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Identifying opportunities to support BIPOC in OA: A Study Preview

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Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color Faculty Perceptions of Open Access, a study currently in progress, explores the risks and rewards of participation in open access (OA) publishing for tenure and promotion by Black, Indigenous, and faculty of color. Despite the open movement being approximately twenty years old, there is still a gap in research on faculty who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in the context of open access.

Our team initially interviewed an international pool of 38 faculty who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, a population which is historically underrepresented in academia. Participants are employed at universities in addition to two and four year colleges. Although still in progress, preliminary results from the study identify opportunities for the open movement to support infrastructure, collaborations, and new models of publishing that may alleviate barriers to open in academia, which are compounded for BIPOC faculty. Initial findings also highlight ways to create more inclusive publishing and tenure practices, conduct more meaningful relationship-building and center marginalized and minoritized experiences in open access advocacy. Finally, it calls for more action to support the shift in open advocacy from assuming knowledge creation is equitable by virtue of being publicly available to ensuring knowledge's impact on scholars and end-users.

The study did not focus on participants' specific experiences with exclusion, micro-aggressions or systemic injustice, but rather highlighted their perceptions of the culture (or lack thereof) of open access at institutions. However, participants did identify informal messaging and experiences with the publishing process which illustrated inequities in the scholarly communication landscape. BIPOC faculty expressed that they are explicitly or implicitly required to do additional work to meet the requirements of promotion and tenure in order to intentionally publish open access. Often, they have to be more hyper-vigilant than their white counterparts when it comes to research impact, work with marginalized communities or on marginalized topics -- both of which increase the possibility of transgressing departmental norms -- in order to earn tenure and promotion.

Action is needed. In the same way that making research open access varies among the disciplines, those doing Scholarly Communications work in libraries or conducting research on the experience of faculty researchers and scholars can no longer assume all faculty have the same motivations or experience with open access publishing. Other outputs and connection to community are ways of creating knowledge that are

unrecognized or unrewarded, due to traditional scholarly communication being based on white supremacist and capitalist or neoliberal values commonly found in academic institutions. Advocacy for open access must address problems impacting faculty at their root in order to transmute the time BIPOC faculty spend navigating marginalization and other large structural inequities in the academy and scholarly publishing if we are to create equitable open knowledge creation.

The initial data collection for this study was sponsored by the Association of College and Research Libraries' Research and Scholarly Environment Committee. One output so far is the contribution to Scholarly Communication Notebook, [Open Access publishing and Black, Indigenous, and people of color \(BIPOC\) faculty qualitative study lesson plan](#). The team is conducting a second recruitment round to target BIPOC STEM faculty, with sponsorship from the Lumina Foundation. The team made the decision to expand STEM perspectives in order to get wider representation and differences in research incentives and culture across disciplines. If you identify as BIPOC faculty in a STEM field and would like to participate, submit your interest here: <https://bit.ly/OABIPOCSTEM>

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