

**FACULTY UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
COUNCIL ON UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

The Faculty Council on University Libraries met at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, **February 28, 2002**. Guest chair Geoff Sauer presided.

**PRESENT:**     **Professors** (Geoff Sauer, Guest Chair), Brown, Chance, Greulich, Kerr, Moy, Sauer and Schepp;  
                  **Ex officio members** Ogburn, Spillum and Wilson;  
                  **Regular Guest** Charles Chamberlin, Deputy Director of Libraries;  
                  **Guest** Alison Buckholtz, Associate Executive Director, SPARC.

**ABSENT:**     **Professors** Martin, Sullivan, Sutton, Tanimoto and Zick;  
                  **Ex officio member** Fuller, Stride and Ullman.

**Approval of minutes**

The minutes of January 31, 2002, were approved as written.

**Alison Buckholtz, Associate Executive Director, SPARC (SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, is the global initiative to create competitive low cost alternatives to high cost commercial journals in the scholarly communication marketplace)**

Buckholtz said the University of Washington has been a partner to SPARC “since the beginning.” She said this represented a “proactive leap” on the part of the UW. This kind of partnership “lets us know when our initiatives are working.” Few institutions, she said, “go the extra mile,” and the University of Washington is decidedly such an institution.

Buckholtz first addressed the development of SPARC to the present, and later spoke to priorities and foci for 2002.

She said SPARC is very interested in library/faculty partnerships, as both have vital stakes in low cost alternatives to high cost commercial scholarly publication. “There is a scholarly communication crisis,” Buckholtz said. “Why does this not work any more?” is the question that people in this community must try to answer. Today’s discussion will suggest some reasons for this dysfunction, and some positive solutions.

Buckholtz stressed that SPARC “is *not* about antagonistic relations between the academic environment and the scholarly communication marketplace.” She said that, as dysfunctional as the scholarly journals marketplace is in the West, it is even more so in the East. (SPARC’s major concentration in the West is in the United States and Europe.) She said that recent initiatives created by SPARC’s association with research libraries are proving particularly fruitful in the UK and on the European continent.

Buckholtz said the “dysfunction in the scholarly marketplace” – though in many respects enigmatic – can be traced in part to the disparate goals of academic scholarship and commercial publishing. “Commercial publishers look for increased financial return,” she noted. Academic publishing, though hardly indifferent to financial return, has other significant goals as well, as all faculty know.

Buckholtz referred to what she called “drivers of change.” She said faculty need to ask: What *can* be published in the digital environment? What is the potential for researchers to control distribution of their own scholarly work?

She said that SPARC “links advocacy and action in scholarly publishing. We are working with faculty, editorial boards, and librarians to: 1) enhance awareness of the benefits of this linkage; 2) promote action options; and 3) demonstrate the success that comes of advocacy and action.”

Buckholtz said that SPARC has 17 publishing partnerships at present. All these partnerships are working towards high quality alternatives to high priced publications.

She spoke of the SPARC Action Plan. “This Plan promotes and aids scholar-led publishing initiatives. It brings new players into the system. It initiates library/faculty partnerships.” She said that SPARC has “both formal and informal partnership advisory services.” These services address marketing (promotion, advertising, publicity, exhibits) and financial support (access to SPARC member earmarked “purchase commitment” and “publishing fee” funds).

Buckholtz mentioned the partnerships of SPARC and the Journal of Logic Programming and the Journal of Machine Learning Research (which is free), as two partnerships that have proved particularly successful. There are partnerships with new journals born of university-led initiatives, such as the Journal of Insect Science out of the University of Arizona. Such initiatives are becoming increasingly prevalent, Buckholtz said.

Buckholtz drew attention to BioOne, which will serve as a template for library/faculty partnerships in the future. “And library/faculty partnerships will be the direction in which SPARC will move in the future,” Buckholtz stressed. “BioOne” (for which libraries put up the money) has attracted many new titles,” she noted. These represent new economic models of “open access” journals (“open access” refers to journals that are free).

Buckholtz said there is a savings potential of \$3,000 per article in “open access” publishing. She said there is “no one standard library/faculty partnership,” which is, she said, “a good, not a bad thing.”

She said the library/SPARC partnerships are having a real impact. “Price increases are moderating. SPARC alternative titles are less expensive than the commercial titles. These journals are still proving themselves, but they are doing so at an accelerating rate. The question will be: Where are scholars choosing to publish? More scholars are now choosing to publish in alternative journals. Widespread acceptance and prestige have been achieved in just three years in the case of the journal Organic Letters. Thus, alternative journals will be able to surpass commercial journals, with the right kind of support.”

Buckholtz said there is mounting pressure to reduce the prices of scholarly journals. SPARC is letting publishers know that it is around, as are SPARC’s partners. It is making a difference.

SPARC priorities in 2002 include: 1) gaining independence; 2) publishing resources lists and evaluations; 3) software reviews; 4) workshops on creating institutional repositories (U.S. and Europe); 5) SPARC Consulting Group (continued development of these services to SPARC partnerships); 6) SPARC legal services (SPARC has a legal firm on retainer already, but may institutionalize these services).

#### Post-Presentation:

Buckholtz said that, though she will be happy to provide an on-line summary of this presentation, ultimately it is better for a faculty member to hear about the faculty/SPARC partnerships from a fellow faculty member than from a library person or someone from SPARC. The fellow faculty member would come from the same “community,” and could best relate the advantages of such a partnership.

Buckholtz mentioned the Budapest Open Action Initiative. SPARC is a co-founder of BOAI. “These low-cost high quality journals do make a dent, but just a dent,” Buckholtz said. “BOAI offers a better way to get to the principles of ‘open access’, and offers convincing evidence that this is the best way to present scholarly material.” She encouraged FCUL council members to visit the BOAI Web site (<http://www.soros.org/openaccess/>) and to add their signatures to the open letter.

Asked about non-scientific journals, Buckholtz said, “Until this year, we focused on scientific and medical journals. Now, we are starting to look at journals in the humanities and social sciences. It is too early to speak of results, but we are quite hopeful.”

Brown asked about university presses, which she said have been unavailing to this point. Buckholtz said this failure is a mystery to SPARC, “and we do not know what the answer is to this conundrum.” She said, “There’s a difficult economic model that university presses work under (as opposed to the more effective economic models that journals work under), and this is certainly part of the problem.” She pointed out that “the scientific publishing was *in* the societies, whereas the university presses were not coming to the societies.” She said that, tellingly, the commercial publishers “knew what they were doing.” Most university presses, she stressed, “do not have a journal competency. They do monographs, and do not have the infrastructure necessary to do journals.” Sauer said it might be useful to SPARC to look at monographs. Buckholtz concurred.

### **Research Survey on Scholarly Publishing**

Sauer asked that council members fill out the Research Survey on Scholarly Publishing (discussed at the previous council meeting by graduate students Ada Emmett and Greg Hatch) and send it to the campus address shown on the survey.

### **Next meeting**

The next FCUL meeting is set for Thursday, April 11, 2002, at 12:00 noon, in 26 Gerberding Hall (NOT 36 Gerberding Hall, which is where the council met in Winter Quarter, but 26, which is also on the ground floor, but at the other end of the corridor).

Brian Taylor  
Recorder