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## Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort

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## Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort

### Description, Abstract, or Artist's Statement

The Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort is a discussion series for faculty members across campus, representing a variety of academic disciplines and unique perspectives, that meets regularly throughout the course of an academic year. The cohort seeks to establish a community where faculty members who are interested in issues related to open access and changes in the scholarly publishing ecosystem can gather, share information, learn from one another, and take actionable steps to provoke positive change at their institutions. While many scholarly communications outreach efforts are isolated, individual, or one-shot activities, the Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort is designed to foster greater cohesion and build relationships, trust, and support among participants over time.

### Keywords

open access, scholarly publishing, faculty engagement

### Disciplines

Library and Information Science | Scholarly Communication | Scholarly Publishing

### Notes

Book is available for purchase at the ALA store: <https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/scholarly-communications-cookbook>

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# ***The Scholarly Communications Cookbook***

*edited by Brianna Buljung and Emily Bongiovanni*

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# Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort

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## NUTRITION INFORMATION

The Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort is a discussion series for faculty members across campus, representing a variety of academic disciplines and unique perspectives, that meets regularly throughout the course of an academic year. The cohort seeks to establish a community where faculty members who are interested in issues related to open access and changes in the scholarly publishing ecosystem can gather, share information, learn from one another, and take actionable steps to provoke positive change at their institutions. While many scholarly communications outreach efforts are isolated, individual, or one-shot activities, the Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort is designed to foster greater cohesion and build relationships, trust, and support among participants over time.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES/PROJECT OUTCOMES

- Foster discussion among faculty on scholarly communications topics in order to develop awareness and understanding.
- Build community among participants in order to cultivate collaboration and mutual support around issues in scholarly communications.
- Galvanize participants to advocate for innovation and advancement in schol-

arly communications, at their institution and in their discipline, in order to effect positive change.

## NUMBER SERVED

The number served by the Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort depends on the interest and availability of faculty members at your institution. A group size between 8–12 participants is ideal as it promotes robust discussions without feeling either too large or too small. I recommend a “core group” of faculty members who commit to attend all/most meetings, alongside an “open door” policy in which other faculty members who are interested can drop in to individual meetings as their schedule allows. A librarian with scholarly communications expertise can serve as chair or facilitator of the group.

## COOKING TIME

You will need time to recruit participants, market the series to your campus, attend to logistical details, such as room scheduling and catering (if desired), and of course to build the curriculum: identify readings for discussion, solicit topics or questions from group members, invite a guest speaker, etc. If summer is a quieter time on your campus, take the opportunity to do much of this preparation before the busy academic year begins. In terms of implementation, I suggest 2–3 meetings per semester for one hour each.

## DIETARY GUIDELINES

The Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort is a way to unite faculty members across the institution from disparate disciplines and backgrounds in a common cause: open access awareness and advocacy. Participants build relationships with other faculty members whom they might never otherwise have encountered on a large or medium-sized campus. They hear stories of open access that may sound similar to or different from their own experiences. These conversations provide them with the opportunity to ask questions and share their opinions. They learn about new OA initiatives, policy efforts, and tools. They find out about all the OA resources and services that the library provides. Moreover, if the library wants to build momentum for a specific effort, such as the adoption of an OA policy at the institution, the cohort is a prime way to foster allies, instill knowledge and understanding, and generate buzz.

## INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

- Publicity materials (print and/or digital) to market the event
- A room to hold the discussions
- Articles, news, or other content for topics of discussion
- Guest speakers who can share their expertise
- Refreshments (optional)

**PREPARATION**

Seek the support of your director or dean and consider whether you will need funding support for the series. You may want to pursue a grant to help cover costs. The Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort at the University of San Diego was funded in part by an \$800 grant from the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) and in part by the University Library. Also consider what kind of personnel support you will need, such as assistance from staff or student workers to arrange logistical details. Make the necessary arrangements.

To recruit faculty members to participate, cast a wide net. Examples of potential participants who have published articles or books about open access, who have participated in other OA or OER initiatives on campus, who have deposited publications in the institutional repository, and new faculty members eager to learn more about scholarly publishing. Advertise the group through your campus' informal and formal communication systems: a faculty newsletter, liaison librarians' relationships with their departments, word of mouth, an email blast, the library's website and social media accounts, and more. Direct contact tailored to an individual can sometimes work best; if you believe someone might be interested in participating, send them a personalized email or invite them to coffee.

As you build the membership roster, start thinking about topics to discuss. For the first meeting, you may want to lay the foundation

for the series by inviting attendees to share their interest in OA, what it looks like in their discipline, what they most want to learn, or what concerns they have. (See figure 1: Introductory Session Discussion Questions.) Ask group members why they joined the group, what they would like to discuss, and whether they have recommendations for readings and/or guest speakers. Allow their interests and experiences to help guide the series' direction.

Prior to each meeting, issue invitations to members and share intended topics of discussion. If there are readings, provide them in advance. Email everyone a day or two before each meeting with a reminder of the time and location. Arrange for someone to take

notes at the meeting and distribute them to all participants afterward.

A great way to keep everyone on the same page is to start a LibGuide or other web page with information about the group that you can point to over the course of the program. Keep it current with meeting dates and locations, scheduled readings and activities, OA resources, and contact information for questions and comments.

**COOKING METHOD**

The cohort at your institution can take whatever focus is most appropriate for your context. Listen to the needs and interests of your faculty members. Ask your dean or director what they most want to accomplish with the

**Questions for Discussion**

The following questions are provided as suggestions to spark discussion at the initial/introductory meeting of the Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort.

1. What brought you here today?
2. What does open access look like in your field/discipline?
  - Is there an awareness of open access? How knowledgeable about open access are academics in your discipline?
  - Is open access valued?
  - Are there respected open access journals?
  - Does open access participation factor into tenure and promotion decisions?
  - What rumors or misconceptions about open access do you think are most common in your discipline?
3. How much does open access consideration factor into your decisions about publishing and/or patronizing journals?
4. What do you most want to know about open access?
5. What questions or issues would you like to discuss in future meetings? Do you have any recommended readings you would like to discuss? Do you have recommendations for guest speakers or other programming?

**Figure 1: Introductory Session Discussion Questions**



**Photo 1: Heather Joseph speaks about open access at the University of San Diego.**

Photo credit: Martha Adkins.



**Photo 2: Faculty members listen to Joseph's presentation.**

Photo credit: Martha Adkins.

series. Be open to what topics or ideas are most pressing for your campus and design the curriculum with those priorities in mind.

For example, at the University of San Diego, faculty members at the first cohort meeting voiced an interest in hearing about the history of the OA movement as well as the “basics” of what it entails today. Thus, when we scheduled SPARC Executive Director Heather Joseph to visit our campus and talk with the group, we asked her to cover these topics. Heather did a fantastic job providing the “big picture” of OA and elucidating the importance not only of *access* but also of *equity* in knowledge formation and dissemination (see photos 1 and 2).

The University of San Diego also has a unique context in that it hosts the annual Digital Initiatives Symposium (DIS), which brings approximately 200 attendees—librarians, faculty members, deans and directors, library staff members, vendors, etc.—from around the world to our campus each spring to examine a wide variety of topics related to open access and the scholarly communications ecosystem. In an effort to involve more (non-library) USD faculty in all the DIS has to offer, grant funding from the Open Access Campus Conversations Cohort will provide registration to the 2020 symposium for select cohort participants. This is a wonderful way to connect members of USD's faculty to a wealth of information about open access and scholarly communications, including hands-on workshops, keynote addresses, lightning

talks, concurrent sessions, and networking and collaboration opportunities.

### **ALLERGY WARNING**

Don't be surprised or disheartened if attendance fluctuates from one meeting/event to the next. It might be helpful to poll members on their availability via Doodle prior to scheduling meeting times. Regardless, just do what you can to encourage consistency and commitment: send friendly reminders, choose convenient locations, entice attendees with refreshments, and follow-up with recaps of each session's progress and next steps.

### **CLEAN-UP**

To assist with tailoring the cohort to your unique campus and participants, it's a good idea to do a follow-up assessment at the end of each meeting and/or at the conclusion of the series. Assessment can be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative assessment

could include the number of participants and the number of OA actions resulting from the series (e.g., how many faculty members decided to add their work to the institutional repository, launch an OA journal, adopt OER, etc. as a result of their participation in the cohort). You can also use a survey to ask participants to rank their agreement with evaluative statements about different aspects of the series (such as content, organization, and leadership) in order to gauge its perceived effectiveness. Qualitative assessment can include soliciting anonymous comments from participants, such as what they valued most about the experience and what could be improved. If the series helped spark changes or new ideas on campus, such as the beginning of conversations about an institutional OA policy, that is significant and should be discussed in a final report.

With all forms of assessment, let participants know how their feedback will inform the

future direction of the series. Finally, share assessment findings with key stakeholders on your campus, such as the library's dean/director, as well as with external stakeholders, such as the organization that provided grant funding.

### **CHEF'S NOTES**

Your cohort should be attuned to the culture of your campus and responsive to the needs of your participants. Perhaps a year-long series isn't enough time and you want to renew the cohort for another year or more. Maybe participants wish to take turns leading the discussion or presenting something they find interesting about OA. Some faculty members may rotate out of the group and new ones might take their place.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Digital USD. (2020). Digital initiatives symposium. Retrieved from <https://digital.sandiego.edu/symposium/>