

BFA Libraries Committee Annual Report for AY 2019-20

June 26, 2020

Bridget Dalton, Chair

The Library Committee met monthly, first in person, and then due to COVID 19 restrictions placed in March, remotely via Zoom. On behalf of the members of the Library Committee, I submit the following report of our activities for AY 2019-20.

The committee identified two major priorities for this year's work, which are related: Support of CU Boulder's move toward 'transformative' sharing of scholarly works and support of Open Education Resources.

1. Supporting CU Boulder Libraries' move toward 'transformative' sharing of scholarly works, including renegotiation of contracts with publishers, primarily Elsevier.

Continuing last year's work, the committee has focused on supporting the university's move to more open source access to educational materials and the changing nature of scholarly communication. Across several sessions, Dean of the University Libraries Robert MacDonald and the committee discussed the ongoing efforts to revision scholarly publication and access, and specifically, the university's renegotiation of the licensing contract with Elsevier, the largest of the 'big deal' publishers. These various contracts have become increasingly expensive and inflexible over the years, restricting opportunities to support the diverse needs of library users and scholars engaged in academic publication. Reform efforts are happening at academic libraries across the US and internationally, and Dean MacDonald is an active member of a US group of academic libraries that is sharing experiences and expertise as they move forward with their respective initiatives and publisher contract negotiations.

In collaboration with other members of the CU system and regional consortium, CU Boulder and Dean MacDonald have spent much of the academic year renegotiating the Elsevier contract, which is currently scheduled to end in December 2020. The University of California system has been a leader in contract negotiations, and has consulted with CU Boulder, meeting virtually with the BFA Executive Committee, as well as with Libraries Chair Dalton BFA Chair Ferry, and Dean MacDonald. The goal is to reduce costs and improve access through renegotiation of read-access and article processing charges. The committee continues to be in strong support of this initiative, especially given its potential to provide greater access to scholarship to CU Boulder, and importantly, smaller institutions across Colorado and the western region. It should also provide greater support to CU Boulder scholars' publications efforts.

Based on other libraries' experience, it is customary for the publisher to extend access for several months beyond the contract end date to finalize the negotiations. Dean MacDonald is anticipating that this will be the case for our libraries. In the interim, faculty, staff, and students will experience some disruption to their usual access to journals. In some cases, works will be obtained through inter-library loan, and in other cases, individual works will be rented or purchased. The libraries will continue to offer delivery to faculty's mailboxes.

Another potential disruption may be in relation to some faculty and research staff's relationships with Elsevier in their roles as editors or review board members. It varies widely by discipline, but some scholars receive financial compensation for serving in these roles and it is not clear how that might be impacted under a new contract. Dean MacDonald and Chair Dalton had planned to meet with current CU Boulder editors to discuss this matter, but the meeting was put on hold once the pandemic hit and other matters took priority. Contract negotiations, in general, were slowed as a result of the pandemic, and thus there was no new news to report on the Elsevier contract at our last committee meeting of the year. Obtaining an update from Dean MacDonald on the contract status and immediate implications for CU Boulder libraries users will be at the top of our agenda when the committee reconvenes for AY 2020-21.

2. Supporting CU Boulder Libraries' Open Education Resources Initiative

The committee strongly supports the libraries' Open Education Resources initiative, led by Libraries OER Leads, Caroline Sinkinson, Merinda McLure, and Melissa Cantrell.

As stated on the libraries' OER webpage,

Open Educational Resources (OER) are "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others."

From The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Further,

"Open educational resources address the high cost of educational materials and inspire a renewed approach to collaborative, social, and open pedagogical practices. The CU Boulder Librarians work alongside faculty, students, and staff to explore these potentials by supporting the adoption, adaptation, and creation of OER. (<https://libguides.colorado.edu/oer>)

The OER Leads met with the committee, providing a slideshow presentation of OER and engaging in a discussion about the work and the committee's role in supporting increased faculty and instructor involvement. The committee agreed to share information with their respective schools and departments about the upcoming Open Education Week and the March 2 virtual workshop with esteemed open educator Rajiv Jhangiani, PhD. More broadly, committee members agreed to encourage colleagues to contribute to OER, including submitting information to the [CU Boulder OER Tracker](https://libguides.colorado.edu/c.php?g=904633&p=6565057) if they teach a low or no-cost course (generally under \$30). <https://libguides.colorado.edu/c.php?g=904633&p=6565057>

The committee recommended that the libraries continue ongoing outreach and PD efforts, since OER is an evolving area and faculty themselves are evolving in relation to their needs, interests, and expertise in both creating and using open education materials. We plan to follow up on this initiative in AY 2020-21.

3. Misc.

University Libraries Strategic Plan 2020-22

Dean MacDonald and library staff presented the Libraries Strategic Plan to the committee, which was in strong support of the plan, and offered minor feedback. The 2020-22 Strategic Plan is available online at https://www.colorado.edu/libraries/sites/default/files/attached-files/public_strategic_plan_2020-2022.pdf. I have also sent a pdf copy with this annual report for posting.

School and department representation on BFALC

It has been a continuing goal of the committee to increase representation and involvement of faculty on BFALC. We have a small, dedicated group of members but know that we need additional perspectives represented (and especially from Engineering and Computer Sciences, who are heavy contributors and users of scholarly journals and should be part of the discussions related to the Transformative Scholarship and OER initiatives. We determined as a committee that we would seek help from the BFA Executive Committee in personally reaching out to potential members. This was delayed due to Covid 19. Although the BFA agreed to extend the current committee memberships for AY 2020-21, we will pursue contacts with Engineering and Computer Sciences in particular, since the publisher contract negotiations will be continuing.

Farewell and thank you to Lisa R. Kippur, Executive Assistant to CU Boulder University Libraries

At its last meeting, the committee recognized Lisa R. Kippur for her exceptional service to the committee over many years. Lisa is retiring from the university this year and will be sorely missed. Lisa is a consummate professional in all that she does, scheduling meetings, writing and distributing committee meeting minutes, arranging refreshments, and generally supporting the committee, and especially, the Chair, in accomplishing the committee's work. Her kindness and care are always evident. We wish her much health, happiness, and adventure in this next phase of life's journey!