



March 2015 Member Update

Over the past few weeks, activity in the North American Public Access policy arena has reached new heights. In just the past four weeks, the three largest Canadian Funding Agencies released a new, harmonized policy to ensure public access to articles and data resulting from their funded research, and eight U.S. Departments and Agencies also released plans for policies to ensure the same.

This comes at the same time that legislation designed to codify agency policies into federal statute has been introduced (under bipartisan sponsorship) into both chambers of the U.S. Congress. All signs point to a continuation of the growing trend among funding agencies to actively move to make sure that these crucial research outputs are made as accessible - and useful - to the public as possible. Of course, this development has significant implications for our campuses, and SPARC will continue to provide you with regular, timely updates on the details of these policies as they come online, as well as with [access to resources](#) to help support effective campus communication and compliance efforts.

At the same time, we'll keep up our efforts to make SPARC members are aware of opportunities to continue to help shape and refine these policies - and those in the works at other funding agencies - so that they support scholarship and research in the most effective and efficient way possible.



- Heather Joseph, Executive Director, SPARC



OPEN ACCESS

FASTR Refiled in the 114th Congress

On March 18th, the Fair Access to Science & Technology Research (FASTR) Act was refiled for the 114th Congress. With [bipartisan support](#) in both the House and Senate (original sponsors includes Sens. Cornyn (R-TX) and Wyden (D-OR) and Reps. Doyle (D-PA), Lofgren (D-CA) and Yoder (R-KS)), the proposed bill is in a strong to see potential movement this year. The text of the bill remains the same as the one filed in the 113th Congress, and with the recent flurry of activity around U.S. departments and agencies issuing public access plans in response to the OSTP Directive, action from Congress to harmonize and codify these efforts is more important than ever. To take action, visit the

[SPARC Legislative Action Center](#) and contact your elected officials to ask that they support the FASTR Act.

Theme of 2015 International Open Access Week to be “Open for Collaboration”

This month, SPARC announced that the theme for this year’s International Open Access Week will be “Open for Collaboration.” The theme highlights the variety of ways collaboration can inspire and advance the Open Access movement—from partnerships within the library community among longtime colleagues, to new ways of working with students, researchers and members of stakeholder groups outside of our traditional operating sphere, to the working relationships the community has established with policymakers to deliver Open Access policies around the world. The theme also emphasizes the ways in which Open Access enables new avenues for collaboration between scholars by making research available to any potential collaborator, anywhere, any time. Open Access Week will be (October 19-25, 2015). Join the online Open Access Week community at <http://www.openaccessweek.org>.

Wikimedia Foundation Announces Open Access Policy

In keeping with their mission of empowering people through information, the Wikimedia Foundation has publicly announced its [open access plan](#). The plan requires researchers that receive funding from the Foundation to either publish their research outputs in an open access journal or immediately deposit the author’s accepted manuscript in a public repository under a free license. In addition, it calls for all supporting materials - including data and software - to be made freely publicly available at the time publication.



OPEN EDUCATION

Republican Governors Association

SPARC had the opportunity to connect with current and former state governors during the recent Republican Governors Association (RGA) meeting in Washington, DC. Conversations about Open Access and Open Education took place with a diverse set of state policymakers, including Governor Abbott of Texas, Governor Baker of Massachusetts, Governor Martinez of New Mexico, Governor LePage of Maine, Governor Pence of Indiana and Governor Hutchinson of Arkansas. We were also able to spend time talking about key issues with staff for Governor Christie of New Jersey, Governor Brownback of Kansas and Governor Haslam of Tennessee. These interactions underscored once again just how deeply “Open” issues resonate across the political spectrum, and the many opportunities within states to take action. Several governors’ offices have expressed interest in follow-up meetings, and SPARC will continue working closely with our members as we cultivate these relationships.

OER Amendment Adopted by House of Representatives

In the recent floor debate on the Student Success Act, a large K-12 authorizing bill, the U.S. House voted to adopt an amendment to add “the creation and distribution of open textbooks and open educational resources” as an allowable use of certain federal grant funds. Put forth by Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO), the amendment was adopted by a voice vote with bipartisan support. SPARC worked closely with our coalition partners who operate in

the K-12 space to raise awareness of the upcoming vote and the opportunity to take action. While the larger bill was ultimately put on hold for political reasons, the amendment itself serves as an important marker of the growing visibility and support for our issue.

U.S. Agencies Highlight OER

One of the most exciting outcomes from Open Education Week (celebrated earlier this month) has been the deepened engagement with OER of several U.S. federal agencies and the current Administration. The White House OSTP and Department of Education kicked off the week with a joint blog post showcasing the Administration's current OER-related programs. The Department of Labor used the week to highlight its new "Online Skills Academy" project, and the Department of State wrote about its plans to launch OER pilot programs in both formal and informal learning. SPARC will continue to work with our coalition partners to capitalize on the growing opportunities to educate these agencies about OER, and to collaborate with them to create new programs and policies supporting the creation and adoption of OER.



OPEN DATA

Heather Joseph named to Department of Commerce Data Advisory Council

Heather Joseph, the Executive Director of SPARC, was appointed to the [newly-created Commerce Data Advisory Council](#) (CDAC) at the US Department of Commerce. The Council includes "19 of the best and brightest private and public sector thought leaders on data management and dissemination in the United States," and will provide guidance to Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker on issues of data management and data policy. The first convening of this Council will take place in Washington DC on April 23 and 24.

Early Bird Registration extended and Additional Speakers Announced for COAR/SPARC Conference

Early bird registration has been extended until March 27th for the upcoming [COAR-SPARC Conference](#), Connecting Research Results, Bridging Communities, Opening Scholarship, to be held April 15 and 16 in Porto, Portugal. The early bird conference rates for registration before March 27, 2015 are €55.50 EUR for COAR and SPARC members (approximately \$65 US) and €105.50 EUR for non-members (approximately \$120 US).

The program features an exciting slate of international experts, who will speak on topics ranging from organizational models for research data management services to the international open science policy environment including, Jennifer Hansen, Manager, Information & Research Services with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Gerald Beasley, Vice-Provost and Chief Librarian from the University of Alberta; Elisha Rufaro T. Chiware, Director of Libraries at Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Johanna McEntyre, Director for Europe PubMed Central and many others! Please check out our [website](#) for the full program.



STUDENT ACTION

Exclusive Opportunity for SPARC Members to Sponsor Students to Attend

OpenCon 2015

In coming weeks we will be announcing the details of OpenCon 2015, our annual meeting for students, early career researchers and young library professionals. Immediately following the announcement, SPARC members will have an exclusive two-week period to sponsor a student or early career researcher, to reserve a place at the meeting with all travel expenses covered. OpenCon 2015 will build on the highly successful inaugural OpenCon meeting, held in Washington DC last year, which convened students and early career researchers from around the world interested in leading the charge for Open Access, Open Education, and Open Data and connects them with leaders in each community. Competition for available attendance slots was intense, with more than 1,700 individuals applying for 110 available slots. More information will be available on the [OpenCon website](#).

National Student Organizations Advocate for Open Access on Capitol Hill

Earlier this week, two leading national student organizations made the case for Open Access to policymakers on Capitol Hill. The National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) and Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE) brought more than 50 representatives from graduate student governments from across the United States to advocate for policies that affect graduate students, including Open Access and Open Educational Resources. This spring marks NAGPS' 12th advocacy event in DC that has included Open Access. SPARC annually provides advocacy training and issue education to the NAGPS event, as well as general support for the students annual gathering in DC.

OpenCon Community Events Ramp Up

The OpenCon community events will be ramping up in the coming month with two new events. The first is an open community call on Wednesday, March 25th, at 12pm EDT / 9am PDT that will cover hot topics across Open Access, Open Education, and Open Data, and provide time for those leading projects to update the community on their progress. More information and logistics on how to join the call can be found [here](#).

The second event is the first in a new series of OpenCon Community Webcasts featuring Dr. Titus Brown who will share his story of gaining tenure as an open researcher. Titus is an Associate Professor at the University of California Davis Genome Center, and recently wrote about his experience gaining tenure as an "open" scientist. The hour-long, open webcast will be held on Friday, April 3rd, at 12pm EDT / 9am PDT. More information and a link to join the webcast is available [here](#).

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Thoughts on ways to improve this communication? Please send them to Shawn Daugherty, Assistant Director for Operations & Programs at shawn@sparcopen.org