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## PRACTICE ARTICLE

# Implementation of Transformative Agreements at the University of Chicago Library: A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

The University of Chicago Library created a working group, composed of librarians across the library, to engage in dedicated and focused work around transformative agreements, including understanding how they work and how the library should be engaging with them in a complex open access (OA) landscape. The working group was charged with specific tasks, including determining challenges and opportunities around transformative agreements, developing criteria for determining when to use the library's OA fund to pursue an agreement, conducting ongoing assessments of the agreements, and developing a set of recommendations to communicate this out to our wider campus community. The group's work included piloting several transformative agreements and establishing a rubric to evaluate these agreements. The creation of the group allowed the library to gain valuable knowledge and expertise, engage actively in new models for supporting OA, and start critical conversations on campus. The group continues the work, with the ultimate goal of affordable OA publishing and communicating the value of OA with researchers and campus partners, as well as positioning the library as a campus leader in OA.

**Keywords:** open access, transformative agreements, rubric

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the University of Chicago (UChicago) Library created the Transformative Agreements Working Group (TAWG) to give dedicated and focused attention to understanding transformative agreements and show how the library could engage with them as one option in a complex open access (OA) landscape.

Like our colleagues in libraries across the world, the TAWG recognizes and acknowledges the importance of making research more openly available to all, as well as providing our institution's researchers with a pathway to make their scholarship more widely available. The imperative for sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the temporary provision of public access to content typically restricted behind paywalls, has underscored the critical importance of ensuring open and accessible dissemination of scholarly research to all. In tandem with funding mandates like Plan S, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) memo, and other influential initiatives, the landscape of academia has undergone a transformative shift in both culture and practices. Recognizing this dynamic environment, it became important for our library to adopt a comprehensive approach when shaping strategies and actions to facilitate an informed transition to OA. By taking into account stakeholders' interactions and available resources at different levels, the library will be able to better serve the UChicago community and beyond in the process of fostering and solidifying open scholarship.

Today, there is a shared understanding across the library, and the TAWG has gained confidence in how we think about and approach transformative agreements. Our coordinated approach, however, was developed over time and through concerted effort. Prior to the creation of the TAWG, the library held many internal discussions that were distributed and often without coordination across the organization. With the creation of the TAWG, the library had an opportunity to create expertise on transformative agreements and create outreach opportunities to increase awareness of the benefits of making research open, including increasing the openness and availability of UChicago research and raising the profile of the university and its authors. The work of the TAWG provided a critical understanding of OA models to help inform and guide our work, which in turn allowed us to build relationships with publishers as we negotiated mutually beneficial agreements to increase OA output.

The UChicago Library has entered into agreements across disciplines, both directly as the UChicago Library and through consortial agreements with the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). In total, as of December 2023, the library has entered into twelve Read & Publish agreements, we are subscribing to forty-six Subscribe to Open (S2O) titles and are

participating in nineteen other agreements that help fund the OA publishing of scholarly books and journals. These agreements all adhere to the detailed rubric our group created, which provides us with a framework for decision-making. It is our intention to continue to refine the rubric as we continue to pursue our OA efforts, with a focus on knowledge equity and open scholarship.

In this paper, we present the work of the TAWG to share what we have learned without endorsing any particular agreement as a sustainable model for OA. This includes a detailed description of the rubric created by the working group that serves as a guiding framework for our efforts, insight into our next steps, and discussion of the challenges that lie ahead.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is significant literature on transformative agreements that provides important information and insight, e.g., defining what they are (e.g., [Pampel et al., 2022](#)), how impactful they may be in specific ways, e.g., on publication patterns (e.g., [Bakker et al., 2024](#)), and what alternative models may be available and should be considered (e.g., [Boston, 2023](#)). An important source of information is The Scholarly Kitchen, a blog that provides a platform for discussions around critical publishing issues, such as transformative agreements (e.g., [Hinchliffe, 2019](#); [Shull, 2021](#); [Wilson, 2022](#); [Muddit, 2024](#)). For the purposes of our article, we focused on literature that discusses the process of evaluating transformative agreements and creating frameworks for decision-making.

The wealth of articles published over the last few years about implementing and evaluating transformative agreements speaks to the complexity that these agreements bring to library negotiations and workflows. [Goddard & Brundy \(2024\)](#) discuss many of the unique elements of transformative agreements that must be considered when analyzing an offer, including the mechanisms that a publisher uses when determining author affiliation, types of licenses offered, and reporting requirements. They also suggest data that libraries should request from publishers to aid in their evaluation of an offer, as well as the need for a single platform for author verification and reporting. Struggles with disparate and sometimes incomplete data from publishers are a common theme in many articles. Rawlins notes that some publishers are unable to provide data on the article processing charges (APCs) that have been paid, exacerbating concerns about paying twice ([Rawlins, 2024](#)). In 2021, one of the working groups established by [Wise & Estelle \(2019\)](#) and cOAlition S surveyed libraries, consortia, and publishers about the data they found most useful ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#)) and then created templates with these data that libraries can use when requesting journal titles, historic spend, and publishing output information from publishers ([Wise & Estelle, 2019](#)). Other working

groups established by [Wise & Estelle \(2019\)](#) and cOAlition S created negotiation criteria, workflows, and sample license agreements to aid in the negotiation and implementation of transformative agreements ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#)).

Common criteria for evaluating transformative agreements that appear throughout much of the literature include the need for transparency with license agreements and pricing ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#); [Muñoz-Vélez et al., 2024](#)), authors retaining copyright of their works ([Goddard & Brundy, 2024](#); [Hosoi, 2021](#); [University of California Office of Scholarly Communication, n.d.](#)), CC BY as the default license offered ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#); [Hosoi, 2021](#)), and that the agreement should be truly transitional in nature; the publisher should have a plan for moving their entire portfolio to OA ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#); [Dodd, 2024](#); [University of California Office of Scholarly Communication, n.d.](#)) and not just creating a new revenue stream for themselves ([Dodd, 2024](#)). There were also concerns about the way transformative agreements shifted costs to large academic research institutions with their heavy scholarly output ([Dodd, 2024](#)). In addition, worries about the inequities inherent in the transformative agreement model, and ways in which libraries and publishers can work together to lessen these inequities, were broached by several authors. Wise & Estelle recommend that publishers offer a differential pricing model that recognizes the unevenness of wealth distribution and that this pricing structure should be based on transparent metrics ([Wise & Estelle, 2023](#)). Similarly, [Rouhi et al. \(2022\)](#) make several suggestions for how waiver programs for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) can be improved to make them more equitable, including automatic recognition of eligible authors and clarity on waiver and discount terms presubmission. Rouhi et al. suggest that libraries should negotiate for language in their licenses that commits publishers to implementing improvements in their waiver programs ([Rouhi et al., 2022](#)).

Although any discussion about transformative agreements needs to be coupled with a discussion about the merits of transformative agreements more broadly, we focused on the process of deciding on and entering agreements, with the understanding and recognition that there is much more dialogue that can and should be pursued.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

### The TAWG

The TAWG was created through an open call asking library colleagues with an interest in transformative agreements and a willingness to participate in the group to self-nominate. The membership is, for the most part, representative of most areas of the library, with individuals from the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and electronic resources. At this time,

we do not have representation from area studies, special collections, or law. We hope, however, to add representatives from these areas in the near future as the TAWG continues its work.

The TAWG was established with a one-year fiscal commitment, with the understanding that the group would develop a recommendation for the continuation of the group or the creation of a standing committee. The TAWG was allocated \$150,000 to explore OA initiatives.

The charge of the working group was to determine challenges and opportunities around transformative agreements, develop criteria for determining when to use the library's OA fund to pursue an agreement, conduct ongoing assessments of the agreements we entered into, and develop a set of recommendations to communicate this out to our wider campus community.

## **The rubric**

An important aspect of the TAWG charge was to analyze transformative agreements strategically.

Significant effort was placed on the development of a rubric to ensure a consistent application of criteria to decision-making for Read & Publish agreements. The rubric consists of four primary areas: 1) sustainability and transparency, 2) impact on UChicago, 3) diversity and inclusion, and 4) access and discovery.

For each of these four areas, there are specific points made, including a definition and suggested criteria for consideration.

## **Sustainability and transparency**

Sustainability and transparency include four key points. The first is sustainability in pricing with both the cost of the agreement and whether the fee structure allows for long-term sustainability from the library budget perspective. The criteria to which this is applied include transparency of how pricing is determined, the proportion of “publish” costs to our previous “read” costs, and, if entering into a multi-year agreement, defined and clear incremental increases from year to year that reflect a reasonable and manageable percentage (based on current economic climate). The agreements we sign should be transformative in nature; our “read” costs should decrease as more articles are published OA.

The second point addresses the payment of APCs. APCs are defined as the fee that an author, their funder, or their institution pays to publish their article OA. Our rubric recommends that the agreements we enter into have a broad impact by benefiting our institution's authors and

incentivizing the transition from a subscription model to OA, rather than just agreeing to pay outright APC costs with a 1:1 ratio. In other words, using library funds for APCs, even if paid on an annual basis via a Read & Publish agreement, cannot be sustained.

Thirdly, license terms should not have confidentiality clauses. The TAWG agreed that the transparency of license terms is critical; we should be able to share them with our peers.

Finally, the fourth point concerns the management of OA article requests. The submission process for authors should be straightforward and indicate that the OA option is available and funded by the library. Publishers should employ a range of tools to identify affiliated authors, including not just email domains but also the use of Ringgold and/or Research Organization Registry IDs to help ascertain affiliation. When unlimited (non-token-based) publishing is allowed, the publisher should offer auto approval of all affiliated articles to reduce delays and staff resources. For token-based agreements, the publisher should offer a choice between auto and manual approval, and this process should be simple and not time intensive for library staff.

### **Impact on UChicago**

Critical in any conversation about new programs and initiatives, including transformative agreements, are the benefits for UChicago, the library, our users, and our community. Under this area, there are three specific points.

First, the rubric considers the number of UChicago corresponding authors who have published, both with and without paying an APC, in an applicable journal. Journals with a higher number of UChicago authors are prioritized; however, we also want to leave room to experiment with this model and to consider journals from small society publishers and others that are less well-known. It remains to be seen whether the number of UChicago authors for a journal might increase once we publicize a new OA agreement.

Second, the rubric takes into account the number of UChicago authors that would benefit from an agreement. This is the consideration of the ratio of the number of potential authors to the size/scope of the resource. With this consideration in mind, the rubric prioritizes agreements that cover a wide range of disciplines.

For the time being, our rubric is also considering usage statistics for the journals included in the agreement; however, as more journals are published OA, this use gets difficult to track since users accessing open content are not required to authenticate. As COUNTER statistics improve, we will be considering other ways in which we can track the usage of OA content, including the global impact of UChicago publications.

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is an overarching principle for all that we do in the library and critical to our mission, vision, and values. Ensuring fair and equitable access to the intellectual output of UChicago researchers is vital to help support these efforts. Therefore, the third area of the rubric is diversity and inclusion, consisting of three points.

The first point is that the Read & Publish agreements we sign apply to all faculty, students, and staff at UChicago who are corresponding authors, without restrictions placed by the publisher. There is some complexity to this, however, as university credentials and designations at the university can be challenging given the many partnerships and relationships the university has established with other institutions, centers, hospitals, and organizations. For clarity, the TAWG includes faculty, students, and staff who have university credentials and can access the library's electronic resources with them.

For the second point on the rubric, we look at equity of access among the disciplines across campus. It is important we consider subject areas that may not have traditionally taken part in, or have funding for, OA. Ideally, all UChicago corresponding authors should have equal opportunity to publish their research in the OA manner regardless of their discipline.

Point three is ensuring that the transformative agreements we enter are inclusive and equitable, and it addresses ways that our agreements can better reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles. Examples of this are supporting smaller publishers, and only signing agreements with publishers whose platforms are compliant with current accessibility standards.

It is also important that the transformative agreements we enter into are inclusive and equitable on a global scale, and that we do our best to mitigate the imbalance of research coming from more highly funded institutions and regions. We are mindful that authors from smaller, less well-funded institutions and from LMICs are less likely to be able to afford transformative agreements or pay an APC to make their research OA. We support publishers who partner with Electronic Information for Libraries, Research4Life, and similar organizations to waive APCs for underfunded researchers. We also take into consideration the publishers' public commitments to promote an inclusive and diverse culture within the scholarly publishing community.

## Access and discovery

Ensuring that research being published at UChicago is discoverable and accessible is paramount. Access and discovery is the fourth broad area of the rubric, which addresses three points.

The first point is ensuring the ability to deposit publications into an institutional repository. All journals should be published with a Creative Commons license, allowing the author to maintain their copyright and giving the library the ability to add publications to our institutional repository.

The second point is perpetual access to the resource. It is important to retain post-cancellation access to all titles that are included in a Read & Publish agreement, including those that are not applicable to the “publish” portion.

Finally, in the third point, we cover metadata. We want to ensure that publishers provide the proper access points and metadata for all resources contained within agreements. Catalog records are vital, as is the management of the collection within knowledge bases and discovery systems. It is important to ensure that all articles are properly indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and in the major discovery systems and relevant databases.

## **OUR AGREEMENTS TO DATE**

Over the past three years, the Read & Publish agreements that the UChicago Library entered into have ranged from small society publishers and university presses to agreements with large for-profit publishers. Although some of these agreements have been truly transformative in nature, transitioning our read costs to publish costs with little to no increase in subscription, others have increased our expenses a great deal. For instance, the Cambridge University Press (CUP) agreement, negotiated by the BTAA, had a small increase over our prior spend (<3%) and provided access to all CUP journals (an additional 219 titles), as well as unlimited publishing for all hybrid and gold OA journals. In contrast, our agreement with another publisher was a “step-up” program that allowed only a limited number of OA tokens each year as our “publish” costs continued to nearly double each year of the agreement. Because we had a set number of tokens, we decided to allow each of our authors only one token per year. Because of the complications of this token-based model and the unsustainability in pricing for adding unlimited publications to our agreement, we decided to cancel the “publish” portion of this agreement in 2024.

Diversity and inclusion criteria also varied greatly among our Read & Publish agreements. Although all agreements allow our current affiliates (students, faculty, and staff) to publish in their journals and several reach across multiple disciplines, at least three of the publishers we have agreements with were not meeting current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines accessibility standards when they were assessed by the Library Accessibility Alliance. In addition, many publishers do not yet have statements committing to DEI within their editorial teams and the papers they publish. Our group was pleased, however, at the actions taken by the

Royal Society of Chemistry with the creation of the Joint Commitment for Action on Inclusion and Diversity in Scholarly Publishing. This commitment produced a set of minimum standards for the publishing community to take and build upon to help minimize biases. To date, 56 publishers have publicly committed to these standards.

It is likely impossible to eliminate all differences between publishers' agreement terms, but the criteria set in our rubric provide guidance on the evaluation and renewal of transformative agreements. For example, token-based agreements only provide a limited number of OA allocations per year, and each token de facto functions as an APC. As mentioned previously, to uphold equity among eligible authors, the library has to review each funding request manually to ensure each corresponding author will receive only one token within the year. The library must consider the value of the agreements in terms of financial sustainability, workflow efficiencies, and this model's impact and ramifications in journal publishing. Continuous support for token-based agreements would legitimize and perpetuate OA as a new profit stream for publishers instead of enabling a real shift away from libraries paying to read versus paying to publish. The result would likely be a new form of big deal that helps secure rising profit levels for the publisher but leaves the library to bear the financial burden of both traditional subscription costs and publishing charges.

In addition to the criteria set in our rubric, we recommend publishers do the following to better assist libraries with managing and evaluating their agreements:

1. Disclose revenue and operating costs on a publicly available website, as well as annual reports containing the ratio of OA articles per journal. This will provide transparency on how funds are being spent and ensure that the "read" costs for libraries are reducing as more articles are published OA.
2. Maintain consistent and complete metadata for articles published by an institution's authors and provide it to institutions on a monthly basis or via an online interface. Publishers should also be aware of the National Information Standards Organization Open Access Business Processes (OABP) Working Group and commit to adhering to the standards that are published.
3. Maintain a dedicated email address that addresses the library's needs, questions, or concerns specific to Read & Publish agreements in a timely manner.
4. Maintain a list of journals on a publicly available website that researchers can use to see which journals they can publish in for free according to the terms of the library's agreement.
5. Provide clear instructions during the author publication workflow, informing authors of their institution's Read & Publish agreement, and defaulting to CC BY as the selected license.

6. Provide transparency on the author publication workflow and the licenses authors are asked to sign by displaying them on a publicly available website.

## CHALLENGES

Over the course of the year, the TAWG spent considerable time having discussions to identify the many challenges around transformative agreements. These challenges were then built into our decision-making process. The following are some of the more immediate challenges that our group found.

### Consistency in access

The lack of consistency among agreements, even those within a specific discipline, was difficult to track and explain to our researchers. For example, the publishing allowance for some agreements only applied to the publisher's hybrid journals; gold OA journals were excluded. In addition, certain article types, such as book reviews and editorials, were excluded from the OA allowance. Token-based agreements further added a layer of confusion by applying limits to the number of articles published OA under the agreement, requiring the institution to monitor the number of tokens throughout the year and to communicate these restrictions with authors. Publisher agreements also vary by institution, and most of our publishers do not keep a public-facing web page with the titles each institution can publish OA in under the terms of the agreement. This is especially confusing to researchers who are looking for a journal within their discipline that the library has an OA arrangement with. Maintaining a comprehensive list of all journals that we have publish allowances for is time intensive for library staff.

### Metadata availability

The lack of consistency with the metadata that each publisher offered and the method by which they provided the data was also an issue, which made it difficult to compare our researchers' output with the different publishers. Since the metadata available from each publisher vary greatly, we were required to investigate further when vital information, such as DOIs and license type, was missing from the publisher reports. Also, several publishers did not offer an online interface from which we could retrieve our authors' output. Instead, they emailed periodic updates (typically either monthly or quarterly) on author publications. This, combined with the variable types of metadata being collected, required significant staff time to aggregate when we needed to review the overall output of our agreements.

## Financial sustainability

Many of our discussions focused on the financial sustainability of these agreements. Several of the offers we received from publishers would greatly increase our costs—some by as much as threefold. We knew that such increases were unsustainable for our budget, but determined that smaller initial increases in our subscription spend were acceptable. Our group also had concerns that most Read & Publish offers seemed to reenter us into new “big deal” packages. These “big deal” packages reduce our library’s flexibility and financial independence in managing our subscriptions. Concerns were also raised about the rapidly changing environment of OA and the effect that government mandates and other funding requirements would have on the value of our agreements.

Like many libraries, we hoped that as more articles became OA, journals would flip from the hybrid model to purely open, and our subscription costs would move from paywalled “read” access to paying to support the OA publishing of this content. We were provided with a fund for new OA initiatives and used a portion of this fund to transition some of our subscriptions to Read & Publish agreements. We approached the first year of our group with a level of experimentation, allowing us to enter into large deals with publishers with which our university has a high level of output, as well as smaller societies and other publishers with which our output was low but had sustainable models for transitioning to fully open.

The TAWG also discussed the challenge of needing to understand and place a value on impact. For example, is it worthwhile to experiment with a low-cost Read & Publish agreement with a reputable publisher if UChicago authors have not previously published in their journals? Will our authorship increase if we offer free OA publishing for our researchers? Another important challenge was the substantial amount of time required for negotiations of individual agreements as well as the very important consideration of the long-term financial sustainability of entering into agreements. Will our subscription “read” costs decrease as more articles are published as OA? Finally, we identified the potential of government mandates and funding requirements for OA changing the value of the transformative agreements we enter into as a challenge. We can often get a better deal if we sign multi-year agreements, but is that commitment worthwhile when the OA environment is changing so rapidly? These challenges were an important part of our discussions and considerations as we completed our work. Although we do not have space to address each in this paper, we will be considering them as we continue our work.

## NEXT STEPS

OA mandates have played a significant role in increasing the volume of openly available research. However, it is evident that there is still more work to be done to create a truly

sustainable and equitable lifecycle for open research. We are closely watching many initiatives, with particular interest in Plan S, as one of our next steps. When Plan S was launched in 2018, transformative agreements were seen as a way to transition academic publishing from a closed, paywalled system to a fully open one. This has not become the reality, however. Their 2022 report shows that 68% of titles within the program failed to meet their OA growth target and only 1% of journals flipped from hybrid to fully OA ([European Science Foundation, 2022](#)). In early 2023, Plan S funders confirmed their financial support of transformative agreements would end by 2024 ([European Science Foundation, 2024](#)). The White House OSTP memo issued in August 2022 garnered wide support from the research community. However, as noted in the Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation (IPLC) Letter to the Office of Science & Technology Policy, financial support is still needed for the infrastructure and services this transition will require ([Ivy Plus Libraries Confederation, 2023](#)).

The TAWG's initial work established the evaluation rubric and saw the library pilot several transformative agreements. In addition to the challenges mentioned above, we also recognize the inequities inherent in Read & Publish and other APC-based agreements. Although we want to continue to explore ways in which we can assist our researchers with publishing OA, it is vital that we are not trading the inequities of paywalled "read" access for another inequity that silences the voices of researchers from underfunded institutions and locations. It has become evident that alternative models for funding OA must continue to be explored. The library has helped fund several initiatives as we continue to experiment with funding the transition to open. There is much more work to be done with investigating new OA models and with assessing and communicating the agreements we have entered into. As the multi-year licenses for our first round of Read & Publish agreements near an end, the TAWG is now broadening its work to assess their successes and failures and to continue participating in the library's broader promotional efforts around OA.

## Assessment

The Library will need to assess its transformative agreements to demonstrate the full value and impact of each agreement. Assessment will play an important role as we consider the long-term financial sustainability of these agreements and as we decide where to focus our future efforts. Moreover, the library may have to rely on assessment data when canceling a popular Read & Publish agreement to explain why we are discontinuing a service researchers have come to expect.

In most cases, the publishers provide the library with the metrics that are needed to assess agreements. The metrics most helpful in decision-making are as follows:

- The publisher's progress in transitioning hybrid and closed journals to fully OA and the decrease in "read" costs as a result.
- Authorial metrics: How many articles have our researchers published in these journals both before and during the agreement? How much money did researchers save in APCs because of the agreement, based on baseline numbers from previous years?
- Usage statistics: The types of metrics publishers currently offer based on their platforms need to improve as we start taking into account global and regional usage, especially as they pertain to the articles published by UChicago researchers. Furthermore, since we aim to ensure that all articles published under these agreements are added to our institutional repository, we must include usage statistics from our own platforms. We should make every effort to identify and aggregate statistics from all points of access even knowing they are bound to be incomplete.
- We will seek feedback from our researchers at all levels (faculty, students, and staff) both directly (surveys, focus groups, and anecdotal) and indirectly (through publishers' feedback mechanisms).

### **Promote/communicate about transformative agreements on our campus and beyond**

The TAWG has engaged in a wide range of activities both to educate the UChicago community on transformative agreements and to inform faculty, students, and staff about the agreements the group has negotiated. In June 2022, the group met with the library's Committee on Collection Development to present our goals and to discuss challenges and opportunities with respect to transformative agreements. We presented a draft of our rubric and a list of definitions. Members found an email message for librarians most helpful when communicating about the availability of transformative agreements to their departments. In fall 2022, the Scholarly Communications Librarian facilitated a series of four introductory meetings with library administrators, in which they discussed the future of OA at UChicago.

To inform the university community of the transformative agreements we have entered into, we have written several news posts for the library website as well as an article for the spring 2022 issue of *Libra* (Harris et al., 2022), the library newsletter. In addition, several activities were coordinated during the 2022 Open Access Week, which included a table staffed by TAWG members who handed out goodies with OA informational flyers. We also continue to maintain the Open Access LibGuide, which lists the transformative agreements we have signed and contains a search tool that allows our researchers to search for all publications that are part of our Read & Publish agreements. Additionally, the TAWG created an email template with information about transformative agreements that provided subject specialists with a launching point to discuss OA specifically with their departments, faculty, and students.

Promotion of transformative agreements and OA will likely be more effective and fruitful if the library fosters ongoing collaborative partnerships with faculty and student-oriented service units such as the Social Sciences Research Center (SSRC) and UChicagoGRAD. By leveraging their constant communication with faculty and students, the library can heighten UChicago researchers' awareness of how the library proactively facilitates equitable access to the scholarly work produced by the university community. At the same time, researchers will better understand and appreciate librarians' expertise in elevating the reach and impact of research and scholarship and may provide the library with suggestions for future actions.

### **Our recommendations to our library leadership**

Related to the charge and deliverables the TAWG made the following recommendations to library leadership, all of which were well received, we recommended that in an effort to make this a bigger conversation on campus, the University Librarian, Dean of the Library, and the Strategic Library Board should extend the TAWG timeline another year, with an open call for additional members, specifically reaching out to the areas not currently represented in our group, including law, area studies, and special collections. Additionally, there should be a commitment to empower the TAWG to continue entering agreements this coming year with committed funding. This includes conducting an assessment to determine the appropriate level of annual and ongoing funding and understanding that several agreements will need to be renewed in the coming years. We also recommended that library leadership create a vision statement with guiding principles regarding the library's support for open scholarship, including the approaches we have taken so far to achieve OA. This includes developing a financial plan that directly addresses long-term financial sustainability.

To ensure that information is available about transformative agreements in the Library, on campus, and beyond, the TAWG made recommendations around communication and assessment. A communication plan should be created to share information about agreements with researchers, departments, and divisions. This plan should also include ways to broaden our communication about our efforts at a national level. There should be efforts to collaborate with other service-oriented campus units to raise the UChicago community's awareness of transformative agreements and to gather feedback. The TAWG should determine how to continue leveraging Open Access Week to promote its work and identify other national activities that could be used for the promotion of our work on campus. An assessment program or practices should be developed, which would determine the impact of transformative agreements and whether/how to continue them. More so, the knowledge gained from negotiating transformative agreements should be used to continue to update our license agreement terms.

## The future of the TAWG

Forming the TAWG was important to gain valuable knowledge and expertise, engage actively in new models for supporting OA, and start critical conversations in this area on campus. We have had a first-hand view of publishers' and researchers' responses to the changes these agreements have brought about. Although we have been inspired by new innovative models to support OA publishing, we have also been disappointed by some of the policies enacted by publishers, some of which appear profiteering.

There is still much work to be done to reach our goal of affordable OA publishing and to educate our researchers and campus partners on the value of OA. Keeping abreast of the changing environment and working with publishers and library colleagues to shape this environment is a vital function of the TAWG. Our work will position the library as a campus leader in OA publishing and, ideally, propel the university to embrace a new paradigm of openness.

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