



## Fall Provost's Conference Highlights Commitment to Open Educational Resources

ON Friday, October 29, faculty from across campus gathered at the Driscoll Ballroom for the 2010 Provost's Conference on Scholarly Communication in the Digital Age. This was a timely topic on a national level, following International Open Access Week (October 18-24) and the publication and endorsement of an Open Letter in support of the Federal Research Public Access Act (FRPAA) by a number of university presidents, provosts, and research vice presidents in the spring. The day's presentations and conversations were also particularly relevant for DU at a time when the Faculty Senate is undertaking efforts to expand the university's use of open educational resources and review promotion and tenure practices.

After breakfast and opening remarks from Provost Greg Kvistad and Penrose Dean Nancy Allen, Heather Joseph delivered the opening keynote, "Open Access: The Current Landscape and Future Direction of Scholarly Communication." Joseph is Executive Director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and spent 15 years in the publishing industry before dedicating herself to open access initiatives. For this presentation, Joseph focused on open access journals, noting that quality research often isn't readily accessible due to price barriers, technical barriers, and cultural barriers. Some science journal subscriptions costs thousands of dollars per year, and journal expenditures have outstripped inflation and library budgets. Open access journals, such as those catalogued in the Directory of

Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and institutional digital repositories can increase access while decreasing costs.

Having research available is a first step; but scholars must be able to work with it. Joseph noted that there has been an explosion of publishing to keep up with the exponential pace of research, but while the amount of information has increased dramatically, our human ability to manage and interpret it has not. We therefore must harness the power of networks for accessibility and usability, and to do so, we must remove legal barriers as well as technical barriers for interoperability. For open access journals and databases to succeed, there will also need to be cultural change within academia. New types of scholarship may not be trusted, especially if there are questions about their sustainability, and there is a deep reliance on current impact measures. Open access advocates will need to work on increasing researcher awareness about their options and rights and aligning incentives and rewards structures with open access goals. You can read more about Heather Joseph's work and view selected presentations at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/about/staff/joseph.shtml>.

Following the keynote, the panel "Open Access in Practice: Local Experts Share their Experiences" discussed the benefits and challenges of several specific open-access efforts. In "E-Journals & Interactive Design: Re-mediating the Fields for Scholars & Writers," Scott Howard, Professor and

Director of Graduate Studies in the English Department, discussed the two digital journals he publishes annually on Blogger. [APPOSITIONS: Studies in Renaissance/Early Modern Literature & Culture](#) and [RECONFIGURATIONS: A Journal for Poetics & Poetry/Literature & Culture](#) are both peer-reviewed, international open-access journals with Creative Commons licenses. Because the two journals address the needs of such different authors and audiences, they have offered unique challenges, but the open-access blog format has its advantages, including the flexibility of the publishing space, the ease with which readers can comment on works, and the ability to track usage through Google Analytics.

Jamaica Jones, who is the special projects librarian for the National Center for Atmospheric Research, discussed NCAR's OpenSky digital repository in "Open Access at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)." NCAR and UCAR (University Corporation for Atmospheric Research) have adopted an open access policy (based on the NIH Public Access Policy established in 2008), which requires employees to submit their publications to OpenSky. [OpenSky](#) provides a permanent digital location for research findings and makes them widely accessible to an international audience while protecting authors' rights and providing services such as usage metrics analysis, institutional reporting, and automatic updates of online CVs. Jones attributes the success of OpenSky to its support of a collaborative research culture, partnerships with traditional publishing entities, integrated infrastructure, and author services that make participation more attractive to researchers. She also notes that scholars from DU can benefit from open access initiatives like this one through heightened visibility and impact, increased citations, greater engagement with the public, and an opportunity to shape the future of scholarly communication.

Donald McCubbrey, from the Department of Information Technology and Electronic Commerce in Daniels College of Business, presented "Open Educational Resources: Status and Trends." McCubbrey is the project co-leader for the [Global](#)

[Text Project](#), which supports the development and distribution of free college-level textbooks. This highly collaborative effort, based on the principle that "No one is as smart as everyone," invites student involvement in text creation—allowing student work to add real value and have a life beyond the classroom—and encourages users to modify books to suit local circumstances, particularly since the project focuses on developing economies. An increasing selection of books is available online, in print, or on DVD, and is searchable by keyword or subject directory. McCubbrey identified several challenges for such open-access initiatives, including the need to increase awareness, change faculty attitudes toward textbook adoption, encourage student involvement, and increase project funding and sustainability. McCubbrey argues that the benefits of open access textbooks for students and teachers, however, call for a proactive and sustained approach to open-access and alternative publication models here and abroad.

Following lunch and conversation, Diane Harley, a Senior Researcher for the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California at Berkeley presented a keynote on "The Future of Peer Review in Academic Promotion and Publishing." Harley co-authored the report ["Assessing the Future Landscape of Scholarly Communication: An Exploration of Faculty Values and Needs in Seven Disciplines"](#) (2010), which is based on extensive case studies of tenure and promotion practices and research values in fields from astrophysics to political science. Based on this research, Harley argued that current tenure and promotion systems rely too heavily on a limited number of high-profile journals and citation metrics and expressed concerns that the elite standards of research universities often influence tenure and promotion requirements for less competitive colleges in negative ways. Instead, academic communities should establish more flexible peer review and academic reward systems that recognize the changing landscape of research and publishing.

The conference concluded with three concurrent sessions to extend conversations from the plenary sessions. Jamaica Jones and Greg Colati

facilitated “Data Centers are the New Library Stacks: What Libraries Can Do to Help Make Your Academic Work Discoverable and Sustainable.” Colati is Coordinator of Digital Initiatives (DI) for Penrose, which is dedicated to creating sustainable, accessible, digital content at the University of Denver. You can learn more about DI tools and services online at <http://library.du.edu/site/about/DI/index.php>.

Don McCubbrey and Diane Harley led the discussion “Open Educational Resources: New Models for Classroom Materials,” which allowed participants to learn about resources like the [Internet Archive](#) and [OER Commons](#) and share strategies for using library resources and

Blackboard to deliver open course content.

Heather Joseph and Anne McCall, Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences moderated “Changing Models in Scholarly Communication: Implications for Promotion and Tenure.” While these talks (and a chocolate reception) ended the Provost’s Conference, they were intended to start ongoing conversations about open access and the future of scholarship and teaching at DU.

You can view video of the plenary sessions and access related documents and resources on the [Provost Conference Portfolio Page](#).

- Jennifer Campbell

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## Call to Conversation for Winter 2011 *Faculty Forum*

The 2010 Provost’s Conference affirmed DU’s commitment to open educational resources (OER), and promoting OER is one of the Faculty Senate’s agenda priorities for 2010-2011. You may recall that Nancy Allen and Don McCubbrey made presentations on the subject to the Senate in March 2010; links to those PowerPoints are available on the [Faculty Senate Minutes](#) webpage. The Academic Planning and Personnel Committees will take the lead for the Senate on this issue, but we’d like to hear what you think. For the winter edition of the *Faculty Forum*, we invite articles from faculty across campus about open access scholarship and open educational resources. Do you publish your research in open access forums? Why or why not? What are the benefits and challenges of open access and/or digital scholarship in your field? What types of open resources do you use in your classes and how do you deliver course content to students? How can DU and the Faculty Senate work toward greater acceptance of and innovation in open access scholarship and pedagogy? Please send queries or abstracts to Jennifer Campbell ([Jennifer.Campbell@du.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Campbell@du.edu)) by January 31, 2011.