



A Survey of Cornell & Syracuse University Faculty Regarding Author Fees for Open-Access Journals

We Wanted to Learn

- What faculty know about OA author fees
- What faculty think about OA author fees
- Had faculty paid such fees in the past or refused to publish in OA journals because of them?
- How had they obtained funds to pay such fees

Survey Basics

- Qualtrics survey
- Essentially identical at both CU and SU
- Target departments at Cornell and/or Syracuse: EMPSL and/or equivalent departments
- Excluded most biology fields

Outline of the Questions

- Have you paid an author fee to an OA journal?
- Or decided against publishing in an OA journal because of an author fee?
- Have you requested line-item funding to cover OA author fees?
- If a student wanted to publish in an OA journal, would you cover their author fees?
- Overall, do you have any opinions or feelings about OA journals and the model of charging authors rather than readers? [free response]
- Would you recommend publication in an OA journal to colleagues and/or students? [free response]

Findings

- 123 respondents from CU and SU, pluralities from Applied Physics (15), Physics (21) and Mathematics (27)
- Plurality tenure-track faculty (48)
- Majority (89) did not pay an author fee within the past 3 years
- Of those who did, 16 journal titles were given, only 2 of which appeared more than once (PLoS ONE (2) and Text Response (2))
- Of 18 respondents who gave amount, plurality (7) spent max of over \$1,000
- Majority (64) had not decided against publishing in an OA journal in the past 3 years due to author fees
- 13 respondents requested funding for OA author fees in a grant application in the past 3 years, of whom 6 then received it
- 29 would pay author fees for a junior member of their lab, 31 would not, 45 were unsure
- Free-response questions, main themes:
 - opposition to any additional costs
 - feeling that these journals are not solid enough to justify placing papers in them
 - many tentatively hopeful that model will mature
 - many hopeful that funders will add \$ to grant awards to cover this cost

Future Directions

- Educate faculty about \$ they already pay to publishers via the library
- Educate faculty/students about potential sources of \$ for author fees
- Educate faculty/students about distinction between reputable and disreputable OA journals