

Jere Odell, Heather Coates, and Kristi Palmer

Rewarding open access scholarship in promotion and tenure

Driving institutional change

Faculty often report that the promotion and tenure (P&T) process is a barrier to adopting open access (OA) practices.¹ Even as libraries offer a growing number of OA services (including repositories, funds, journal publishing, data management, and altmetrics tools), efforts to reform the institutional scholarly communication culture will lag if the explicit and implicit values of P&T committees do not adapt.

Here we describe the efforts of one institution, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), to reward OA scholarship in the P&T process. With librarians as advocates, participants, and change agents, IUPUI has become one of the first to include OA as a value in its P&T guidelines.² At IUPUI this policy-driven, top-down approach is complemented with a bottom-up education and outreach strategy. These librarian-facilitated efforts make the first steps toward building a scholarly communication environment that rewards OA participation.

Top down: Developing policies to support OA in P&T

In 2015, the IUPUI Office for Academic Affairs added the following statements to the “Chief Academic Officer’s Guidelines for Preparing and Reviewing Promotion and Tenure Dossiers 2016-2017”:

Open Access

- IUPUI is committed to disseminating the fruits of its research and scholarly activities as widely as possible and as such supports faculty participating in digital open access distribution

of their scholarship. The IUPUI Open Access Policy provides a no-cost, opt out approach to increase access to scholarly articles authored by campus faculty members.

- Open access supports many of IUPUI’s Institutional Values including: Civic Engagement; Collaboration; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Economic Development; Interdisciplinary Work and Publication; International Work and Publication; Public Scholars; and Translational Research.³

Drafted by librarians, these statements make an explicit link between IUPUI’s institutional values and OA. IUPUI is an urban, public university with a proud record for service-based learning, community-engaged scholarship, and practice-driven research. To complement IUPUI’s mission and values, the libraries offer a full suite of OA services, including institutional and data repositories, an OA journal publishing platform, an OA publishing fund, and research data services. Thus, it might seem to be a “no brainer” that IUPUI would add support for OA to its P&T guidelines, but these recent additions are the result of several years of persistent effort toward building a favorable culture for OA. In large part, librarians from IUPUI’s University Library, Medical Library, and Law Library led

Jere Odell is scholarly communications librarian, email: jodell@iupui.edu, Heather Coates is digital scholarship and data management librarian, email: hcoates@iupui.edu, and Kristi Palmer is associate dean of digital scholarship, email: klpalmer@iupui.edu, at IUPUI University Library

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these efforts. Key features of the IUPUI approach included: building the groundwork, developing related policies, and proposing P&T guideline amendments.

Building the groundwork: Librarians in faculty governance

In addition to offering an array of OA services, IUPUI librarians have built the groundwork for establishing the value of OA in P&T by participating in faculty governance. At IUPUI, librarians have faculty status and may participate in faculty governance at all levels. As campus service, this work contributes to a P&T case, gives librarians a voice in campus policy, and offers opportunities to collaboratively engage with research faculty. With several librarians on faculty council committees, the effort to promote OA in P&T guidance benefited from purposeful attention to administrative and faculty governance calendars, committee structures, and participant interests. This full and ongoing participation in faculty governance allowed librarians to advocate for OA policies when working with receptive partners at opportune moments.

Developing related policies

IUPUI's statement in support of OA in its P&T guidelines follows several efforts to highlight the alignment of OA with institutional values. Although the IUPUI library faculty adopted an OA policy for their own work in 2010, campus-wide efforts to develop policies began in early 2013. Realizing that the 2013 White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) memorandum⁴ on public access would change how many IUPUI faculty disseminate their scholarship, librarians briefed the Council of Associate Deans for Research. After this briefing, the Council endorsed a statement in favor of OA policy development. In the following months, IUPUI acknowledged the value of OA in several documents, including a September 2013 draft of the campus strategic plan, a SPARC-initiated open "Letter to Congress on Public Access from the Higher Education Community"⁵ supporting legislation to increase public access to federally funded research, and a response to the IU

School of Medicine's draft, five-year strategic plan for research. The librarians gained valuable experience in raising scholarly communication to the level of strategic planning, which proved to be useful when they were asked to contribute to the IUPUI Research Strategic Plan. Librarians authored the final goal of this five-point plan: "Encouraging wider access to findings and applications of IUPUI research."

By the end of 2014, IUPUI included language favoring OA in the final version of the campus strategic plan (August 2014)⁶ and in the final version of the campus strategic plan for research (November 2014).⁷ In the same semester, the faculty council passed an OA policy with an opt-out option (October 2014).⁸ While these documents were not a prerequisite to the language supporting OA in the P&T guidelines, they provided context for doing so and developed a broader and deeper campus understanding of scholarly communication issues.

Proposing P&T guideline amendments

In March 2015, several OA-supportive voices were serving on the faculty council's executive committee. This committee receives and vets suggested revisions to the P&T guidelines. A librarian serving on this committee drafted an OA-valuing statement for the guidelines. In March, when the committee reviewed proposed amendments to the P&T guidelines for the 2016-2017 academic year, the draft statement was unanimously supported.

A month later the Office of Academic Affairs trimmed the contextual content from the draft statement and included the core elements in the P&T guidelines. While the inclusion of the OA values was made quickly and without substantial opposition, it reflected existing OA services, policies, and strategic plans at IUPUI. It was also the outcome of having the right people at the right place at the right time.

Bottom up: Supporting policies with practice

While faculty governance bodies and university administrative offices may adopt reasonable and beneficial policies, the successful implementation of these policies depends on the actions of

individuals. During the dossier review process, P&T committee members must be attentive to the OA statement in the guidelines. Likewise, faculty authors must be confident that OA dissemination will be valued by the P&T committees. For these reasons, IUPUI librarians have focused equally on a bottom-up outreach and education strategy. The approach to supporting bottom-up change includes three features: equipping authors, tracking and reporting the adoption of OA practices, and enabling best practices for research evaluation.

Equipping authors for OA in P&T

In 2012, the Office of Academic Affairs invited librarians to educate faculty about citation metrics as a part of the office's annual P&T workshops. In 2015, the citation metrics workshop expanded and became a four-part series.⁹ The new series takes a broader, more holistic perspective—including approaches to scholarly dissemination and new methods for demonstrating the impact of scholarship. The series proposes a four-step approach to increasing the impact of scholarship: maintaining an online profile, sharing work openly, engaging target audiences, and presenting evidence of impact. In addition to exploring specific tools, workshop attendees learn best practices for research impact, citation metrics, and altmetrics. This workshop series is the result of an ongoing dialogue with the Office of Academic Affairs about the types of products and evidence used to evaluate scholarship within the P&T process.

Tracking and communicating the increase of OA at IUPUI

Recognizing that faculty and P&T committee members have varying levels of awareness regarding changes in scholarly communication, it is important for libraries to supply evidence of change. An author who looked for an OA publishing opportunity five years ago might believe that opportunities were few or limited to grant-funded researchers. Attitudinal inertia will reduce participation if the evidence of change in scholarly communication is not tracked and communicated. To address this issue, the campus libraries share regular reports regarding IU-

PUI OA participation rates with administrators, faculty governance committees, and authors. Librarians track the annual number of IUPUI articles published in OA journals, number of items deposited in the institutional repository, number of articles published in the library's hosted OA journals, and requests for financial support from the OA fund. In addition, librarians are taking a direct look at OA reporting and altmetrics in P&T dossiers. With the collaboration of the Office of Academic Affairs and the approval of the institutional review board, a content analysis of successful P&T dossiers has begun.¹⁰ This analysis may reveal a change in practice that precedes a change in attitudes. Showing local growth in OA publishing not only demonstrates a demand for existing services, including education and consultation, but may also provide evidence to guide efforts to realign P&T values.

Enabling best practices to reward OA

Sharing news of increases in OA practices is valuable, but it does not give department chairs and P&T committees the tools to understand the evolving scholarly communication landscape. Without further guidance, evaluators may rely on outdated documentation, impact factors, reputational proxies, and old habits. A tiered list of journals based on Web of Science subject categories and impact factors will not only age rapidly, but is unlikely to include some of the journals that an author has chosen to publish his or her work.

In contrast, scholarly works may be evaluated on their own merits. Digital dissemination and OA in particular have led to an increased availability of item-level metrics often captured through altmetrics tools. While these tools may be applied to subscription and OA publications, they are well-suited for OA works (particularly those in institutional repositories) that are not readily represented in long-established bibliometric systems.

Altmetrics provide more immediate data that can be interpreted as an indication of interest and engagement from academic, professional, and public communities. IUPUI librarians are currently developing tools to support department chairs and P&T committees in updating

their approaches to assessing a candidate's scholarship. Currently librarians are sharing a metric comparison handout along with models and success stories of faculty at IUPUI and elsewhere (e.g., Erin McKiernan¹¹ and Steven Roberts¹²) who have gained tenure and promotion after choosing OA, data sharing, and open science. Some of these approaches will be incorporated in a metric toolkit that recently received a FORCE16 Pitch-It Challenge award.¹³ It will facilitate a sustained conversation about how scholarship is created, disseminated, and valued within and outside of academia.

In conclusion: Looking beyond IUPUI

While academic librarians have a broad knowledge of changes in scholarly communication, faculty authors and editors often have a narrower view of the landscape. Building a culture that values OA requires the participation of library and non-library faculty. IUPUI is continuing to realign P&T values for OA with top-down (changes in policy) and bottom-up (changes in practice) approaches. These efforts rely on the library's role as a trusted partner, service provider, and source of scholarly communication expertise. Building support for OA in the P&T process at IUPUI has been facilitated by the campus's faculty governance structure and has greatly benefited from the inspired efforts of the right people at the right time.

While we believe that IUPUI provides an instructive example of how libraries can work with their campus partners to build a culture that values OA, every institution is unique. Even so, P&T barriers are not immovable. With ongoing support from libraries, institutional P&T values can be realigned with academic values that favor equitable access to scholarship.

Notes

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