul>
Theme 2: OA ethical or quality concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid OA publication on principle (7)</li> <li>• Skeptical of OA journal quality (5)</li> <li>• Skeptical of OA business model (4)</li> <li>• Other ethical or quality concerns (7)</li> </ul>
Theme 3: Adopting OA publication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invited to publish in OA journals (4)</li> <li>• Authored OA textbook (3)</li> <li>• Considering publishing in a hybrid journal (2)</li> </ul>
Theme 4: Reasons for OA authorship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased readership, citation, or visibility (11)</li> <li>• Reduced time to publication (3)</li> <li>• Desire additional opportunities for OA authorship (3)</li> <li>• Other reasons (9)</li> </ul>

**Table 4.** Themes identified from qualitative analysis of Research Question 1 (figures in parentheses indicate the number of responses tagged with each code)

Selected verbatim responses for the prevailing qualitative themes (author role) are shown in [Appendix B, Tables B1–B3](#), along with corresponding faculty responses to *quantitative* questions on the author role.

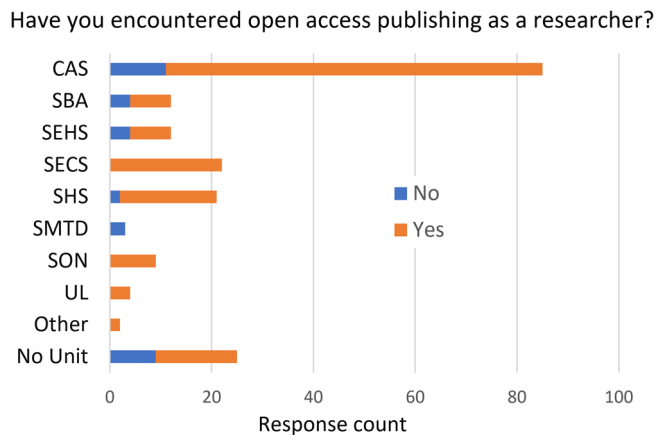
**RQ2: Faculty impact of OA publishing—researcher role**

83% of faculty across all units reported having experience with OA publishing in their role as researchers. The highest percentage of positive responses (units with at least five respondents)

came from the School of Engineering & Computer Science (100%), the School of Nursing (100%), the School of Health Sciences (90%), and the College of Arts/Sciences (87%), as shown in [Table 5](#) and [Figure 3](#).

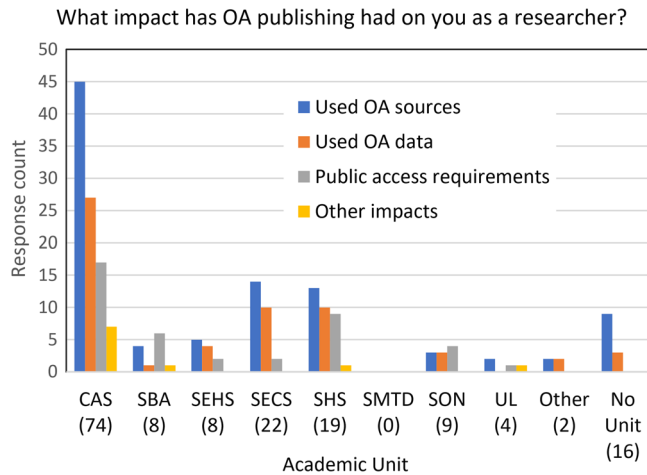
Have you encountered OA publishing as a researcher?			
Unit	No	Yes	Yes
CAS	11	74	87%
SBA	4	8	67%
SEHS	4	8	67%
SECS	0	22	100%
SHS	2	19	90%
SMTD	3	0	0%
SON	0	9	100%
UL	0	4	100%
Other	0	2	100%
No Unit	9	16	64%
All Units	33	162	83%

**Table 5.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as researcher, by unit



**Figure 3.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as researcher, by unit

Faculty who admitted experience with OA materials in their role as researcher were also queried about the nature of their experience. As shown in [Figure 4](#), a majority of respondents in the School of Engineering & Computer Science, the School of Health Sciences, the School of



**Figure 4.** Nature of OA publishing impact on faculty researchers, by unit (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents from each unit)

Education and Human Studies, and the College of Arts/Sciences reported the use of OA sources in research.

When faculty were asked to rate the level of impact OA publishing had on their research, 71% of faculty across all units rated this impact as “substantial” (i.e., at least medium impact), as shown in Table 6. Units that showed high percentages of faculty reporting substantial impact of OA materials in the role as researchers included the School of Engineering & Computer Science (82%) and the School of Health Sciences (79%); conversely, the School of Business Administration showed a lower percentage (50%) of faculty reporting substantial impact of OA in the researcher role.

A chi-square test of independence on the data in Table 6 indicated no significant association between academic unit and “substantial” impact of OA on faculty researchers.

Analysis of qualitative survey responses resulted in the identification of two themes related to OA impacts on faculty researchers, as shown in Table 7.

Selected verbatim responses for the prevailing qualitative themes (researcher role) are shown in Appendix B, Table B4, along with corresponding faculty responses to *quantitative* questions on the researcher role.

Please rate the impact that OA publishing has had on you as a researcher

Unit	Low	Low/ medium	Medium	Medium/ high	High	Total	Not substantial impact	Substantial impact
CAS	12	10	22	15	14	73	22	51
SBA	2	2	1	2	1	8	4	4
SEHS	1	0	3	4	0	8	1	7
SECS	2	2	10	3	5	22	4	18
SHS	1	3	1	7	7	19	4	15
SMTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SON	1	3	1	4	0	9	4	5
UL	0	1	2	1	0	4	1	3
Other	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2
No Unit	2	3	4	0	1	10	5	5
All Units	21	24	44	37	29	155	45	110
All Units	14%	15%	28%	24%	19%	100%	29%	71%

**Table 6.** Faculty rating of OA impact in the researcher role, by unit (Shaded rows were merged for the test of independence)

Themes: OA impact on faculty researchers

Theme 1: Use of OA materials in research

- Reliance on OA materials in research (5)
- Unaware of OA status of research materials (3)
- OA materials not available in my field (2)
- Other comments (1)

Theme 2: OA materials and research relationships

- Using OA materials to identify potential collaborators (1)
- Guiding other researchers to OA sources (1)
- Editing an OA journal (1)

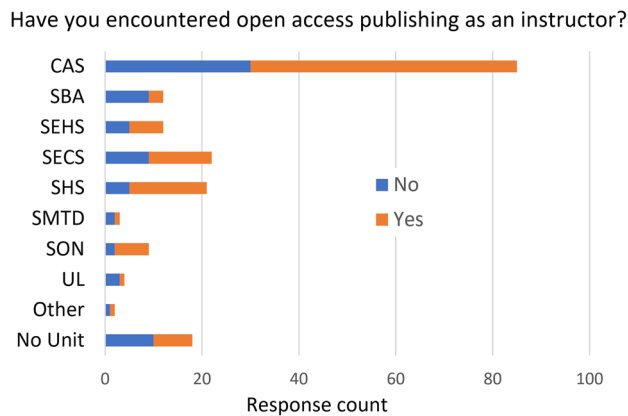
**Table 7.** Themes identified from qualitative analysis of Research Question 2 (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of responses tagged with each code)

### RQ3: Faculty impact of OA publishing—instructor role

60% of faculty across all units reported having experience with OA publishing in their role as instructors. The highest percentage of positive responses (units with at least five respondents) came from the School of Nursing (78%), the School of Health Sciences (76%), and the College of Arts/Sciences (65%), as shown in [Table 8](#) and [Figure 5](#).

Have you encountered OA publishing as an instructor?			
Unit	No	Yes	Yes
CAS	30	55	65%
SBA	9	3	25%
SEHS	5	7	58%
SECS	9	13	59%
SHS	5	16	76%
SMTD	2	1	33%
SON	2	7	78%
UL	3	1	25%
Other	1	1	50%
No Unit	10	8	44%
All Units	76	112	60%

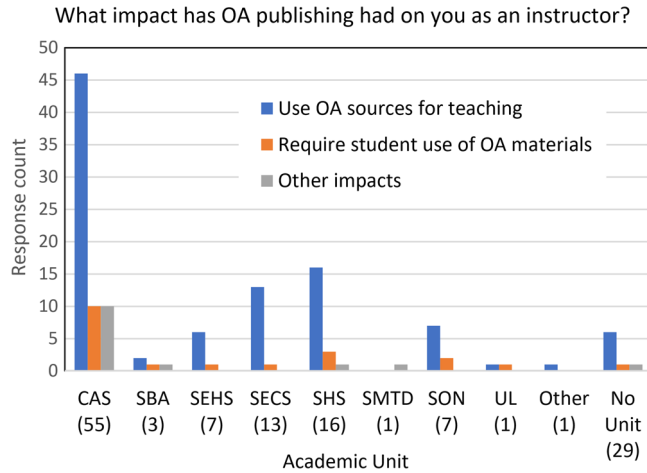
**Table 8.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as instructor, by unit



**Figure 5.** Faculty experience with OA publishing as instructor, by unit

As shown in [Figure 6](#), a majority of respondents in the School of Engineering & Computer Science, the School of Health Sciences, the School of Education and Human Studies, and the College of Arts/Sciences reported the use of OA material in their teaching.

When faculty were asked to rate the level of impact OA publishing had on their instruction, 73% of faculty respondents across all units rated this impact as substantial (i.e., at least medium impact), as shown in [Table 9](#). Units that showed high percentages of faculty



**Figure 6.** Nature of OA publishing impact on faculty instructors, by unit (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents from each unit)

Please rate the impact that OA publishing has had on you as an instructor

Unit	Low	Low/medium	Medium	Medium/high	High	Total	Not substantial impact	Substantial impact
CAS	12	6	12	11	12	53	18	35
SBA	0	1	0	0	2	3	1	2
SEHS	1	1	2	3	0	7	2	5
SECS	0	1	7	4	1	13	1	12
SHS	1	3	4	3	5	16	4	12
SMTD	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
SON	1	1	3	1	1	7	2	5
UL	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Other	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
No Unit	0	0	3	2	2	7	0	7
All Units	16	13	32	25	23	109	29	80
All Units	15%	12%	29%	23%	21%	100%	27%	73%

**Table 9.** Faculty rating of OA publishing impact in the instructor role, by unit (Shaded rows were merged for the test of independence)

reporting substantial impact of OA materials on their instructor role included the School of Engineering & Computer Science (92%) and the School of Health Sciences (75%); a slightly lower percentage of the College of Arts/Sciences faculty (66%) reported substantial impact.

Themes: OA impact on faculty instructors
Theme 1: Use of OA materials in teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledged use of OA in teaching (6)</li> <li>• Using OA data in coursework (4)</li> <li>• Decline to use OA instructional materials (3)</li> <li>• Expressed disinterest in using OA materials for teaching (3)</li> <li>• Using open textbooks or OER (2)</li> <li>• Other comments (2)</li> </ul>
Theme 2: Reasons for/against using OA materials in teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced cost of course materials for students (4)</li> <li>• Lack of access to OA materials for teaching (3)</li> <li>• Quality issues (actual or perceived) with OA course materials (3)</li> <li>• Other reasons (1)</li> </ul>

**Table 10.** Themes identified from qualitative analysis of Research Question 3 (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of responses tagged with each code)

A chi-square test of independence on the data in [Table 9](#) indicated no significant association between academic unit and “substantial” impact (i.e., impact rating of at least medium) of OA on faculty instructors.

Analysis of qualitative survey responses resulted in the identification of two themes related to OA impacts on faculty in their instructional role, as shown in [Table 10](#).

Selected verbatim responses for the prevailing qualitative themes (instructor role) are shown in [Appendix B, Table B5](#), along with corresponding faculty responses to *quantitative* questions on the instructor role.

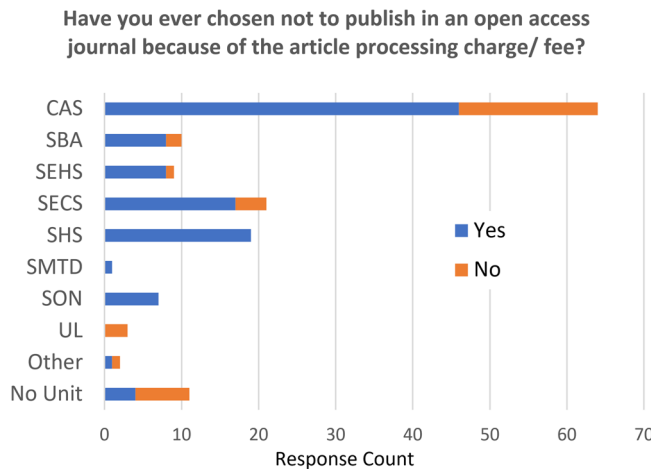
#### **RQ4: APC funding sources and concerns**

When asked whether the requirement to pay an APC had ever influenced their decision to publish in an OA journal, 76% of faculty respondents across all units answered in the affirmative ([Table 11](#) and [Figure 7](#)). A chi-square test of independence indicated a significant association between academic unit and influence of APCs on a publishing decision based on an alpha value of .05,  $\chi^2(5, N = 147) = 14.85, P = .017$ . Academic units with observed values of OA avoidance higher than expected included the School of Health Sciences and the School of Education and Human Studies; the College of Arts/Sciences had observed values of avoidance lower than expected.

Have you ever chosen not to publish in an OA journal because of the article processing charge/fee?

Unit	No	Yes	Yes
CAS	18	46	72%
SBA	2	8	80%
SEHS	1	8	89%
SECS	4	17	81%
SHS	0	19	100%
SMTD	0	1	100%
SON	0	7	100%
UL	3	0	0%
Other	1	1	50%
No Unit	7	4	36%
All Units	36	111	76%

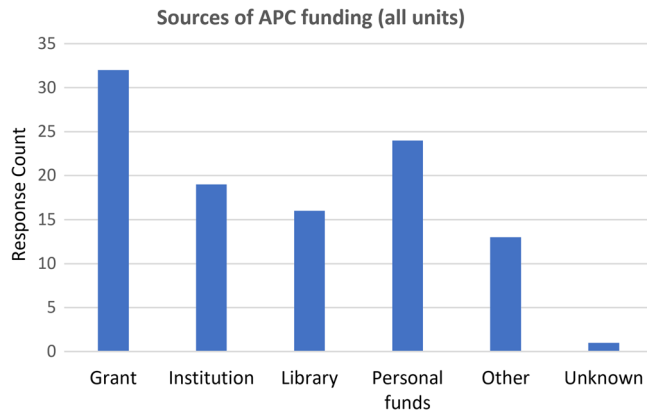
**Table 11.** Faculty choosing to avoid OA publishing due to APCs, by unit (Shaded rows were merged for test of independence)



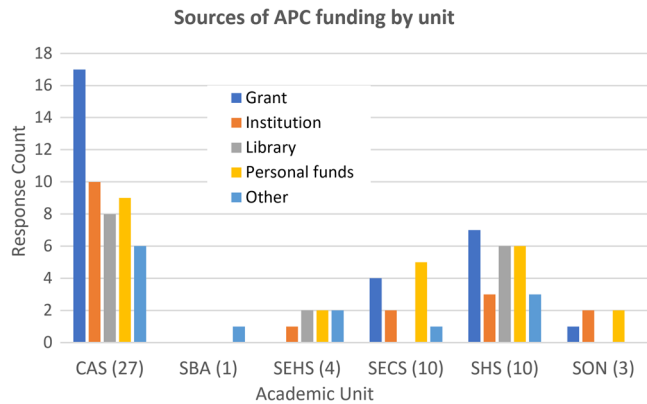
**Figure 7.** Faculty choosing to avoid OA publishing due to APCs, by unit

Faculty responses across all units indicated that funding for APCs came from these sources in descending order of frequency: grants (32), personal funds (24), institution (19), library (16), and other (13), as shown in [Figure 8](#).

Funding sources varied by unit as shown in [Figure 9](#), with grant funding being the most frequent source in several units (the College of Arts/Sciences and the School of Health Sciences) but not in others.



**Figure 8.** Sources of APC funding across all units



**Figure 9.** Sources of APC funding, by unit (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of respondents from each unit)

Analysis of qualitative survey responses resulted in the identification of two themes related to APCs for OA publishing, as shown in [Table 12](#).

Selected verbatim responses for APC Themes 1 and 2 are shown in [Appendix B, Tables B6–B7](#), along with corresponding faculty responses to *quantitative* questions on the impact of APCs on authors.

**RQ5: Impact of OA publishing on faculty use/relationship with the library**

Faculty were asked to respond to the question “Looking to a future where the majority of journals will be open-access, how important is the role of the library in supporting your [publishing | research ]

Themes: Impact of APCs on faculty authors

Theme 1: APC funding sources

- Paid by a collaborator (13)
- Paid by the library (9)
- Paid by my previous institution (2)
- APCs waived by the journal (2)
- Other sources of APC funding (5)

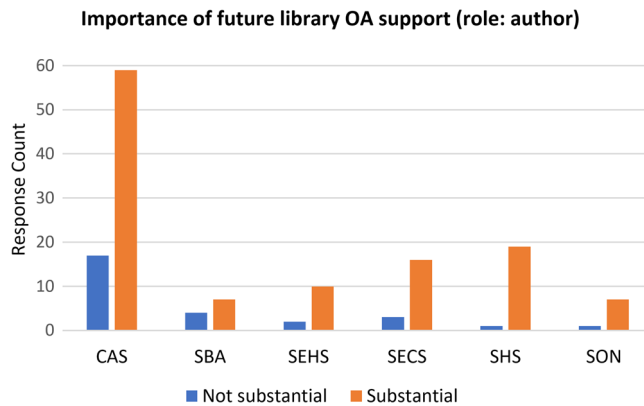
Theme 2: APC funding concerns

- Desire institutional support for OA publication (35)
- APCs are expensive (16)
- Issues with grant funding of APCs (7)

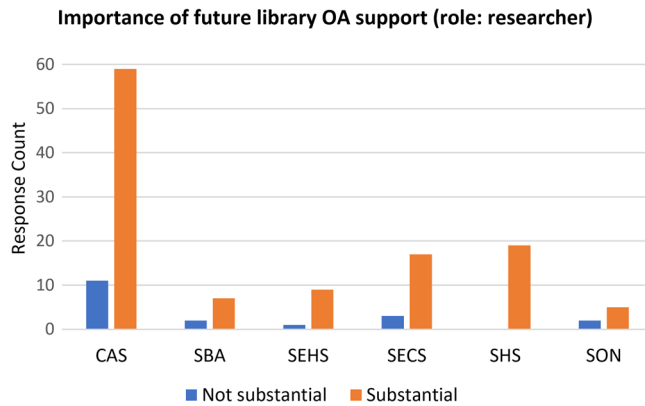
**Table 12.** Themes identified from qualitative analysis of Research Question 4 (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of responses tagged with each code)

*instruction]*” by providing an importance rating on a five-point scale from low to high. These importance ratings were subsequently recoded into two categories: “substantial” (at least medium importance) and “not substantial” (less than medium importance) for further analysis, and are summarized in [Figures 10–12](#).

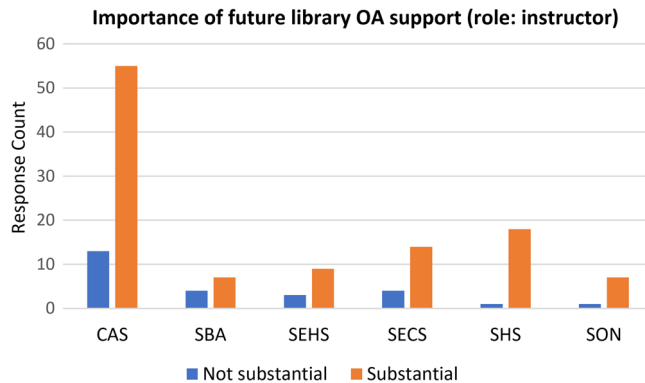
(Author role, [Figure 10](#)): A chi-square test of independence on the recoded importance ratings indicated no significant association between the academic unit and faculty rating of the importance of the library’s role in supporting OA publishing. However, several other quantitative



**Figure 10.** Faculty rating of importance of future library OA support (author role), by unit (Ratings recoded from 5-point Likert scale)



**Figure 11.** Faculty rating of importance of future library OA support (researcher role), by unit (Ratings recoded from 5-point Likert scale)



**Figure 12.** Faculty rating of importance of future library OA support (instructor role), by unit (Ratings recoded from 5-point Likert scale)

variables showed a significant positive association with the future importance of library support for authors, based on an alpha value of .05:

- Prior encounter with OA as an author,  $\chi^2(1, N = 157) = 4.88, P = .027$
- Prior payment of an APC,  $\chi^2(1, N = 123) = 5.10, P = .024$
- Faculty rating of substantial OA impact on authors,  $\chi^2(1, N = 123) = 8.89, P = .003$

(Researcher role, [Figure 11](#)): A chi-square test of independence on the recoded importance ratings indicated no significant association between academic unit and faculty rating of importance of the library’s role in supporting research. However, several other quantitative variables

showed a significant positive association with the future importance of library support for researchers, based on an alpha value of .05:

- Prior use of OA sources in teaching: (using Fisher's exact test,  $P < .001$ ).
- Faculty rating of substantial OA impact on researchers: (using Fisher's exact test,  $P < .001$ ).

(Instructor role, [Figure 12](#)): A chi-square test of independence on the recoded importance ratings indicated no significant association between academic unit and faculty rating of importance of the library's role in supporting teaching. However, one quantitative variable (faculty rating of substantial OA impact on instructors) showed a significant positive association to future importance of library support for instructors based on an alpha value of .05: (using Fisher's exact test,  $P = .031$ ).

Analysis of qualitative survey responses resulted in the identification of three themes related to the impact of OA publishing on faculty relationships with the library, as shown in [Table 13](#).

Selected verbatim responses for Faculty/Library Relationship Themes 1–3 are shown in [Appendix B \(Tables B8–B10\)](#) along with corresponding faculty responses to *quantitative* questions on the impact of OA on their use and relationship with the library.

Themes: OA impact on faculty/library relationship
Theme 1: Decreased need for traditional library services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research process no longer centered on the library (8)</li> <li>• Decreased reliance on library for access to resources (6)</li> <li>• Decreased reliance on library for discovery of resources (1)</li> <li>• Decreased physical visits to library (1)</li> </ul>
Theme 2: Increased need for services supporting OA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliance on librarians for OA publishing guidance (8)</li> <li>• Reliance on library for OA teaching materials (3)</li> <li>• Desire more OA publishing agreements (2)</li> </ul>
Theme 3: Little or no impact on faculty/library relationship
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little or no impact (34)</li> </ul>

**Table 13.** Themes identified from qualitative analysis of Research Question 5 (Figures in parentheses indicate the number of responses tagged with each code)

## DISCUSSION

Although faculty were provided with a working definition of OA materials at the outset of the survey, responses demonstrate differing levels of familiarity with (and acceptance of) these materials and their potential value in research, publication, and teaching. In the author role, some responses indicate a nuanced understanding of the current state of OA publishing and the decision space in which faculty authors must operate, with respondents demonstrating an appreciation of the impact of OA on the tenure and promotion (T&P) process, of sources and timing of APC funding, and of emerging OA publishing agreements. On the other hand, some faculty responding in the roles of author and/or researcher express less interest in library support for OA publishing, and stated their continuing need for traditional library services such as interlibrary loan, subscription access to paywalled content, and librarian expertise in finding reliable sources. The respondents' academic discipline had no discernible effect on these sentiments.

Comparing responses from the author role versus that of researcher confirms a dichotomy identified by previous authors (most notably, [Greussing et al., 2020](#)): Respondents are skeptical about OA journals (in terms of perceived quality, peer review, and impact on the T&P process) when considering a publication venue for their work, but express no such concerns about utilizing OA articles as research sources. Furthermore, some respondents see no real distinction between the author and researcher roles with respect to the impact of OA materials on their scholarship; this may accurately reflect the respondents' viewpoint, or may instead be an indication of the need for better distinction in the survey instructions and prompts to participants about these two roles.

The qualitative responses collected for the instructor role present analytical challenges. A key issue is that respondents tend to confuse licensed library resources (e.g., eBooks) with OA materials. They also cited the impact of materials, such as open educational resources (OER) like open textbooks, which were regarded as out of the scope of this study. In the survey sections on author role and APCs, respondents clearly express the challenges they face with funding OA publishing and their desire for institutional support to pay for OA publishing (including elective use of hybrid OA journals). Respondents describe difficulties paying for APCs in the absence of grant funding; however, even authors with grant funding struggle to find funds for APCs payable after closeout of their grant.

Respondents comment on the importance of the library providing expertise in both the curation of quality OA materials (researcher role) and the navigation of all aspects of the OA publishing process (author role), from journal selection through APC payment. They also

express a high degree of uncertainty about the impact of OA on their scholarship and about their relationship with the library in the future.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the limitations of the sampling approach (i.e., a limited ability to generalize the results to all the faculty at our institution), the survey provides a glimpse into current faculty attitudes, practices, and perceived barriers around OA publishing at our institution. The results indicate that many faculty hold strong feelings about APCs and OA publishing in general, while also revealing a lack of nuanced understanding of the broader scholarly publishing environment and the persistent view of the library as a provider for access and items. This demonstrates a need for continuing outreach and awareness efforts by the library on topics including the ethics of scholarly publishing, distinctions between OA materials and OER, and use of the institutional repository as an alternative to OA journals for the broad dissemination of research results. Librarians should provide more training for faculty to eliminate biases, especially in disciplines that indicate they don't accept OA publications in T&P documents. Respondents made specific requests from the library for more help with evaluating and locating journals in which to publish, continued services to provide access to non-OA materials, and assistance with advocating for more funding or agreements that would permit OA publishing without APCs.

The results of the study have informed a discussion between the library, administrators, and the faculty union around institutional funding for OA publication, and may have influenced a recent collaboration between the Office of Research and the library to restart the library's OA fund. Insights gained in the study have been used to refine content on the scholarly communication outreach webpages, and more programming for faculty based on the survey results is under development.

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## **APPENDIX A.**

### **Survey instrument**

#### **OA PUBLISHING AND APCs - IMPACT ON OU FACULTY**

##### **Start of Block: Intro**

You are invited to participate in a survey investigating the impact that open access (OA) publishing is having on OU faculty in their roles as authors, researchers, or instructors, including the impact of article processing charges or fees (APCs/APFs) from journal publishers.

This project is being conducted by Julia E. Rodriguez, Associate Professor, and James E. Van Loon, Assistant Professor.

Your decision to participate in the survey is anonymous and voluntary and will not affect your present or future relationship with OU Libraries.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Julia E Rodriguez, [juliar@oakland.edu](mailto:juliar@oakland.edu), 248-370-2490 or James E. Van Loon, [jevanloon@oakland.edu](mailto:jevanloon@oakland.edu), 248-370-2477.

##### **End of Block: Intro**

##### **Start of Block: Intro, open access as an author, and APCs**

Open access (OA) publications are online publications that are made freely available to readers without a subscription or paywall. For the purposes of this study, OA publications are any version of literature or scholarship materials made freely available online (incl. pre- or post-prints, data, figures, etc.) but excludes open-source software.

Q1 Have you encountered open-access publishing as an author?

- o. Yes
- o. No

*Skip To: End of Block If Q1 = No*

Q2 Please list the ways that you as an author have been impacted by the shift to open-access publishing (select all that apply).

- o. As an author, I have published articles in open-access journals
- o. As an author, I have paid open access charges/fees (APCs/APFs) to publish in an open access journal
- o. Other (explain in box below)

Q3 Please rate the impact that open-access publishing has had on you as an author.

- o. 1 = low impact
- o. 2 = low/medium impact
- o. 3 = medium impact
- o. 4 = medium/high impact
- o. 5 = high impact

*Display This Question: If Q2 = As an author, I have paid open access charges/fees (APCs/APFs) to publish in an open access journal*

Q4 Regarding open access article processing charges (APCs) you paid for in the past, how were they paid for? (choose all that apply)

- o. APC funded by my grant
- o. APC funded by my institution
- o. APC funded by my library
- o. APC funded by me (personally)
- o. Don't know
- o. Other (explain below)

Q5 Have you ever chosen not to publish in an open access journal because of the article processing charge/ fee?

- o. Yes
- o. No

**End of Block: Block themes: Intro, open access as an author, and APCs**

**Start of Block: Block theme: open access as a researcher**

Q6 Have you encountered open-access publishing as a researcher?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: End of Block If Q6 = No*

Q7 Please list the ways that you as a researcher have been impacted by the shift to open-access publishing (select all that apply).

- As a researcher, I have used open-access sources (book or articles) in my research
- As a researcher, I have used open-access data shared by others in my research
- As a researcher, I have received grants from funders who require that I provide public access to my articles and associated data
- Other (explain in box below)

Q8 Please rate the impact that open-access publishing has had on you as a researcher.

- 1 = low impact
- 2 = low/medium impact
- 3 = medium impact
- 4 = medium/high impact
- 5 = high impact

**End of Block: Block theme: open access as a researcher**

**Start of Block: Block theme: open access as an instructor**

Q9 Have you encountered open-access publishing as an instructor?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: End of Block If Q9 = No*

Q10 Please list the ways that you as an instructor have been impacted by the shift to open-access publishing (select all that apply).

- o. As an instructor, I have used open access publications in my teaching
- o. As an instructor, I require my students to use open access publications
- o. Other (explain in box below)

Q11 Please rate the impact that open-access publishing has had on you as an instructor.

- o. 1 = low impact
- o. 2 = low/medium impact
- o. 3 = medium impact
- o. 4 = medium/high impact
- o. 5 = high impact

**End of Block: Block theme: open access as an instructor**

**Start of Block: Block theme: library role in open access publication**

Q12 In what ways has the growing availability of open access literature and data impacted your use of and your relationship with the library? (explain in box below)

Q13 Looking to a future where the majority of journals will be open access, how important is the role of the library in supporting your publishing, research, or instruction?

	Low	Low/medium	Medium	Medium/high	High
Publishing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 Do you have any additional comments or suggestions on the impact of open-access publishing on faculty at OU? (explain in box below)

**End of Block: Block theme: library role in open access publication**

**Start of Block: Block theme: demographics**

Q15 Which school/college are you primarily associated with? (choose one)

- o. College of Arts & Sciences
- o. School of Business Administration
- o. School of Education and Human Services
- o. School of Engineering and Computer Science
- o. School of Health Sciences
- o. School of Nursing
- o. School of Music, Theatre and Dance
- o. University Libraries
- o. Other

**End of Block: Block theme: demographics**

**APPENDIX B.**  
**Selected faculty responses for dominant qualitative themes**

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (author role)	Ever chosen not to publish OA due to APCs?	Future need for library OA support (author role)
As an author, I have been limited in my ability to publish due to limited funding to support APCs.	SHS	high	yes	high
... with no funding provided by Oakland, it considerably limits the dissemination of my research.	CAS	high	yes	high
I have withdrawn papers from consideration because of article processing fees.	CAS	medium	yes	(no response)

**Table B1.** Selected faculty responses for Author Theme 1 (OA cost or funding concerns)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (author role)	Has published OA?	Future need for library OA support (author role)
I've tried to avoid the ones with APCs as a matter of principle.	CAS	medium	yes	high
...for my future publications I don't anticipate sending to open access journals given their extremely unfair price practices...	CAS	medium	yes	low
...this seems like a terrible model for the future of academia, absolutely dreadful and potentially fraught with tons of unethical consequences.	CAS	low/medium	yes	medium
One thing that has been challenging is the proliferation of open-access journals that are of low quality that simply charge authors to publish anything with limited quality or peer review...	SHS	medium/high	yes	high

**Table B2.** Selected faculty responses for Author Theme 2 (OA ethical or quality concerns)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (author role)	Has published OA?	Future need for library OA support (author role)
...open access is essential for visibility, accessibility, and inclusivity for scientists across the world...	CAS	high	yes	high
I've seen broader readership of my publications that are open-access than those that are not.	CAS	high	yes	high
I have one open access publication, and the number of citations are exponential for that article...	SEHS	medium/high	yes	high

**Table B3.** Selected faculty responses for Author Theme 4 (Reasons for OA authorship)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (researcher role)	Has used OA sources in research?	Future need for library OA support (researcher role)
Open access literature and data are essential for doing research.	CAS	high	yes	high
I use literature/data that I can find, whether it be open access or not.	SON	medium/high	yes	high
It has been instrumental in my research.	SHS	high	yes	high

**Table B4.** Selected faculty responses for Researcher Theme 1 (Use of OA materials in research)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (instructor role)	Has used OA sources in teaching?	Future need for library OA support (instructor role)
I use exclusively open-source materials when teaching and work with OU library to source materials.	SEHS	medium/high	yes	high
I've used an open access textbook, but honestly the quality was terrible. I've had better luck pulling together resources on my own, such as from government websites (e.g., health related data).	SHS	high	yes	high

**Table B5.** Selected faculty responses for Instructor Theme 1 (Use of OA materials in teaching)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (author role)	Has paid APCs for OA publication?	Future need for library OA support (author role)
My very generous coauthors covered the fees for the publication I have that is in an open access journal, so I didn't have to pay. Their university covered the cost.	CAS	medium	no	high
Funded by co-author's grant.	CAS	high	yes	high
I have had the opportunity to publish in open access journals when a co-author outside of Oakland had grant funds. I received funds from OU (library open access fund) one time to publish a paper, which was really helpful.	CAS	low/medium	no	high
I've only been able to publish open access when I've had funding in my undesignated research fund. This was after the grant had ended. I get a (very small) percentage of the indirect costs that go to the university. So, I used this money to pay for open access publishing in a journal.	SHS	medium/high	yes	high

**Table B6.** Selected faculty responses for APC Theme 1 (APC funding sources)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	OA impact rating (author role)	Has paid APCs for OA publication?	Future need for library OA support (author role)
...my main concern about a future where OA is the standard is that it will be much more expensive to keep publishing in the humanities, where much of my research is *not* grant-supported. In that environment, I'd be reliant on the university library to fund my publications.	CAS	medium/high	yes	high
I hope funding is available from Oakland for open access fee for author.	SECS	high	yes	high
There is no way to pay for open access other than through grant funds, but even then often the manuscripts are published after the grant is completed.	CAS	medium	no	high

**Table B7.** Selected faculty responses for APC Theme 2 (APC funding concerns)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	Future importance of library OA support (author role)	Future importance of library OA support (instructor role)	Future importance of library OA support (researcher role)
It allows me to access the work directly rather than hoping the library has a subscription or going through interlibrary loan.	CAS	(no response)	(no response)	(no response)
...the availability of OA literature has led to a decentering of the research process in which academic libraries are no longer the central stations they used to be...Today, the availability of digital archives has had a transformative impact on the way we *do* humanities, but it calls into question what the role of libraries is in catalyzing those projects.	CAS	high	medium	low
Less reliance on OU library for my research.	SECS	medium/high	medium	low/medium

**Table B8.** Selected faculty responses for Library Use/Relationship Theme 1 (Decreased need for traditional library services)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	Future importance of library OA support (author role)	Future importance of library OA support (instructor role)	Future importance of library OA support (researcher role)
One thing that has been challenging is the proliferation of open-access journals that are of low quality that simply charge authors to publish anything with limited quality or peer review (predatory publishers). I'd also like to see additional resources provided to the library to help faculty navigate these issues...	SHS	high	high	high
Continue working to index open access publications and help us search them. Give us more info/training about how to publish open access.	CAS	high	medium	high
Library still helps facilitate me in finding these articles and in navigating my understanding of the process of publishing open access.	CAS	high	medium	high

**Table B9.** Selected faculty responses for Library Use/Relationship Theme 2 (Increased need for services supporting OA)

Faculty verbatim	Unit	Future importance of library OA support (author role)	Future importance of library OA support (instructor role)	Future importance of library OA support (researcher role)
I do not believe that is has impacted me, mainly because the library has subscriptions to many non-open access journals that I use in my research and teaching.	SHS	medium/high	medium	medium/high
The journals I primarily access are nearly all available through the library. The open-access data I use is not accessed via the library. Thus I would say it has had little impact.	CAS	low	(no response)	medium

**Table B10.** Selected faculty responses for Library Use/Relationship Theme 3 (Little or no impact of OA)