As part of SPARC’s commitment to reflecting - and supporting - the truly global nature of research and scholarship, we are pleased to announce the formation and launch of SPARC Africa! Dr. Reggie Raju of University of Cape Town Libraries and SPARC Chair Lorraine Haricombe made the formal announcement of the launch together on August 14 in Cape Town, South Africa during the annual International Federation of Library Associations conference.

Along with SPARC Europe, SPARC Japan and SPARC’s North American organization, SPARC Africa will bring our community one step closer to realizing the vision of creating an active, global alliance of academic and research libraries working together to create a more open system for sharing research outputs and educational materials.

Look for more details on SPARC Africa to be released during Open Access Week!

- Heather Joseph, Executive Director, SPARC

Celebrate OA Week with the Wikipedia Edit-a-thon!

In celebration of International Open Access Week, and this year’s theme of “Open for Collaboration,” SPARC and the Wikipedia Library are co-hosting a global, virtual edit-athon for Open Access-related content on Wikipedia. This edit-a-thon aims to improve already existing Open Access-related pages, create new content where it needs to be added, and translate Open Access-related pages into new languages. SPARC will host a one-hour training webcast, specifically for librarians, on September 30th at 1pm EDT and will discuss the basics of editing Wikipedia, its relevance for Open Access efforts on campus, and tips for planning an in-person edit-a-thon. You can join the webcast here and learn more about the full event at the Open Access Week website.

SPARC “OA Funds in Action” Updated

SPARC recently completed its annual survey of campus Open Access funds and the trend of campus support for OA publication continues to grow. Our results show that the number of papers funded increased by 1,120 from last year, growing the cumulative total of funded
papers by 29%. Similarly, the number of unique authors supported out of campus OA funds increased by 1,052, growing the cumulative total of funded authors by 34%. More information can be found on the SPARC website.

**SPARC MORE Meeting Registration Set to Open**
The SPARC "Meeting on Openness in Research and Education" (MORE) will be held at the Hyatt Regency in the heart of San Antonio's famed River Walk on March 7-8, 2016. Hotel reservations are now open via the SPARC website at the Hyatt Regency - room rates are $189/night. Sessions and speakers will be announced in the coming weeks and meeting registration will open in late October. We look forward to hosting you in San Antonio!

**OPEN EDUCATION**

**U.S. Department of Education Hires OER Advisor**
In an historic “first,” the U.S. Department of Education has hired an advisor to lead a national effort to expand the adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) in K-12 schools. This announcement marks a critical step forward for the Obama Administration - and the U.S. - towards the mainstreaming of OER. The announcement, made by Secretary of Education Arne Duncan during a visit to an Illinois school district leading the way on the local adoption of OER, came on the heels of strong advocacy efforts this summer by SPARC and our coalition partners. SPARC staff have already organized a productive meeting with the new advisor at the Department’s headquarters in Washington, DC. More information is available on the SPARC blog.

**Major Maryland University Switches to OER**
In one fell swoop, The University of Maryland University College (UMUC) announced in August that it has transitioned all of its undergraduate courses to using free, digital OER embedded within the curriculum. UMUC is the first major U.S. institution to fully replace traditional textbooks with OER and expects to save students millions of dollars in the coming years. Read the full announcement here.

**Register for the Open Education 2015 Conference**
The Open Education Conference is the largest annual event in North America for the OER community. Set for November 18-20 in Vancouver, Canada, the conference will once again feature a day-long track dedicated to the role of libraries in advancing OER. This event debut at last year’s conference and received high marks from library community attendees. The early-bird rate for the conference ends September 30th, so be sure to register soon!

**OPEN DATA**

**DOI Event Tracker Announced**
CrossRef has announced a new tool to track activity surrounding a research work from potentially any web source - as long as it is associated with a Digital Object Identifier (DOI). The new DOI Event Tracker (DET) can register a variety of events (bookmarks,
comments, social shares, citations, links to other research entities, etc.) from a wide - and growing - list of online sources. The DET draws data from sources willing to openly share their data, providing the opportunity for users to generate a more robust and realistic picture of the digital life of research works, and to better understand their impact and utility.

**Registration Now Open for “The Future of the Commons: Data, Software and Beyond”**
Registration is now open for this one-day meeting to be held Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at the National Academies of Science in Washington, DC. This workshop centers on the evolving concept of the “commons,” and the various challenges associated with expanding it to include content such as data, software and other crucial digital elements. Attendees will engage with their peers and industry experts on topics including privacy, security, and the unique and shifting needs of various research communities. Co-sponsored by CENDI, the National Federation of Advanced Information Services and the Research Data Alliance/US, and hosted by the Board on Research Data and Information and the National Academies of Sciences, this workshop will include a wide array of speakers, including John Wilbanks (Sage Bionetworks), Michael Carroll (Creative Commons) and a host of other experts. Visit the [website](#) for more information and to register for this event.

![Stu](#) **STUDENT ACTION**

**Wikipedia Co-Founder Jimmy Wales to Anchor OpenCon 2015 Program**
Jimmy Wales, co-founder of Wikipedia, will provide the closing keynote to this year’s OpenCon conference in Brussels, Belgium on November 14th through the 16th. Wales will anchor a strong program that includes thought leaders from across the Open Access, Open Education, and Open Data movements. You can learn more at http://www.opencon2015.org.

Presentations from OpenCon 2015 will be livestreamed and will also be available online following the event. More information on virtual participation can be found on the OpenCon website and two North American scholarship opportunities are still available if you would like to send someone from your institution.

**Right to Research Coalition Launches Open Speaker Database**
While organizing OpenCon and dozens of affiliated satellite events, we’ve built a significant list of expert speakers. Rather than keep them to ourselves, we’ve released them for the community to use and grow. This month, the Right to Research Coalition is introducing its new “Open Speaker” Database. Launching with over 100 speakers from across the globe, we hope this resource will continue to grow and become a valuable resource for the community. Next time you’re hosting an event, check out the database and feel free to [add speakers](#) from your campus or further afield.

**Graduate Student Leaders Flock to DC for Fall Advocacy Days**
This month, graduate student leaders from across the country will fly to Washington, DC to
make their voices heard on Capitol Hill as part of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students’ Legislative Action Days. Open Access and Open Education will feature prominently in their meetings with policymakers, as they have since SPARC began working with the group in 2009. Students played an important role this summer in getting FASTR out of committee in the Senate, and these meetings will add to FASTR’s momentum heading into the fall.

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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