

Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006
Update – September 7, 2006
Prepared by Carol Pitts Diedrichs

Basics

“The bipartisan Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006, introduced on May 2, 2006 by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Joe Lieberman (D-CT), would require that US Government agencies with annual extramural research expenditures of over \$100 million make manuscripts of journal articles stemming from research funded by that agency publicly available via the Internet. The manuscripts will be maintained and preserved in a digital archive maintained by that agency or in another suitable repository that permits free public access, interoperability, and long-term preservation. Each manuscript will be freely available to users without charge within six months after it has been published in a peer-reviewed journal.” The ARL website with all the background can be found at <http://www.arl.org/sparc/resources/frpaa.html>. This is the next logical extension of the Open Access movement.

Who Supports the Bill?

The ARL position is that this is a good thing for libraries. I know you are aware of the issues we face in paying for journal price increases each year. Just this week, we “successfully” negotiated with *Nature* to reduce the increase for their journals down to 34% from 38%. It’s hard to think of that as a “success.” We received an increase to our serials budget this year of less than 7%.

In July, the provosts of the CIC (Big Ten) and Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA, basically the Big 12 plus other research institutions in the western and Midwestern states) wrote letters to Senator Cornyn endorsing the bill. The Presidents of the Oberlin Group (a group of 53 prestigious liberal arts colleges) has also endorsed the bill. Even the student senate at the University of Florida has weighed in. Those can be found at:

Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC – representing the Big Ten institutions and the University of Chicago)
<http://www.cic.uiuc.edu/groups/CICMembers/archive/documents/FRPAAletterFinal7-24-06.pdf>

Greater Western Library Alliance (GWLA – representing the Big 12 institutions and others in the western and Midwestern states)
<http://www.gwla.org/provostletter.html>

The Oberlin Group – 53 college presidents of liberal arts colleges –
<http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/media/Advisory06-0906.html>
<http://www.oberlingroup.org/about/frpaa.pdf>

Student Senate at the University of Florida --
<http://www.sg.ufl.edu/MeetingPDF%5C155.htm>

“The American Association of Law Libraries, American Library Association, Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries, Association of College & Research Libraries, Association of Research Libraries, Greater Western Library Alliance, Medical Library Association, SPARC, and The Special Libraries Association encourage taxpayers and other stakeholders in the scientific process to add their support for this important legislation.” Details are online at <http://www.taxpayeraccess.org/frpaa/>.

I have also been advised that there is on campus support for the bill among some faculty members who are aware of the issue.

Who Opposes the Bill?

Much of the opposition to the bill comes from publishers. Certainly, most commercial publishers are opposed, but some of the scholarly societies are also opposed. Some scholarly societies support activities of the society through the publishing fees for their journals. As a result, they are concerned that this legislation would damage their revenue stream from library subscriptions. Some of this opposition is based on misinformation such as concerns that the legislation will destroy peer review. I've attached a review of the key provisions of the legislation and the library community's response to specific concerns expressed by opponents of the legislation which was provided by ARL's Associate Executive Director, Pru Adler, who is specifically responsible for information policy at ARL.

University of Kentucky Position

There has been no widespread campus conversation about the legislation. I have not taken an official position on the legislation nor has the President or Provost. However, the Provost has been asked by those who support the bill to take a position in support of the legislation. The Provost has sought my advice on the matter.

I would welcome your thoughts on the issue. I am in favor of our taking a position supporting the legislation.