**FACULTY MOVE FORWARD ON OPEN ACCESS POLICY**

Work to begin on building service system for repository

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**GEOFFREY MOCK**

In a unanimous vote, the [Academic Council](http://academiccouncil.duke.edu/) approved a resolution supporting a new [open access repository](http://www.dukenews.duke.edu/2010/03/openaccess.html) for faculty scholarly writings, but asked that organizers return for more discussion when they have details in place about how the repository would be serviced.

The policy would place the final draft manuscript of future scholarly articles in an open access repository that would be available for use by the public. Faculty members have a right to opt-out of the repository at any time, and the repository would respect any embargo requested by the author or journal. The policy would be reviewed in three years to determine its effectiveness.

Open access is in line with the university's commitment to disseminate the knowledge of the faculty, and Duke follows in the wake of peer institutions such as Harvard and MIT that have established similar policies.

But supporting it in theory is one thing, and faculty members said they want to hear more about the details in the fall.

"Passing this resolution says in general we think the philosophy is a good one, but we will want to talk about implementation of the plan once that's developed," said professor Craig Henriquez, chair of the Academic Council. "But the idea of a policy like this is a benefit to us. Just passing this gives us legal coverage for those of us to post our own stories on our own sites."

Faculty will retain the copyright to their scholarly writing under the policy. But English professor Cathy Davidson, co-chair of the task force that wrote the policy, said without an open-access policy, it can be more difficult to make research available to the public. There have been instances when individual faculty members have had to take down their own articles from their websites at the request of their publishers.

"We're in the information age, and yet we're gated as much as anything out there," Davidson said.

Staff from [Duke Libraries](http://library.duke.edu/) and the [Office of Information Technology](http://oit.duke.edu/) will now start work on developing the infrastructure for how it would work. University Librarian Deborah Jakubs said the work could be built upon the infrastructure used to service the library's already-existing archive of Duke theses and dissertations.

As at a previous Academic Council discussion on the policy in February, faculty expressed concerns about the costs, time burdens it might place on faculty and duplication of efforts. The National Institutes of Health already requires grant recipients to deposit their scholarly writing in an NIH repository.

English professor Karla Holloway asked whether the policy would disproportionately affect the humanities, where most articles are published in small journals that might suffer if open access policies affect subscriptions.

Kevin Smith, scholarly communications officer for the library and a member of the task force that wrote the policy, said a random survey of journal publishers showed that most supported open-access policies; the opt-out policy would allow faculty members to continue to work with the rare publisher who doesn't.

Other faculty who edit small journals endorsed the policy.

In the end, Davidson said faculty members will benefit from the policy because research showed open-access repositories promote use of their work. When asked why Duke needed this policy, Davidson related a story from one of her students.

The student worked as a congressional intern this summer, Davidson said, and was asked to research certain questions on health care reform. The student told her that he became frustrated using the congressional database, which didn't have access to the research articles.

"He could find the abstracts, but not the full articles, and it was very difficult for him," Davidson said. "Finally he decided to use his Duke card and see if he could find the information through Duke's subscriptions. And within seconds, he found everything he needed.

"The student told our class that after word got around Capitol Hill that he had access to this information suddenly other congressional offices were deluging this 20-year-old intern with requests for him to find information for them using his Duke library access. That information needs to be available. This policy is just a first step.