

Establishing a Central Open Access Fund

The University of Calgary, Canada

The University of Calgary was founded in 1966. The University has 28,000 undergraduate students and approximately 5,500 postgraduate students. Research at the University is carried out in a similar manner to research at other universities, in particular in Canada and the United States. Faculty members carry out research, usually with funding from Canadian or International publicly supported bodies and publish results of that research, in either journal articles or monographs.

This case study looks into the steps taken by the University to establish a central, institutional fund for the payment of article processing charges (APC) for open access publication and initiating a systematic process to support investigators at the University in disseminating their research to a global community.

The driver to establish the fund: support for open access publishing

The idea of setting up the “Open Access Authors Fund” was discussed within the Library for some time. There was interest in the open access model within the Libraries and Cultural Resources (LCR) and elsewhere on campus, with some open access-related experimentation taking place. The Vice-President Academic/Provost Thomas Hickerson expressed interest in open access but was also influenced by the enthusiasm towards open access that existed at the University already. Hickerson concluded that OA activities would have broad support at the University and so initiated processes to establish the fund. Overall, it was a consensus decision. In June 2008, Thomas Hickerson allocated the money for the program and the fund was announced, in conjunction with the annual American Library Association program.

*“I am very proud of the University of Calgary’s leadership on this issue. There is a depth of support among our staff for taking meaningful action on such issues, and we feel that enhancing the broad availability of research literature is central to our mission. Establishment of the “Open Access Authors Fund” is a way of supporting our own faculty and students, but similar to maintaining institutional repositories, it is an important step in enabling the development of new models for research dissemination. **This is a critical moment. Fundamental change is possible.**”*

Mr. Thomas Hickerson, Vice-Provost (Libraries and Cultural Resources) and University Librarian

Which departments were involved in setting up the fund?

The Libraries and Cultural Resources Unit established the fund. Others on campus were supportive but essentially this was an LCR endeavour.

What was the amount allocated to the fund?

Initially \$100,000 CAN was allocated to the fund.

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Was funding put aside in addition to this budget or did the University have to limit/cut acquisitions on other resources to finance the fund?

The University of Calgary and the Library are involved in faculty teaching and research, and dissemination of that research. As with their commitment to information resources, they also see support for open access as fulfilling a portion of their overall mission, namely that part that supports dissemination of research. Basically, it's not a "one-against-the-other" situation.

How is the fund being used to date?

At this point, the fund is being used for two main purposes: - Approximately half of the fund has been used to establish memberships and prepayment accounts with three Open Access publishers: BioMed Central (BMC), Hindawi, and the Public Library of Science (PLOS). This was done because most accepted submissions to the fund involve these publishers. It gives the University the greatest savings in terms of submission fees, and saves time and energy, given that there are fewer invoices and paperwork to deal with. The remaining half of the fund is being used to pay submission fees for accepted articles where the authors are being invoiced i.e. for "Springer open choice" and other open access models.

How is the fund being administered and monitored at the University?

The fund is administered on a day-to-day basis in the Collection Services unit of the Library by the Serials Librarian. When the Serials Librarian is not available, the Head, Collections Services looks after the fund. The Library accounts unit is also involved as they process the payments authorized under the fund.

The fund is essentially governed by a set of criteria. These criteria were developed within Libraries and Cultural Resources by representatives from a variety of units (Collections and Technical Services, LCR Administration, Information Technology Services, and the University of Calgary Press), including the Vice-Provost/Head Librarian. The criteria will be reviewed annually and also over the course of the year, as the fund operates.

What are Calgary's plans for the future as regards open access and the fund itself?

The main plan is that the fund will continue in future years albeit with some adjustments. There are plans to establish an advisory body for the "Open Access Authors Fund". This group will include members from within LCR and from elsewhere on campus.

Other open access related projects are already occurring at the University of Calgary; The University has the third-largest institutional repository in Canada (<https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/>); and the University of Calgary Press (<http://www.uofcpress.com/Journals.html>) has a few open access journals with a strong interest in OA. The University of Calgary is also a principal partner in the Synergies project (http://www.synergiescanada.org/index_en.html), which will involve some open access journals and also will be holding an "Open Access Day" in early 2009. Overall the University is very interested in open access and is amenable to looking at any OA project or program.