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## **Promoting a culture of openness: Institutional open access policy development and review at a Canadian university**

## **Promouvoir une culture de l'ouverture : Développement et évaluation d'une politique institutionnelle de libre accès dans une université canadienne**

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## ***Abstract / Résumé***

Institutional open access (OA) policies can act as a solid foundation on which to build university-wide support for open access. This is the first paper to reflect on the entire process of developing, implementing, and reviewing an institutional open access policy at a Canadian post-secondary institution. Simon Fraser University (SFU) is one of a few Canadian universities with an institutional open access policy. As a leader in open access, SFU is well positioned to share observations of our experiences in the first three years of our OA policy. Throughout this paper, we reflect on the role that the policy plays in the broader culture of openness at SFU and on the OA resources and supports provided to SFU researchers. Other institutions may find our observations and adoption of the SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, results) appreciative inquiry framework useful as they explore future policy development or review and work to promote a culture of open access within their university community.

Les politiques institutionnelles de libre accès (LA) peuvent constituer une base solide sur laquelle construire un soutien au libre accès à l'échelle de l'université. Cet article est le premier à proposer une réflexion sur le processus d'élaboration, de mise en œuvre et d'évaluation d'une politique institutionnelle de libre accès dans un établissement postsecondaire canadien. L'Université Simon Fraser (SFU) est l'une des seules universités canadiennes avec une politique institutionnelle de libre accès. En tant que leader en libre accès, la SFU est bien positionnée pour partager des observations sur ses expériences au cours des trois premières années de sa politique de LA. Tout au long de cet article, nous réfléchissons au rôle que la politique joue dans la culture plus large de l'ouverture à la SFU et sur les ressources et les soutiens du LA disponibles aux chercheurs de la SFU. D'autres institutions pourraient trouver nos observations et l'adoption du cadre d'enquête appréciative SOAR (forces, opportunités, aspirations, résultats) utiles lorsqu'elles envisagent l'élaboration ou la révision d'une politique future et travaillent à la promotion d'une culture de libre accès au sein de leur communauté universitaire.

## ***Keywords / Mots-clés***

open access, open access policy, policy development, policy review, scholarly communications, scholarly publishing, Canadian academic libraries

libre accès, politique de libre accès, développement de politiques, évaluation de politiques, communication savante, publication savante, bibliothèques universitaires canadiennes

## ***Introduction***

Open access (OA) policies mandated by institutions, funders, and governments are a significant way that public access to research is being prioritized in Europe, Australia, the United States, and Canada (Huang et al., 2020). These policies, which require researchers to make the products of their work openly available, are recognized as effective (Larivière & Sugimoto, 2018). However, at the time of writing, only 14 of 346 Canadian post-secondary institutions have OA mandates (C-SKI, 2017), Simon Fraser University (SFU) being one of them. As we mark the third anniversary of implementing the SFU Open Access Policy (OA Policy), the authors reflect on SFU's process from policy development through to review, as well as the library-based supports that have been developed and enhanced alongside the policy. This review marks an important moment to consider what we have learned.

Using SFU's OA Policy as a case study, this paper discusses the process of exploring, developing, and socializing such a policy and outlines the implementation process. It explores the process of the OA Policy review committee, which adopted an appreciative inquiry approach to highlight the impacts and lessons learned in the first three years, thus providing direction for future work in this area. Throughout, the authors reflect on the role that the OA Policy plays in the broader culture of openness at SFU.

By garnering institution-wide support, institutional OA policies can provide a foundation on which to build further policies and strategies towards OA advocacy and action. As institutions seek support from their faculty senates or other academic governance bodies to reinforce a culture of open access within their university community, our observations about the process at SFU may help to inform policy development and review.

## ***About Simon Fraser University and SFU Library***

Consistently ranked one of Canada's top comprehensive universities, SFU is a public university with approximately 23,000 full-time equivalent students across three campuses in Burnaby, Vancouver, and Surrey, British Columbia. With branches at all three campuses, SFU Library serves a diverse group of patrons, including a significant Master's and doctoral graduate student population, undergraduates, faculty, staff, and community members. Recognized as a leader in open access, at the time of writing SFU is one of 14 universities in Canada with an institution-wide OA policy (C-SKI, 2017) and is one of five Canadian members of the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions (COAPI, n.d.). As part of SFU's broader commitment to open access, the university is also a signatory to the Compact for Open-Access Publishing Equity (COPE), which calls on institutions to commit to financial support for "reasonable publication charges for articles written by its faculty and published in fee-based open-access journals" (COPE, n.d., "The Compact").

Support for scholarly communications and open scholarship initiatives at SFU is provided by a robust team of eight librarians and associated staff across multiple library

divisions, including the Research Commons, Digital Publishing, the Copyright Office, the Institutional Repository (IR), Collections Management, and Learning and Information Services. This distributed approach allows for significant collaboration and sharing of expertise, ensuring that open scholarship initiatives continue to advance at SFU.

In addition to library support and initiatives for open scholarship, SFU also benefits from co-location with two significant open scholarship projects: the Scholarly Communications Lab (<https://www.scholcommlab.ca/>) and the Public Knowledge Project (<https://pkp.sfu.ca/>). The presence of both of these projects at SFU helps to raise awareness of open access among faculty members and has contributed to creating an environment of support for the OA Policy.

It is worth noting that SFU Library is unique in Canada in terms of its organizational structure at the university. The University Librarian & Dean of Libraries reports to the Vice President, Research and International (VP Research), as opposed to the Vice President, Academic or Provost as is conventional. This close relationship with the VP Research is beneficial for the library, as it ensures that the library is well aligned with the strategic research mission of the university. This relationship fosters collaboration at the inception of new research initiatives and strong channels of communication with the VP Research. In addition, it makes it easier for the library to foster strong connections with colleagues in the Office of Research Services, Research Ethics, and other units in the VP Research portfolio. Early and ongoing discussions with the VP Research about the process of creating a university-wide OA policy ensured strong executive support for the process.

### ***Canadian Open Access Landscape***

Canada's Tri-Agency is one of the most significant sources of federal research funding. A collection of three public granting agencies, the Tri-Agency is composed of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Introduced in 2015 and building off the 2008 CIHR Policy, the Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications requires that all research funded by these three publicly funded agencies be made openly available within 12 months of publication (Government of Canada, 2016). Authors can comply with the policy by depositing the full text of their published article in an institutional or subject repository, or by publishing in an open access journal, provided there is no embargo longer than 12 months enforced by the publisher. Authors are eligible to use Tri-Agency grant funds towards article processing charges for OA journals.

There are a number of Canadian library consortia working to support open initiatives, such as the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) and the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL). Examples of this support include the Open Access Policy Toolkit recently developed by CARL, which consists of templates, principles, and rationales for each section of an OA policy, and lessons learned by library directors involved in the adoption of OA policies (CARL Advancing Research

Committee, 2020). CARL also brought scholarly communications practitioners together at the 2019 Advancing Open event to share ideas about ways to “mobilize open initiatives and uptake in the academic environment in Canada,” including discussion about OA policies and their role in advancing open scholarship (MacCallum et al., 2020, p. 2). CRKN provides resources, services, and supports for open initiatives at their member organizations.

There is evidence in the literature that Canada, and North America more broadly, lags behind in open access to research. Huang et al. (2020) performed a large-scale analysis of over 1200 institutions worldwide, providing rankings of the top 100 institutions based on percentage of output that is gold OA, green OA, and both combined; notably, North American institutions barely register on any of these rankings (Supplementary Figures, pp. 2–3). This extensive study also assessed the effects of policy interventions on faculty publishing practices, finding that “universities in Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) and North America (Canada and the U.S.) lag behind comparators in Europe (on repository-mediated open access) and Latin America (on open access publishing)” (Huang et al., 2020, p. 7). Huang et al. (2020) also found that European and North American institutions tend to reach a maximum level of gold open access around 40% of publications and then plateau rather than continuing to rise (p. 13). Our aim with this paper is to begin to address this by providing a roadmap for institutional open access policy development, implementation, and review, in order to assist other institutions interested in increasing open access to their research.

## ***Literature Review***

Academic libraries are the natural home of support for open access (Fernandez & Nariani, 2011; Fruin & Sutton, 2016; Monson et al., 2014; Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013). At institutions with OA policies, libraries often administer resources and supports, and drive outreach and promotion of open access. They have also been integrally involved in the development of the policies themselves (Fruin & Sutton, 2016; Kern & Wishnetsky, 2014; Kipphut-Smith, 2014). This adds to other areas in which Canadian and American academic libraries have recently begun to be involved as major stakeholders and leaders in policy development, such as research data management (Cox et al., 2017; Cox & Pinfield, 2014) and copyright (Graham & Winter, 2017).

Below we review the small but consistent amount of literature in the past decade addressing OA policy work. There have been few studies or reports of this work in Canada, and those that are available typically reflect on only one aspect of OA policy work (for example, outlining the policy development process only). This paper seeks to address this gap by providing a comprehensive case study of policy development, implementation, *and* review that may prove useful to other institutions considering undertaking this work.

## **Policy Development and Implementation**

As universities have taken a variety of approaches to developing and implementing open access policies, different groups have been the drivers of policy development. For

example, Cantrell and Johnson (2018) described a graduate student-led process of adopting an OA policy at the University of Colorado Boulder, and addressed the benefits and challenges for the collaborating librarians and graduate students. Kern and Wishnetsky (2014) described the library's role in supporting OA, providing a walk-through of the process of developing an OA policy at Allegheny College. More recently, Otto and Mullen (2019) examined the role of faculty in implementing Rutgers University's OA policy by looking at faculty interest, participation, and compliance. Reinsfelder and Anderson (2013) surveyed library directors to investigate the level of influence academic administrators have over an institution's movement towards OA, and concluded that "as academic administrator attention to open access increases, open access activities of faculty and librarians also increase" (p. 481).

As more institutions adopt OA policies, different styles of policy approaches have emerged. Fruin and Sutton outlined the "Harvard style policy" that "automatically grants a nonexclusive license and a related expectation of deposit in an institutional repository," which is distinct from the "encouragement style policy" that only requests or "encourages faculty to make their scholarship accessible through open access" (2016, p. 479). In February 2016, Landry noted that no universities had adopted the "Harvard model in Canada" (2016, para. 4). Now, as of May 2020, 3 of the 14 Canadian universities with an OA policy have Harvard style policies: SFU, Université TÉLUQ, and York University (C-SKI, 2017).

In addition to the CARL Open Access Policy Toolkit described above, there are resource guides available to assist those who are interested in developing an OA policy at their institution. Shieber et al. (n.d.) established "good practices" for OA policies, acknowledging that "multiple, divergent good practices" can evolve over time, rather than there being one set of established best practices (Preface). This living guide has been constantly updated since its development in 2012, and provides guidance on drafting, implementing, and promoting a policy.

## **Policy Promotion and Outreach**

A university's institutional repository (IR) is typically the primary location through which researchers are encouraged or required to make their work openly available under an OA policy, and therefore promotion of the IR is a key aspect of building support for OA within an institution (Zhang, Boock, & Wirth, 2015, discussed below). Otto (2016) assumed that open access and the institutional repository go hand in hand and detailed 18 "key elements" in Rutgers University Libraries' messaging around open access, which explicitly incorporated the IR (p. 18).

This included messages such as "A new and exciting research ecosystem is emerging, with the Open Access Policy and (its implementation via) [the institutional repository] comprising the central kernel or core that makes it all possible" (Otto, 2016, p. 14). These elements provide a tested roadmap for those wanting to emphasize this integral connection between the IR and open access.

Fruin and Sutton (2016) surveyed 51 North American institutions about their OA policies, methods of promoting such policies, and common faculty concerns and ways they are addressed. The authors provided some “keys to success” drawn from their results, including many relating to promotion of a policy, such as “engagement with governance groups” (p. 482) and ensuring “the involvement of widely respected faculty advocates” to encourage buy-in among their peers (p. 483). They found that institutional policies strengthen and lend authority to the library’s other open access initiatives by serving as a reminder of the institutional and administrative support backing the OA message. Through interviews with OA practitioners in the United Kingdom, Dawson (2018) found that “identify[ing] influencers and informers,” especially high-level administrators and department heads, is key to successful open access outreach (p. 13). By bringing open access messages back to their departments and faculty colleagues, administrators “can help amplify your message by drawing attention to it and lending it authority” (Dawson, 2018, p. 13).

Institutional OA policies presented alongside other advocacy efforts have the potential to lead to other institutional advances towards a future of OA. For example, at the University of California (UC), which has had an OA policy since 2013, the library’s 2019 temporary suspension of their “big deal” subscription with Elsevier was endorsed by the Academic Council of the Academic Senate in a letter highlighting the commitment to UC’s OA Policy (Academic Council, 2019). As an advocacy tool, UC’s OA Policy may have contributed to the institutional support that made ending negotiations with a major publisher possible.

## **Policy Compliance**

Researcher adherence with institutional, funder, and national open access policies is a topic of considerable interest in the literature. Faculty workload, an absence of compliance mechanisms, and a lack of understanding or awareness of open access policies are often provided as reasons for low compliance (Dawson, 2018; Larivière & Sugimoto, 2018; Suber, 2012). Funding bodies can ensure compliance by withholding funding if past research is not openly available. Institutions can use performance reviews and promotion guidelines to ensure policy compliance, as we will discuss below.

Institutions measure compliance with and success of institutional open access policies in various ways. The observation by Kipphut-Smith et al. (2018) that “a number of COAPI members struggle with identifying what should be measured and what tools and methods are appropriate” indicates the complexity involved and the different ways that institutions measure policy compliance (p. 1). Taking a practical standpoint to address this challenge, Kipphut-Smith (2014) developed a scalable workflow for populating an IR with faculty works in order to support Rice University’s OA Policy. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2019) described workflows used at the University of Colorado Boulder to increase awareness of the OA policy and increase the number of publications deposited in the institutional repository while reducing the burden on researchers. On a broader scale, Vincent-Lamarre et al. (2015) used the MELIBEA directory of institutional open access policies to identify if there are conditions within policies themselves that can make OA

mandates stronger, finding a correlation between the effectiveness of the policy and deposit timing, internal use, and opt-outs.

While there is an increasing focus on open access in the scholarly communications sphere, when it comes to review, promotion, and tenure (RPT) protocols, things have not changed. Alperin et al. (2019) evaluated protocols at 129 representative institutions, finding that “open access” was explicitly mentioned in only 5% of the guidelines and often in the context of caution around quality of open access publishing venues (p. 14). This may provide another reason for low OA policy compliance: RPT documents send clear signals about what is “valued” in academic work, and the absence of open access in these protocols indicates that there is still much work to do in translating the OA policies’ goals of broad access to research practices.

Finally, funder open access policies also affect researcher compliance with open access. Larivière and Sugimoto (2018) measured compliance across several funders with OA policies in Europe and North America, finding that policy enforcement, infrastructure, and timeliness—i.e., whether or not a delay is permitted before a work is made open access—can impact compliance. Their research “demonstrates that funders can clearly shape compliance through their mandates, and that this compliance needs to be monitored” (Larivière & Sugimoto, 2018, p. 486). Although the Tri-Agency requires making research outputs open access, in practice this policy has not been enforced. Larivière and Sugimoto (2018) reported that in 2016, 79% of research funded by SSHRC, 67% funded by NSERC, and 45% funded by CIHR had “no open access [version] identified” (p. 484). They posited that this is likely influenced by the fact that in the Canadian context “no strong environment of enforcement has arisen,” compared to other jurisdictions such as the United States and the United Kingdom, as “both the NIH [National Institutes of Health] and the Wellcome Trust state that they will withhold or suspend payments if articles are not made open access” (Larivière & Sugimoto, 2018, p. 485). It remains to be seen how the coalition of European funders’ “Plan S” initiative will impact international researchers. Plan S aims to ensure that all publicly funded scientific publications are “published in compliant open access journals or platforms” by 2021 (Coalition S, n.d., “About Plan S”).

Were the Tri-Agency to increase their enforcement mechanisms—for example, by withholding funds for future applications if previously funded work is not open access—researchers may have additional motivation for ensuring their research is openly available. This could further influence compliance with institutional open access policies, since by making their work open access to comply with the funder's policy, researchers will also be complying with their institutional policy. The Canadian government’s recently released Roadmap for Open Science brings attention to the importance of sharing scientific data and findings widely and could result in increased enforcement of the Tri-Agency open access mandate (Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada, 2020).

## **Policy Review**

Andrews, Zerangue, and Harker (2017) investigated how to assess an OA policy, including what questions can be asked and what can (and cannot) be measured within



an IR. Measures available via an IR can include locations of users, downloads and views, and altmetrics, but the IR alone cannot provide participation rates, locations of co-authors, syllabi using OA materials, or data related to OA items not in the IR (Andrews, Zerangue, & Harker, 2017, slide 17). The authors emphasized that each institution will need to define what “success” means at that institution, and then determine what to measure and formalize in the assessment process (Andrews, Zerangue, & Harker, 2017, slide 18).

Kipphut-Smith et al. (2018) identified questions that can help individual institutions define success and applicable measures, such as whether IR data related to gold as well as green OA is relevant, whether to count all openly readable works or just those with an open license (e.g., Creative Commons), and whether to count articles with embargoed access (pp. 9–10). This study surveyed members of the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions (COAPI) about their methods for assessing an OA policy and compliance, and the authors concluded that best practices for measuring compliance would both help individual institutions and contribute greatly to the advancement of OA in general (Kipphut-Smith et al., 2018, pp. 11–12). Kipphut-Smith et al. (2018) also created a Compliance Worksheet to help institutions address some of the issues they uncover, and encouraged COAPI member institutions to share their results through COAPI (pp. 35–37).

Zhang, Boock, and Wirth (2015) compared IR deposit rates over time as an OA policy was implemented at Oregon State University (OSU), using both Web of Science data and article metadata from OSU’s IR to calculate deposits as a percentage of total faculty publications. They found that deposits actually declined following the implementation of the policy, and concluded that “passing an OA policy alone is not a guarantee of increased faculty engagement in OA initiatives” (Zhang, Boock, & Wirth, 2015, p. 9). These authors also found that, in addition to the policy, “outreach activities and mediated deposit services” were significant factors in the adoption of OA at OSU (Zhang, Boock, & Wirth, 2015, p. 14).

### ***SFU’s Open Access Policy: Policy Language***

The SFU OA Policy acknowledges the commitment of SFU authors, defined as “faculty members, students, and post-doctoral fellows,” to “share the products of their SFU research with the broadest possible audience,” including other scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and the public at large (SFU Library, 2017a, para. 4, 6). The OA Policy requires researchers to deposit their authored and co-authored scholarly articles in Summit, SFU’s institutional research repository, granting SFU “non-exclusive permission to archive, preserve, reproduce and openly disseminate, in any medium, all scholarly articles authored by [them], provided that the articles are properly attributed to the authors, and that it is done for non-commercial purposes” (SFU Library, 2017a, para. 9). Authors are required to submit to Summit “an electronic copy of the final version of each article no later than the date of its publication” (SFU Library, 2017a, para. 4), and the library will manage access delays required by publication embargoes, which are honoured by the OA Policy.

## Exceptions to the Open Access Policy

The OA Policy—and SFU Library as its steward—acknowledges that not every product of scholarship can be made openly available for a variety of legitimate reasons. Additionally, we anticipate that our understanding of what ought to be open may change over time. For example, some research based in Indigenous communities may not be made open in order to respect local protocols, while other research may require restrictions to ensure the safety of research subjects. While SFU encourages open sharing of scholarly articles to the fullest extent possible, a waiver mechanism is provided that will grant an exception to the policy for any author who provides a rationale.

## ***SFU'S Open Access Policy: Context, Development, and Implementation***

### Context

As early as 2010, SFU librarians were considering whether the university community was ready to support an OA policy and were exploring other ways to facilitate OA at SFU. This work was supported by the Senate Library Committee, which endorsed the library's [open access strategy](#) (SFU Library, 2010). At that time, a lack of awareness about open access among faculty members and widespread misunderstanding of open access led the library to conclude that further work was needed before proposing a policy. Instead the library undertook promotion of the new [SFU Central Open Access Fund](#) (OA Fund) (SFU Library, 2021), active participation in Open Access Week, and an array of other initiatives to raise awareness on campus.

Open access funds that support payment of article processing charges (APCs) are another common way that universities support open access at their institutions (see Fernandez & Nariani (2011) for a summary of OA funds in Canadian libraries). While an OA fund may not be directly connected to an OA policy, access to funding to support publishing in open venues appears to contribute to familiarity with OA in an institution. For example, Monson et al. (2014) found that all interviewees in their study “used their [OA] funds as a promotional vehicle for open access” (p. 317). The SFU Library administers the OA Fund, which currently provides SFU researchers who publish in gold OA journals with funding of up to \$2500 CAD per article towards APCs, for up to two publications per author per year. Articles funded by the OA Fund are required to be deposited in Summit. The Library's collections budget supports the OA Fund.

By 2015 a new [Strategic Research Plan](#) (SFU, 2016) was under development at SFU, and it included open access as an important goal in the dissemination of research. The [2015 Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications](#) (Government of Canada, 2016) also helped to bring attention to the imperative of open access. At this time, SFU had also adopted the vision of becoming Canada's most community-engaged research institution (SFU, n.d., p. 2). Sharing the outputs of scholarship with the community—not

keeping them locked behind paywalls—was understood as an important part of this community engagement. At the same time, the library was also developing a new [Strategic Plan for 2017–2021](#) (SFU Library, 2017b). In the SFU Library Strategic Plan, OA is a key part of the library’s brand, beginning with its current vision (“Open for research. Open for learning. Open for collaboration.”) and value of openness (“We lead by example in supporting open access, open source, open data, open educational resources, and minimal restrictions on licensed information resources.”) (SFU Library, 2017b, “Vision” and “Values”). In addition to supporting the strategic visions of the university and the library, the primary goals in creating the OA Policy were to increase institutional awareness of open access publishing models and to support researchers in meeting funders’ open access mandates.

## **Policy Development**

Developing and socializing an institution-wide OA policy is not something that can be done overnight. Indeed, the policy development process described in this paper took approximately 16 months, and on reflection could have benefitted from an even longer period of socialization—this at a university where support for open access was already quite mature. For example, as noted above, SFU’s Senate Library Committee had endorsed an open access strategy in 2010, and results from an internal faculty survey indicated a higher-than-average level of support for open access. In mid-2015, SFU’s Dean of Libraries proposed to the VP Research that the Senate Library Committee strike a subcommittee on open access. This group, later named the Open Access Advisory Committee, was composed of researchers, librarians, administrators, and students. It was charged with developing a draft Open Access Policy and reviewing the policies governing the five-year-old OA Fund. In drafting the OA Policy, the OA Advisory Committee drew upon evidence from the literature and best practices from institutions that had already passed policies of their own. The committee had a goal that the resulting policy would be as far-reaching as possible: for example, by not limiting the policy to faculty members but explicitly including students and post-doctoral fellows in the definition of authors. The committee looked for the few other existing examples of such inclusion at the time, such as the University of California, where institutional OA policies went beyond including only faculty authors (UC Office of Scholarly Communication, 2015).

### ***Phase One: Key Stakeholder Consultations***

Members of the OA Advisory Committee consulted with various stakeholder groups prior to circulating a draft policy to the wider campus for feedback. The dean presented the draft policy to the Deans’ Council, vice presidents, and the president, while other committee members consulted with groups representing the proposed authors: the Faculty Association, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Senate Library Committee, and Senate Committee on Graduate Studies. This extensive consultation during the drafting process surfaced core values, but also some tensions that needed to be addressed within the policy and as part of the outreach campaign. Some of the issues raised at this time were concerns about unintended consequences to academic freedom, representation of scholarly outputs not included in the policy, compliance

strategies, and perceived costs of open access publishing. The OA Advisory Committee's discussions also informed wider communications strategies, such as developing a set of frequently asked questions that spoke directly to the concerns raised.

The feedback from these early consultations resulted in a softening of policy language. The OA Advisory Committee discussed at length the strategy of bringing forward a more strongly worded policy without the endorsement of some of these groups, versus a less-directive policy with full support of all campus constituents. As a result of significant debate, the following phrase was added: "This policy is aspirational and intended to encourage open access to scholarly work. While *the University expects authors to participate*, no University sanctions will result from failure to comply" (SFU Library, 2017a, para. 12, emphasis added). The committee understood that this modification introduced the possibility of contradiction. However, the committee concluded it was better to go forward with a slightly weaker policy that would be widely supported, rather than push through with a stronger policy that was unlikely to be endorsed. The committee felt the revised wording still conveyed the expectation that researchers must deposit their work. Stating that the policy is aspirational and that no university sanctions will result from failure to comply acknowledges the university's lack of enforcement and compliance mechanisms.

### ***Phase Two: Broader Community Consultations***

In spring 2016 the policy consultation process was opened to the wider campus community, with town halls and department and faculty meetings hosted by OA Advisory Committee members. The goal of these sessions was to facilitate conversation, gather feedback, and raise awareness around the policy's development. It was critical that a faculty member from the Advisory Committee led each of the town hall meetings, so that key constituents were hearing directly from their peers. Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly supportive of the ethos of the policy, but concerns were raised around issues of workload for university authors and potential limitations on publishing venues. Most questions and concerns at this point were around journal policies for self-archiving, differences between green and gold open access models, and acceptable article versions for deposit. These feedback sessions also helped identify open-access champions and skeptics on our campuses, whose suggestions and constructive criticism resulted in specific changes to the policy language. For example, while the policy applies specifically to faculty, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows, language was added to acknowledge that SFU staff may also author academic papers and to encourage them to deposit these in Summit. The OA Advisory Committee took all steps possible to ensure support for the policy was in place when it was considered at SFU Senate.

In January 2017, after being endorsed by SFU's Senate Library Committee, Senate Graduate Studies Committee, Faculty Association, Graduate Student Society, Post-Doctoral Fellows Association, and Departmental Library Representatives, [SFU's OA Policy](#) (SFU Library, 2017a) was unanimously [endorsed by SFU's Senate](#) (SFU Senate, 2017, pp. 11-12).

## **Policy Implementation**

The OA Policy was launched in 2017 with a university-wide communications campaign that aimed to raise awareness of the policy and of the general value of open access. This campaign included endorsement from the president and from the VP Research, presentation at an SFU Faculty Association meeting, visits to department meetings by liaison librarians, posters and postcards, and social media posts linking back to a library webpage with details of the policy. Educational materials were developed, including integrating policy details into library learning modules and slide decks for scholarly communication workshops. An email address was set up to collect feedback though few questions have come through this channel.

Staffing for the institutional repository was also reviewed in order to ensure adequate support for mediated deposit. IR staff created simple deposit and waiver forms for researchers. IR staff members continue to ensure that deposited articles meet publisher policies and manage any full-text embargoes. The staff also communicate with authors about policy requirements and follow up after deposit, providing permalinks to deposited articles for use on other platforms.

SFU Library has continued to raise awareness through outreach activities about everything open, such as celebrating International Open Access Week, maintaining a scholarly communications blog, creating communications and marketing materials, and supporting initiatives that specifically target student researchers. Building on this foundation with broad and consistent vocal support for open endeavours makes open access part of every conversation the library has with administration, departments and faculties, and researchers. Bringing open access into all of these conversations helps to raise awareness and interest in the policy and related resources.

## ***SFU Open Access Policy Review***

As the third anniversary of the SFU OA Policy's implementation approached, an OA Policy review committee was formed to produce a brief report for SFU Senate that reflected on OA Policy outcomes and related initiatives. Because open access is enshrined as a goal both in SFU's institution-wide Strategic Research Plan and in the library's own Strategic Plan, this review was not intended to open up the policy or its goals for revision or reconsideration. Therefore, the review committee wanted to use a review process that would allow it to take stock of the OA landscape at SFU and help facilitate further activities that would continue to build a culture of openness across the university. The review committee selected the SOAR framework, which looks at the strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and target results presented by an initiative. This approach to assessment is grounded in appreciative inquiry, an "energizing approach for sparking positive change" that "focuses on what is working well (appreciative) by engaging people in asking questions and telling stories (inquiry)" (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p. 13). While the OA Policy review committee was not aware of SOAR being used by other libraries for this type of policy review, members of the committee had used SOAR in the past for internal assessments and found it to be a constructive, holistic way to reflect on an initiative.

## Assessment

As described in the literature and discussed above, a variety of measures can be used to assess the success of an OA policy, and “success” can be defined in many different ways. Like many institutions (Kipphut-Smith et al., 2018; Zhang, Boock, & Wirth, 2015), the SFU OA Policy review committee used Summit deposit statistics in its review because the policy commits researchers to depositing their work there. However, the broad outlook of the SOAR approach also led the review committee to consider data from the OA Fund for a bigger picture of the OA culture at SFU. The OA Fund’s support for gold OA complements the OA Policy’s emphasis on the use of green OA (self-archiving) to make otherwise-closed work openly available; these together provide a range of options to researchers wanting or needing to make their work open. While these two measures (deposit statistics and data from the OA Fund) together do not account for all of the open access outputs of SFU-authored research, they nonetheless provide a starting point for understanding OA at SFU. As discussed in the *SOAR: Opportunities* section below, future implementation of a university-wide faculty CV system would allow for more accurate reporting of the overall publication output at SFU, and in turn may provide a more precise picture of SFU publications that are published open access. This would include, for example, research published in “diamond” open access journals, where article processing fees (APCs) are not charged, or where faculty use other sources of funding (such as research grants) to cover APCs without accessing the OA Fund.

As the [SFU Open Access Policy Report](#) shares, the number of scholarly articles and book chapters deposited in Summit has increased since the OA Policy went into effect, nearly doubling from 2016 to 2019 (Gallilee et al., 2020, p. 2). Many of these deposits were from first-time submitters. This increase is especially significant in the SFU context, since the library offers mediated deposit but does not actively harvest researcher publications; researchers need to submit their work proactively. The review committee included book chapters in this data because, while their deposit is not required by the policy, the committee was interested in looking at participation in open access more broadly and recognized that some disciplines produce more monographs than scholarly articles.

Since the OA Policy was implemented in 2017, uptake of the OA Fund has increased by 40% (Gallilee et al., 2020, p. 2). As addressed above, while the fund is not a direct proxy for measuring the impact of the policy itself due to the different emphases on green versus gold OA, this substantial increase suggests that general awareness of open access has increased at SFU in tandem with outreach measures undertaken in relation to the policy.

## Faculty Endorsement of the OA Policy

In gathering the data to inform the review, the review committee consulted with library staff in roles related to scholarly communications, collections, copyright, and the institutional repository. However, to align with the engaged inquiry approach of appreciative inquiry, it was important for the committee to hear directly from researchers

in addition to looking at data from Summit deposits and the OA Fund. MacCallum et al. (2020) point out that “while it has yet to be determined if an institutional OA policy alone can translate to action,” such policies nonetheless offer opportunities for awareness and advocacy, which can influence the overall support for open access (p. 9). This, combined with findings such as Dawson’s (2018) on the importance of “influencers and informers” (p. 13), led the review committee to seek such champions at SFU. For example, Dr. Angela Kaida, Canada Research Chair Tier II in Global Perspectives in HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Associate Professor in SFU’s Faculty of Health Sciences, comments that she is

grateful for SFU’s leadership in adopting an institution-wide Open Access Policy. As a health sciences researcher focused on HIV and sexual and reproductive health, I want our research findings to inform practice and policy to improve equity in health outcomes. To do so, our research needs to be widely available and accessible to all who need it, including community organizations, government representatives, researchers in LMICs, clinicians, patients and their families, students, and many other health stakeholders outside of the formal academic system. Open access policies are an important step in this right direction. (Gallilee et al. quoting Kaida, 2020, p.3)

SFU’s Publishing Department has updated its Tenure, Promotion and Review criteria to reflect the policy guidelines, indicating that “[i]n keeping with the University’s Open Access Policy of 2017, only those publications that are in compliance with the policy will be considered by tenure, promotion, and review committees” (SFU, 2017, p. 2). Dr. Hannah McGregor, Assistant Professor in Publishing, further describes the benefits of this change to her as a researcher: “In the context of an institutional setting where OA is treated as a shared value, I have had the space to experiment with open, accessible, and publicly-engaged scholarship,” such as her podcast *Secret Feminist Agenda* (McGregor, 2019, para. 3).

## **SOAR Process**

SOAR stands for strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results, and provides a growth-focused perspective for reflecting on an initiative (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, p. 127). These four frames provided the review committee with a positive and forward-looking starting point for assessing the strengths and areas for growth of both the policy itself and related supports such as Summit and the OA Fund, as well as broader education and outreach efforts around open access. In this way, the committee was able to reflect on the full range of programs and resources that support SFU researchers in working more generally towards a culture of openness.

### **SOAR: Strengths**

The SOAR approach identified numerous strengths in SFU Library’s approach to open access. Mechanisms for collecting input from across the university in the process of developing the OA Policy raised awareness of open access and related issues, and also helped to identify open-access champions among faculty and administration. Both

the policy development leading up to 2017 and the policy review in 2020 inspired thoughtful discussions at SFU Senate, where faculty members raised questions about the policy itself and about how to motivate behavioural change among researchers.

Open access and related initiatives are supported by eight librarians across multiple divisions. This dispersed support enables these librarians to use their connections to spread information about OA to a broad range of SFU members. This collaborative approach results in the ability to provide researchers with specific and nuanced support for every aspect of the research and publishing process, including research data management, understanding publishing agreements, leveraging Summit, and hosting an open journal.

The outreach and educational activities described above, which bring an awareness of OA across the university, are another strength in SFU Library's support for open access. This broad approach is reinforced by financial support, including the OA Fund, past contributions to [OpenCon scholarships](#) for grad students (SFU Library, 2019), and the [SFU Graduate Student Society's Open Access Award](#) (SFU Library, 2020).

### ***SOAR: Opportunities***

A primary opportunity for future growth identified during the SOAR analysis pertains to the collection and availability of data relating to OA at SFU. Collection of data about Summit deposits and articles funded by the OA Fund could be improved with the creation of routine workflows and timelines. Transparency could be improved by making this data publicly available on a library webpage. Regularly collecting this data and making it more readily accessible could assist the library with identifying trends and patterns between and across disciplines, and could help highlight more open-access champions among SFU researchers.

An outreach opportunity that has been discussed but not yet undertaken is following up with researchers featured in SFU Communications' *SFU News* or in media outlets locally, nationally, and beyond, to ensure that their work is openly available in Summit. This would ensure that research featured in the public discourse is publicly available, which has the potential in the long run to impact the extent to which SFU research is incorporated into policy and practice in a variety of sectors. Summit is also currently undergoing a platform migration, and this review has helped to inform discussions about its features and workflows.

While the collaboration across librarian and staff roles to support open access is certainly a strength at SFU Library, the benefits of this model could be amplified by creating an Open Working Group to facilitate communication and collaboration between these roles. This group would include representation from scholarly communications, repository management, and support for Open Educational Resources (OER), OA publishing, and open data. This would combine the benefits of the current dispersed model with those of a more concentrated, dedicated open scholarship division.



There is also an opportunity for the library to celebrate and champion the fact that one SFU department has updated their review, promotion, and tenure (RPT) protocols to reflect the SFU OA Policy. While our current practice already involves sharing sample RPT language that incorporates the terms of the OA Policy with departments that are reviewing their RPT protocol, we can do more to highlight this opportunity to embed OA with other departments at the university. Advocacy that happens within departments themselves is a powerful motivator, and embedding OA in policies at the departmental level would be an effective way to promote a culture of openness on our campuses.

Another opportunity is presented by the fact that SFU's Research Services and IT Services departments are planning to adopt a Current Researcher Information System (CRIS, or "faculty CV system"), as is becoming more common at Canadian institutions. The possibility of connecting the CRIS software to Summit represents a major opportunity to simplify researcher workflows, and at the same time improve data collection and transparency. Implementation of the OA Policy has allowed the library to bring this discussion to SFU Senate and senior administration in a way that would not have otherwise been possible.

Future changes to Tri-Agency or other funder compliance mechanisms would also present an opportunity to build outreach around promotion of those changes. Increased compliance requirements would provide researchers with additional motivation for ensuring their work is openly available, and the library could use these changes to promote its resources and expertise.

### ***SOAR: Aspirations***

As the OA Policy has matured and awareness of open access at SFU has grown, the time is right to develop an action plan as a longer-term framework for the library to support promotion of the policy and development, enhancement, and promotion of related services such as the OA Fund and Summit. This action plan could address additional data collection and collection and consideration of feedback from the SFU community, and would help move the campus community further towards open scholarship. This action plan could be developed by the Open Working Group mentioned above, and would involve librarians and library staff currently involved with open access publishing, the repository, and the OA Fund. It could also involve those in scholarly communications more generally, as well as research data management, the Copyright Office, liaison librarians, and potentially other roles.

An action plan would also provide targeted goals and measures by which to assess the success of the policy and related services such as Summit and the OA Fund, both across departments and by comparison with other institutions. One specific goal would be to gather more qualitative evidence through interviews, focus groups, and faculty surveys to investigate researcher motivations for making their work open access and the specific role that the policy plays in these decisions. These feedback-gathering techniques would also serve as opportunities for engagement and awareness raising.

## **SOAR: Results**

“Results” in a SOAR analysis are more like targets: potential future results to work towards, rather than results of current or past action and assessment. These potential results guide development of “meaningful measures” to aim for (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012, pp. 127–128).

One of the next steps will be to conduct a review of the SFU Open Access Fund. While increased use of the OA Fund is great news as an indicator of increasing open access publishing, this funding is not infinitely scalable and changes may need to be considered to ensure it remains affordable for the university. SFU Library is also sensitive to critiques of OA funds as shoring up a gold pay-to-publish model that is inherently flawed, where instead more emphasis should be placed on self-archiving or other revenue models for gold journals, to move toward true long-term sustainability (Pooley, 2019).

As the library works towards gathering more specific data (as described in the *SOAR: Opportunities* section above), this data could be used to benchmark SFU against other institutions. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for example, estimates that their institutional repository contains 44% of their researchers’ publications since 2009, a figure that they describe as a “high-water [mark]” for research libraries (MIT, 2016, p. 14). While SFU’s rate of deposit to the repository is certainly well below this figure, the library is working to develop assessment measures to compare SFU’s total publication output to Summit deposits in order to undertake such benchmarking.

While the OA Policy only applies to scholarly articles, the library understands that research and research outputs are evolving to include new venues and new formats to reach a wider range of audiences. To truly create a culture of openness, the library will need to support the full range of ways SFU researchers are creating and sharing their work. The library is invested in supporting open access to all varieties of paywalled scholarly outputs by encouraging deposit of these to Summit.

Finally, undertaking this review of the OA Policy provided an opportunity to develop a set of general considerations to guide any future policy development and review (related to OA or otherwise) taking place within or led by the library, and to provide for continuity when roles change and responsibility for a specific policy changes hands. These considerations include understanding the expected outcomes of the review, the reviewer’s responsibilities and decision-making opportunities, and the decisions that should come from administrators or others in the library or university. Identifying key stakeholders in and beyond the library and their roles in the review process is also important, as they may need to be involved in consultation, asked for feedback, or prioritized for sharing the resulting report. Policy reviewers should also consider whether an existing framework (such as SOAR) would be useful to guide the review. The types of quantitative and qualitative data that will be relevant will need to be identified and collected, ideally in a proactive and ongoing way.

## **Conclusion**

Academic libraries clearly play many important roles in promoting and supporting open access at post-secondary institutions. As a leader in open access, SFU is well positioned to share observations around the results, impacts, and lessons learned in the first three years of the SFU OA Policy. The positive, forward-looking perspective of the SOAR appreciative inquiry analysis provided a useful framework for this review because it enabled the review committee to consider the broad range of programs and services provided by the library rather than only the OA Policy. This review—and the resulting deeper understanding of the network of support for open access at SFU and within SFU Library—will contribute to a solid foundation for potential internal and external changes that could make open access a requirement for researchers. Other institutions may find these observations useful as they explore future policy development and review and work to promote a culture of open access within their university community.

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