A Resolution to Gather Information on Usage of Academic Journal Databases at Purdue University

Whereas, subscriptions for databases of academic journals is a large and growing annual cost for the library budget,

Whereas, the costs of these subscriptions and the practices associated with them by the publishers of the academic journals has become an issue of increasing concern and frustration for faculty, administrators and the Board of Trustees,

Whereas, faculty effort as reviewers and editors of academic journals is essential to their operation and represents a gratis contribution to the publishers,

Whereas, detailed information with the number and distribution of downloads by academic level and organizational unit, and subsetted by article, journal and publisher, would be valuable in knowing how to proceed with any alternative to the current system,

Be it resolved, the Purdue University Senate requests that administrators, faculty, and staff initiate a program for obtaining more information about the usage of the databases of academic journals by the members of the Purdue community. This program should include:

a) Requesting detailed information from the publishers on database usage for the last completed database subscription period, including frequency data showing the number of times individual articles are downloaded for each journal in the database.
b) If the method in paragraph a) fails to deliver sufficient actionable information, developing Purdue-based mechanisms for recording (in an anonymous way acceptable to the Purdue IRB) patterns of usage of journal databases. These could include a common portal for downloads and/or a mechanism for evaluating web traffic with the publisher sites.

c) Preparing a comprehensive report on the gathered information, including proposals for alternative arrangements with an evaluation of their costs in dollars and any resulting limitations on faculty and student research and education.

Approved by URPC, November, 8, 2017:

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