

Report of the Northern Illinois University Open Access to Research Articles Act Taskforce

In compliance with provisions of the *Open Access to Research Articles Act*, Illinois Public Act 098-0295, this report is submitted to the Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees, to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, to both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly and to the Governor of the state of Illinois from the Northern Illinois University Open Access to Research Articles Act Task Force.

The text of Public Act 098-0295 has ten specific issues that were to be addressed as well as the issue to “design a proposed policy regarding open access to research articles, based on criteria that are specific to each public university’s needs”.

1. The Northern Illinois University task force has designed such a policy in the document: **Open Access for NIU produced published journal articles**. This policy needs to be approved by the Northern Illinois University Academic Senate [**currently this is pending**].
2. In this policy, there is no restriction on where authors choose to publish the results of their research; there is no limitation, real or perceived, on the academic freedom of the individual author. What is being requested is that authors retain their copyright to their works, rather than turning over the copyright to the commercial publisher so that at a time of the author’s designation or that of the publisher of their article, the article can be exposed to the World Wide Web through deposit into NIU’s Institutional Repository *Huskie Commons*.
3. The reporting and oversight of the policy will be the responsibility of the Northern Illinois University Academic Senate in cooperation and conjunction with the Northern Illinois University Libraries and the *Huskie Commons* administrator.
4. As Northern Illinois University already has developed an institutional repository in *Huskie Commons*, the up-front cost of its creation has been absorbed by the University Libraries. Maintenance of *Huskie Commons* for the duration, especially in light of PA 098-0295 will require a commitment upon the part of Northern Illinois University for personnel and material costs, unless or until these costs are covered by the State of Illinois for the purpose of enforcement of this act.
5. There does exist opportunities for collaboration between public universities for use and maintenance of repositories, and for long term digital preservation. CODSULI (the Council of Directors of State University Libraries in Illinois) is a pre-existing group that could be utilized to explore opportunities for collaboration and cost sharing. Currently it has no such charge.
6. Use of scholarly repositories is twofold. In an open scholarly repository materials that are ingested are also exposed to search engines and web crawlers for discovery. Materials can also be deposited that are accessible only through a security log-on; this follows the standard of access to commercial journal content; it is password secured. Finally, materials can be deposited that are not retrievable by the public, but only by the IR administrator. Sensitive records could be preserved in this scenario. In short an IR can be used for a variety of means and purposes.

7. In the long run, it is less expensive to pay a fee for Gold open access for a single article than to subscribe to an online commercial publisher journal that may have one download per fiscal year. That said, it has to be noted that among open access journals, only about 1/3 of open access journals are “Gold” and charge a fee, the majority of open access publications have no fee. As the business model for publishing changes with the advent of open access, it is somewhat understandable that some publishers will charge an up-front publication fee to replace subscription fees. However, if this becomes the norm, then there will still exist a “pay-wall” that will restrict scholarly communication.
8. Other than getting down to the granular level when it comes to content and composition of academic journal articles, the major difference in publishing is whether the medium for dissemination of research and scholarship should be through journal articles, conference papers, or monographs. As the pending FASTR (Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act) legislation does not include laboratory notes, preliminary data analyses, author notes, phone logs, or other information used to produce the final manuscript; classified research, research that results in works that generate revenue or royalties for the author (such as books), or patentable discoveries to the extent necessary to protect copyright or a patent; and, works that are not accepted for journal publication, and PA 098-0295 only deals with published research articles, these difference do not need to be expounded in an open access policy other than to exclude them.
9. The preferred version of the research article that should be made publicly accessible is the same version that was published. If this is not possible, deposit of the pre-print version with its permanent link to the published article will be the version used.
10. Determination of which research should be covered should be determined by the Faculty Senate in conjunction with the faculty whose work is being considered.