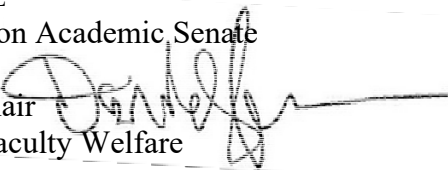


COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

November 15, 2017

To: Dylan Rodriguez
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Daniel Jeske, Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare



Re: Open Access 2020 Proposal (OA2020)

The UCR Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) considered the proposal for UCR to sign the Expression of Interest (EoI) for the Open Access 2020 (OA2020) initiative. We interpret from the accompanying cover letter from Leonard Nunney that signature of the EoI would mean that UCR is expressing 'broad support' for the initiative. For reasons discussed below, FWC falls short of expressing 'broad support' for the initiative. However, during the formative stage of detailing how OA2020 might work, we do feel it is important for UCR to have a seat at the table. We therefore offer qualified support for signing the EoI. Our reasons for qualified support of the EoI include:

1. Concern with the specific details of how the cost of publishing will be worked out. FWC speculates that these costs, or at least some portion of them, will be passed on to the authors and finds this prospect concerning.
2. It was noted in our discussion that currently there is tremendous variability in the cost of publishing in open access journals, ranging from zero dollars to thousands of dollars. Would a proposed subsidy plan for publishing in open access journals result in faculty choosing journals they 'could afford' to publish in rather than choosing based upon where the work would have the biggest impact?
3. We discussed a concern that widespread open access publishing framework might adversely impact professional societies who rely on journal subscription revenues to function. A likely consequence might be higher membership fees imposed upon faculty members.
4. Finally, FWC noted that quality of open access journals varies considerably. A naive, yet real, view held by some members of academia is that they are 'pay to publish' venues. FWC notes the challenge of overcoming this bias. Especially while both the open access and traditional publishing models co-exist, merit and promotion processes will need to consciously work toward eliminating stereotypes concerning the choice of publishing outlets, and truly focus on the quality of the research in the paper.