Library funding for Open Access at KU Leuven

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Overview presentation

- How we organize library funding for Open Access
- Support for OS initiatives
- Support for OA books published by Leuven University Press
- No more APCs
- No transformative agreements
How we organize library funding for Open Access
“If you want change, try something new”

• Redirect library budgets: shift from spending on product to spending on production cost
• Stimulate the development of new, innovative, non-profit, and community-owned initiatives
• Encourage the diversity of business models in the market of academic publishing

“If you want change, try something new”

With change, come some challenges:

Set-up of library budgets
- Rigid structure
- Reluctant to redirect budget
- Limited amount of funds

Overcoming arguments against trying something new
- Current academic reward system
- Importance of institutional rankings
- Prestige attached to legacy publishers

Issue of freeloaders
- Lack of concrete return on investment
Established in 2018 to streamline OA support

Managed by KU Leuven Libraries

Overseen by a committee chaired by KU Leuven’s vice-rector for research policy

Day-to-day management by two members of the library’s staff (together about 0.3 FTE) with some administrative support (about 0.1 FTE)

http://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/fairoafund
KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access

Devoted to the support of non-profit and community-owned initiatives in the field of Open Scholarship + subsidies for OA books by Leuven University Press

Put the spotlight on partners who are willing to try out something new and who serve scholarship rather than shareholders

Distinct budget line separate from the acquisition budget for academic publications behind a paywall (in 2022 €60.000 for initiatives and €100.000 for OA books)

http://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/fairoafund
KU Leuven Fund for Fair Open Access

2017: conceptualization and securing the budget
2018: establishment fair APC and BPC fund
2019: extension of the fund to include support for broader OA programs
2020: inclusion of more and more support for OS infrastructures
2021: discontinuation of fair APC fund
2022: support for OS initiatives and OA books with LUP
...

http://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/fairoafund
Why (not) a separate fund?

- Secures library budget for non-profit OA
- Simplifies budget decisions and administration
- Creates extra visibility

- Support for non-profit OA might be perceived as marginal > important to also use collection budget!

http://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/fairoafund
Support for OS initiatives
Vetting OS initiatives

Budget of €60,000

Count on others

Do it ourselves with some “selection criteria”
Count on others

- Partners with shared values
- Rigorous evaluation
Do it ourselves

• Serve scholarship rather than profit
  • Controlled by academic community
  • Copyright retention by the author(s)
  • Aim for sustainability, diversity, and equality
• Transparency is key
• Local research community
• Diversity
• Administration
  • Budget
  • “Return on investment”
  • Yearly contracts
For the full overview, see: https://www.kuleuven.be/open-science/what-is-open-science/scholarly-publishing-and-open-access/open-access-kuleuven/fair-oa-initiatives
Support for OA books published by Leuven University Press
No more APCs
Application process

Submission via online form → Case-by-case evaluation of journals → Confirmation or rejection within three business days
Why we launched an APC fund

• Support for scholar-led, non-profit OA journals depending on an APC-based business model
• Stimulate bibliodiversity
• Increase awareness about OA publishing costs
• Increase awareness about for-profit vs. non-profit
Why we discontinued an APC fund

- Misconception of central APC fund
- Grey zone between for-profit and non-profit
- APC business model is not sustainable
- Large administrative burden and cost
No transformative agreements
What are transformative agreements?

• Contracts with publishers that transform the business model underlying scholarly journal publishing, moving from subscription-based reading towards OA publishing
• Typically read-and-publish (R&P) deals
Why we would want transformative agreements

- More journal articles published in OA
- Why pay a subscription invoice (read) and a multitude of APC invoices (publish) if you can bundle them all in one single invoice?
- Surely this bundling will save us money (discounts, less administration)?
- Surely this bundling will mean that we no longer pay twice for the same content (libraries through subscriptions and authors through APCs)?
- User-friendly for researchers: no more individual bills!
- Often coupled with providing more transparency about costs
- Often coupled with authors retaining copyright
- Can be coupled with automated archiving of published versions in institutional repositories

courtesy of Demmy Verbeke, see also: Verbeke, Demmy (2021), Not Only Transformative Agreements
https://scholarlytales.hcommons.org/2021/03/16/not-only-transformative-agreements
Why we don’t want transformative agreements

• Not cost-neutral and financially unsustainable in the long run
• Shift subscription budget of libraries to funding OA without altering business structure
• Strengthen oligopoly: the big get bigger and stronger, the small are marginalized even more
• Inequitable: inability to read is exchanged for inability to publish
• Hoover up all library budgets, and thus threaten funding for OA publishers who have never worked with the paywall business model
• We are making profit-driven OA publishing the most user-friendly
• We are funding the further for-profit take-over of scholarly communication
• We are undermining our own negotiation position next time around

courtesy of Demmy Verbeke, see also: Verbeke, Demmy (2021), Not Only Transformative Agreements
https://scholarlytales.hcommons.org/2021/03/16/not-only-transformative-agreements
Further reading


Verbeke, Demmy (2021), Not Only Transformative Agreements, https://scholarlytales.hcommons.org/2021/03/16/not-only-transformative-agreements

Mesotten, Laura (2021), What’s in a Number? A Closer Look at Open Access Readership Data, Part One, https://dhcommons.hypotheses.org/84
