

Bill: Resolution 4.9.2024

Resolution: To Call Upon the University of Vermont's President, Board of Trustees, and Graduate College to set up an open access publication fund for graduate students.

Sponsors: Toyib Aremu (SDPEG), Alison Hall (Biology), Rigo Melgar (RSENR), Mandy Nix (RSENR), Shashank Poudel (SDPEG)

Co-sponsors: Rethinking Economics UVM, Rubenstein Graduate Student Association (RGSA), Sustainable Development Policy Economics and Governance (SDPEG) Student Club, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), Indian Subcontinental Student Association (ISSA)

Whereas, open access publications are an essential requisite for the professional development and advancement of today's and tomorrow's graduate student scholars and leaders across the University of Vermont, and;

Whereas, there is a growing need to fund open access publication to reduce critical barriers to information access, account for the living histories of knowledge exclusion in higher education, and share knowledge emerging from the University of Vermont with the world, and;

Whereas, knowledge improves with access and use, not in isolation but in communities of learning, making it imperative to collectively fund open access journals and publications at the University of Vermont,^{1,2} and;

Whereas, as Donella Meadows, a pioneer of systems thinking and sustainability, stated: "Missing information flows is one of the most common causes of system malfunction. Adding or restoring information can be a powerful intervention, usually much easier and cheaper than rebuilding physical infrastructure,"^{3,4} and;

Whereas, the Covid-19 pandemic, combined with the intertwined social and ecological crises that we face, requires us to rethink and overcome the privatization of knowledge because "treating knowledge as a commons and a public good is much more likely to deliver efficient outcomes for the entire global population,"⁵ and;

¹ [Kubiszewski, I., Farley, J., & Costanza, R. \(2010\). The production and allocation of information as a good that is enhanced with increased use. *Ecological Economics*, 69\(6\), 1344-1354.](#)

² [Farley, J., & Kubiszewski, I. \(2015\). The economics of information in a post-carbon economy. In P. W. Elliott & D. H. Hepting \(eds\), *Free Knowledge: Confronting the Commodification of Human Discovery* \(pp. 199–222\). University of Regina Press.](#)

³ [Meadows, D. \(1999\). *Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system*. Hartland: The Sustainability Institute.](#)

⁴ [Meadows, D. H. \(2008\). *Thinking in systems: A primer*. Chelsea green publishing.](#)

⁵ [Hensher, M., Kish, K., Farley, J., Quilley, S., & Zywert, K. \(2020\). Open knowledge commons versus privatized gain in a fractured information ecology: lessons from COVID-19 for the future of sustainability. *Global Sustainability*, 3, e26.](#)

Whereas, the mission of the University of Vermont states that its goal is: “To create, evaluate, share, and apply knowledge and to prepare students to be accountable leaders who will bring to their work dedication to the global community, a grasp of complexity, effective problem-solving and communication skills, and an enduring commitment to learning and ethical conduct,”⁶ and;

Whereas, the University of Vermont has repeatedly recognized respect, integrity, justice, and responsibility as core values of its mission, and;

Whereas, providing funding for open access publications will enable the University of Vermont to fulfill its mission by helping heal information inequities of closed-system publications and privatized knowledge, which gatekeep global communities from accessing information blocked by paywalls, and;

Whereas, graduate students originate from and conduct research in parts of the world where issues of information inequity remain prevalent, and both we graduate student researchers and the communities with whom we conduct collaborative research will benefit from free and open access to our co-created knowledge, and;

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the graduate students of the University of Vermont call upon the President, the Board of Trustees, and Graduate College to establish an open access publication fund, through which graduate students can cover fees to publish their open access research without resource constraints; and develop, deepen, and disperse our and the university’s knowledge for the interconnected well-being of people and planet locally to globally, and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the University of Vermont Graduate Student Senate urges the President, Board of Trustees, and Graduate College to engage in public discussions with relevant stakeholders from across the university, including but not limited to UVM graduate students, faculty, research staff, and libraries, to collaboratively (1) establish an open access publication fund, and (2) establish open access journals and publication avenues to overcome the barriers of information sharing created by privatized knowledge in the long-term.

⁶ University of Vermont’s Mission and Vision: <https://www.uvm.edu/mission-and-vision>