Open Access Publication Fund Recipient Interview Results

January 2014
Introduction
Between January 2010 and November 2013, the Open Access Publication Fund was administered by CUL 36 times. As the Open Access Publication Fund is currently reaching a point of exhaustion, John Saylor requested feedback from fund recipients to better understand the fund’s impact on recipients and to inform whether to renew this fund for future support of open access publishing. This report presents the results of interviews conducted with 14 recipients, as well as statistics on the awards distributed in the three years that the Open Access Publication Fund has been supported.

Open Access Publication Fund Statistics
Grants awarded from the Open Access Publication Fund varied in amount. Here is a brief snapshot of the variation between awards:

- Grant awards ranged from $225 to $2590.
- The average grant amount was $1127.
- The median grant amount was $1214.
- 8 grants were given for $1350, 2 grants for $675, and the remaining 26 grants were for a variety of amounts (Figure 1).

![Number of Grants by Amount](image)

Figure 1: Number of Open Access Publication Fund awards by amount awarded
28 individuals received grants for a total of 36 grants awarded. Most grants were awarded to unique individuals, but some individuals received multiple grants:

- 24 individuals received one grant
- 1 individual received two grants (for a total of $1929)
- 2 individuals received three grants (for a total of $2580 and $3382)
- 1 individual received four grants (for a total of $5642)

Grant recipients came from 20 different departments at Cornell University (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornell Department</th>
<th>No. Individuals Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Statistics &amp; Computational Biology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology and Evolutionary Biology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entomology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab of Ornithology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology and Immunology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurobiology and Behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Pathology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weill- Neurology and Neuroscience</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weill -Public Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weill-Clinical Epidemiology in Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** 28

Table 1: Departments represented by the 28 individuals who received grants from the Open Access Publication Fund.
Awards were distributed at an increasing rate each year. In 2013, the same number of grants were awarded as were in 2010, 2011 and 2012 combined.

![Number of Grants Awarded by Year](image)

**Figure 2:** Number of grants awarded per year: 5 grants in 2010, 6 grants in 2011, 7 grants in 2012 and 18 grants in 2013.

Articles in 16 open access journals were funded: 13 of which were in *PLOS One*, and 5 in *Zookeys* (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing Journal</th>
<th>No. Articles Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMC Evolutionary Biology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMC Genomics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMC Medical Genetics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology and Evolution</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology and Society</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosphere</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entropy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Research Letters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology and Earth System Sciences</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Food and Agribusiness Management Review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Education Online</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neural Plasticity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Journal of Physics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOS Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLOS One</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zookeys</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total** 36

Table 2: 36 articles in 16 open access journals were funded by the Open Access Publication Fund.
Interviews and Results
Over December 2013 and January 2014, CUL Assessment and Communication interviewed 14 fund recipients by phone. Of the 28 individuals who received awards in the previous three years, 19 were randomly selected and directly contacted via email to request an interview. Of the 19 individuals contacted, 14 responded and were interviewed. Interviews were not taped, and responses were transcribed during the interview. Following is a report that details the individuals interviewed and their responses.

Interviewees
14 individuals were interviewed:
- 7 (50%) – professors
  - 1 assistant professor, 2 associate professors and 4 professors
- 3 (21%) – PhD students
- 3 (21%) – extension or research associates
  - 1 research associate, 1 senior research associate and 1 senior extension associate
- 1 (7%) – visiting fellow

Of the interviewees, 3 were from the Lab of Ornithology, 2 were from Neurobiology and Behavior, and the other 9 came from a variety of departments (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornell Affiliation and Department</th>
<th>No. Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weill-Clinical Epidemiology in Medicine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology and Evolutionary Biology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology and Immunology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurobiology and Behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research associate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab of Ornithology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Research Associate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological and Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Extension Associate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab of Ornithology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting Fellow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab of Ornithology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Interviewees by Cornell affiliation and department.
General responses to Interview Questions

Below is a breakdown of general responses for each interview question (four questions were asked, each identified below). For more detailed feedback on themes that were commonly discussed, see the quotations, following this general breakdown.

1. Why did you pick this journal for submission?
   - 12 (90%) - the open access model was a factor in picking the journal for submission
     - 2 associate professors
     - 4 professors
     - 3 PhD students
     - 1 research associate
     - 1 senior extension associate
     - 1 visiting fellow
     - [In other words, 1 assistant professor and 1 senior research associate did NOT consider open access to be a factor in their publication choice]
   - 5 (35%) – the quick turn-around in open access was desirable
     - 2 associate professors
     - 2 professors
     - 1 senior extension associate
   - 7 (50%) – the bigger impact of open access publications
     - 2 associate professors
     - 1 professor
     - 2 PhD students
     - 1 research associate
     - 1 senior research associate

2. How did you hear about the open access fund?
   - 7 (50%) – word of mouth
     - 2 associate professors
     - 1 professor
     - 2 PhD students
     - 1 senior extension associate
     - 1 visiting fellow
   - 3 (21%) – email announcement
     - 1 professor
     - 1 research associate
     - 1 senior research associate
   - 2 (14%) – promotional card
     - 2 professors
   - 2 (14%) – self-directed search
     - 1 assistant professor
     - 1 PhD student
3. What would you have done with the article if you hadn't received the award to cover the author fee?
   - 6 (42%) – would have published in traditional journal
     - 1 professor
     - 1 PhD student
     - 1 research associate
     - 1 senior research associate
     - 1 senior extension associate
     - 1 visiting fellow
   - 4 (28%) – would have found different project money to cover fees
     - 2 associate professors
     - 1 professor
     - 1 PhD student
   - 3 (21%) – would have paid out of pocket
     - 1 assistant professor
     - 1 professor
     - 1 PhD student
   - 1 (7%) – would not have published article
     - 1 professor

4. Have you noticed a difference in the interest generated and/or feedback between traditional vs. open access journals?
   - 8 (57%) – yes
     - 1 associate professor
     - 3 professors
     - 1 research associate
     - 1 senior extension associate
     - 1 PhD student
     - 1 visiting fellow
   - 2 (28%) – no
     - 1 assistant professor
     - 1 PhD student
   - 4 (28%) – not enough information yet to answer
     - 1 associate professor
     - 1 professor
     - 1 PhD student
     - 1 senior research associate
Quotations from Interviewees
Below are quotations (as transcribed during phone interviews) from interviewees.

Open Access Leads to Larger Impacts
My article was a description of two new species of fish, which usually wouldn’t get a lot of attention. However, this journal is good at getting press releases out. They encourage authors to write press releases themselves (and have editors on staff who help authors do this). As a result, we had stories about our article translated to French and Portuguese and it got lots of hits and attention. None of that would have happened if we used the traditional publishing model.

This paper has made a huge impact, and led to the making of documentary film. I’ve been at Cornell for 37 years, and there is no other event in my career that equates to the opportunity that publishing this paper has led to. I wouldn't have published this article without the fund. It is THE benchmark in my entire career.

When publishing in open access journals I have received more inquiries from international colleagues. I don’t think this happens with traditional journals as much. I get more of a global reach when I publish in open access.

International access to my publications is much improved. I do work in South America, and I know that open access has transformed science there. Brazil especially – virtually all of the journals published in Brazil use the open access model. By publishing in an open access journal, my South American colleagues have access to what I publish.

When I publish in traditional journals, I notice that people contact me for reprints, especially from other countries or small institutions. I know that only a subset of people who try to access my traditionally published articles actually contact me to ask me for a reprint. I don’t get those requests for reprints when I publish in open access journals.

From the standpoint of the publication, having an open access journal is incredibly helpful for colleagues in developing countries. Much of my work is in the Pacific, and the three papers I have had supported all deal with Tahiti, French Polynesia. Having my taxonomic contributions available to end-users without significant research support is an added outreach component to my research.

Support of Broad Scholarship at Cornell
In general, this fund is a good idea. It is something that will help the faculty to become more aware or conscious about open access when thinking about publishing a paper. For me, it’s not just the financial support, but the principle, the signal that Cornell gives to its academic community.

On average, of all proposals submitted in my field of study, only 5% are funded. In the past, my group at Cornell has had a funding rate of about 30%, but in recent years it has gone down to
10%, so money is getting much tighter. Not only is funding less certain, but I’m not sure what the implications are if we add publishing fees for open access in our grant proposals. **For now, this fund bridges the gap between that lag in publishing expectations.**

This fund made the difference in me pushing myself. **Because Cornell supported me, I pushed myself.** Without Cornell’s financial support in this area I never would have engaged in this topic.

Because Cornell got me an entry-way into open access, it has led to additional opportunities to help open access grow. Since publishing in *Entropy*, I have been solicited to contribute articles to two budding open access journals: *Advances in medicine*, and the *Journal of ancient diseases and remedial therapies*. **This fund made the difference, and as a result, I am helping to launch these new journals.**

I would hate to see this fund go. **It has impacts, especially for younger people who have so much competition and pressure on citations.** It is so important for them to get their stuff out there and increase citation rates. If Cornell doesn’t support this, they’ll be behind the game.

Having this fund available has helped a lot. Although I am biased toward the historical traditional journals that I have been taught to trust, I am open to publishing in open access and I think it is the future. **Supporting open access is a big part of enabling people to be productive.**

If I didn’t have this fund, I would have paid out of my faculty discretionary funds to publish in the open access journal. But this would have had implications for limiting other funding opportunities, particularly for my graduate students. **If faculty members use their discretionary funds to publish in open access journals, it limits other opportunities, particularly for their graduate students** (like supporting conference attendance, seeding new projects, etc.)

I really hope it continues. **It makes it a lot more feasible to consider open access, especially for graduate students.**

Cornell has substantial resources that it uses to maintain a global university. **Open access journals seem a very cost effective means to disseminate research results worldwide bearing the Cornell stamp.**

This is a very important program. Having funds available for faculty members for open access publishing creates another mechanism for publication. Dissemination of our work is as important as doing our work. The dissemination process is lengthy and difficult so having more support for dissemination of our work is critical. **This program pays back in so many ways, as more publications in open access will lead to more grants, more visibility, and more opportunities for the future.**

**Benefits of Open Access**

I anticipate wanting to publish in open access journals more, in part because they’re online and therefore they support more figures and illustrations that aren’t possible to include in print journals otherwise.
Open access journals tend to be more with-it and up-to-date as far as electronic dissemination goes. For example, Zookeys uses DOIs in all of their references. Open access journals have such foresight.

A lot of my work is cross-disciplinary, and open access journals are often cross-disciplinary.

**General praise for the Open Access Publication Fund**

I am very grateful that this program exists. It was a huge help, especially for a graduate student like myself.

This fund pushed me to publish in this open access journal instead of a traditional one.

I am more than happy to tell others: this is an unbelievably wise program to support.

This fund, in parallel with other initiatives that help Cornell to get ahead of the curve, is fantastic.

I have been helped in a major way by the Provost/Library open access fund. Moreover, I've spoken with colleagues at other universities (including UC Berkeley where a similar program is in place) lauding Cornell's support of the democratic ideal of the DOAJ consortium. My colleagues have invariably been impressed by Cornell's forward thinking on this issue, and either vow to find out more about their own program, or vow to consult their higher administration to see if they can get a similar program in place.

**Suggestions and Observations**

I would like to see an increased conversation about Cornell adopting a broad open access policy following Harvard or Stanford’s lead in this area.

**PeerJ** is an open access journal where I pay a $99 fee and then can publish there forever. Cornell Library could subscribe to this as an institution: [https://peerj.com/pricing/institutions/](https://peerj.com/pricing/institutions/)

I would suggest making the policy really clear on the website that this fund will not cover alumni of Cornell. I had submitted his article to PLOS One along with two coauthors on the article, both of which were former Cornell graduate students of mine. Only after we had revised the article several times and gotten our publication accepted did I realize that those two alumni wouldn’t be covered under the fund.

In general, I find that awareness about the open access Publication Fund is zero among my colleagues.

It is a little harder to find out about the fund now. It would be good to help faculty understand how exactly to apply – it wasn’t quite so obvious to me.

I tell everybody about the fund, but I feel like you haven’t marketed it well or publicized it well. There are a slew of academics who are proponents of open access publishing who you could team up with.
Interview Form

Name:
Date called:

Introduction:

You may remember a recent email from John Saylor regarding the funding that you received to publish in an open access journal. We are trying to get a sense of how successful the Open Access Publication Fund is and whether to continue to fund it.

Award information for reference:

- Published in: *(name of journal)*
- Award amount:
- Date distributed:

Questions:

1. Why did you pick this journal for submitting this article? (Is open access model mentioned as a reason to submit here? If not, probe).

2. How did you find out about the availability of this funding? (Do they look to the library for this, or grants, etc?).

3. What would you have done with the article if you hadn’t received the award to cover the author fee? (pay it yourself? Withdraw article and submit elsewhere, if so where? Other open access or traditional journal?).

4. You have probably published in both traditional and open access journals. Have you noticed any difference in amount of interest or feedback generated between the two models? Any other points of comparison?

Other notes: