

Open Access and Scholarly Communication at SUNY Geneseo

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In October, SUNY [Geneseo's Milne Library](#) will be celebrating Open Access Week for the first time with two campus wide events. Open Access Week is an international event intended to educate students and researchers about open access, and to provide participants with the knowledge and tools they need to participate in open access.



Our first Open Access Week event will be a moderated panel discussion with Geneseo faculty from across the disciplines. We have three major goals for this panel. First, we would like to provide faculty with some [background](#) about what open access is and how it works. Informal conversations with faculty members revealed that many are not aware of the concept or its implications. Second, we would like to provide a forum for faculty to share their experiences with open access. In this way, we can demonstrate that the faculty at Geneseo are participating in open access in a variety of ways. Finally, we would like to engage faculty in a discussion about the implications of open access at Geneseo. This includes questions about tenure, promotion and scholarly reputation and concerns about access to the scholarly literature.

The second open access event will be an invited talk from [Charles Lyons](#), Scholarly Communication Librarian at the University at Buffalo. Both events will be open to faculty, staff, students and community members.



Planning for these open access events started in May 2010 as Milne Library's new Scholarly Communication Team met to outline its goals and objectives. This team has been formed to help the library respond to the broad changes taking place in the world of information and scholarly communication. Librarians Sonja Landes, Sue Ann Brainard, Kim Davies Hoffman, Kate Pitcher, Tracy Paradis and myself developed three broad goals. First, we want to promote Geneseo's research and scholarship both on and off campus. Second, we want to [educate](#) faculty and students about issues surrounding scholarly publishing. The Open Access Week panel and lecture are our first events related to this broad goal. Third, we would like to provide assistance to our faculty where needed to help them with their research and publication efforts.

While many of these activities build on previous library strengths, we are also venturing into some new territory. In order to help us better understand the research and publication environment on the Geneseo campus, we will be conducting a campus wide survey of faculty scholarly activities. Over the next year, library liaisons will be meeting with faculty members across campus to discuss their motivation to publish, their types of scholarly activity, their understanding of scholarly communication issues and how we can best support their research and publication efforts. We decided to undertake this project in an effort to understand how the needs of faculty on a primarily undergraduate campus may differ from those at large research institutions. [Reports](#) and discussion about scholarly activity

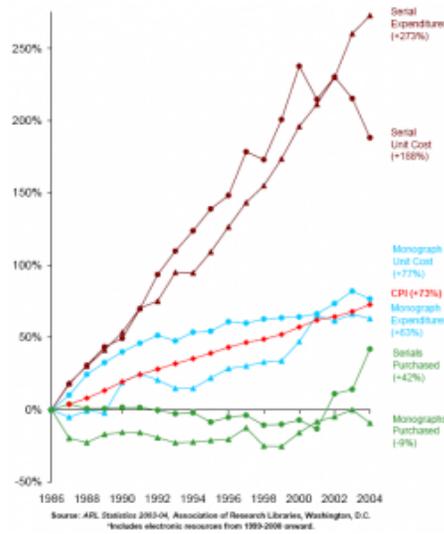
and attitudes towards open access and other changes in scholarly publishing often focus on large institutions. While there will likely be many similarities, we need to understand our faculty needs before we can effectively meet them.

We are already aware of the scholarly and open access activity of many of our faculty, although this picture is currently incomplete. At the moment, we know of faculty who have published in open access journals, some who have archived copies of their papers in disciplinary repositories, some who have reviewed for open access publications and at least one faculty member who is currently serving as an editor for an open access journal. By interviewing most of our faculty, we hope to learn more about their open access activities and their scholarly efforts in general.

Despite the increasing acceptance of open access publications, there is still misinformation about what open access means. For new faculty coming up for tenure and promotion, clarifying these issues can be particularly important. Dr. Brian Morgan, of Geneseo's School of Education, suggests that a clear campus wide policy on open access may be called for, "I think the college should adopt a policy that formally states that open access journals are to be treated equally when other factors such as peer review, acceptance rate etc. are taken into account.

Otherwise, faculty will continue to be leery of publishing in them. There are some on-paper closed access journals which are of lesser quality than many open-access ones."

Throughout our faculty interviews and open access events, our primary goal is to encourage discussion of these issues on campus. While many in Milne Library are strong proponents of open access, we decided that ardent advocacy might not be our best strategy. In general, faculty are not interested in the "[Serials Crisis](#)" or being told how to publish by librarians. Instead, we plan to provide information and a forum for faculty to discuss these issues. In this way, we can provide faculty open access advocates a stage, and build a grassroots group of open access champions.



At the moment, we are unsure about the form of future open access related events and education programs. Our panel discussion, lecture and the faculty interviews this year will likely provide us with ideas for future events and initiatives. We feel that Milne library and its librarians are perfectly situated to facilitate on campus discussions of open access and other scholarly communication issues. We are excited about our first events for this year's [Open Access Week](#), and look forward to planning future events.



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