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KU among first to sign declaration on open access policies

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LAWRENCE — The University of Kansas has reaffirmed its commitment to making scholarly work widely available by becoming one of the first American universities to sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities.

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The declaration’s goal is to make scholarly research more accessible to a broad section of the public by using the advantages provided by digital and electronic communication. Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little signed the declaration.

“On behalf of the University of Kansas, I am pleased to sign the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities,” Gray-Little said. “As the first public institution in the United States to implement an open access policy, the University of Kansas, its leaders, administrators and faculty widely understand and appreciate the importance of this endeavor. I am honored to lend my support.”

More than 300 universities, libraries, research institutions and other entities have signed the declaration. KU is among the first American universities to signal support by signing, joining Harvard University, Duke University and the University of Oregon among others.

“Making the research of our faculty experts available to the widest possible audience has been a major priority at KU. Signing the Berlin Declaration is another step forward in this effort, and we are pleased to join the many fine institutions that are also committed to open access to scholarly research,” said Lorraine Haricombe, dean of libraries.

To be able to sign the Berlin Declaration, an institution must make its authors’ work available without restriction, place scholarly publications in an institutionally maintained, publicly accessible repository and support transition to electronic open access throughout the university. Ada Emmett, associate librarian, said the declaration aligns with KU’s scholarly communication programs.

“These are objectives that we continue to work toward and have made significant progress in meeting,” Emmett said. “KU is very well-positioned to sign this declaration and continue to work toward fulfilling the conditions of the declaration.”

The university will mark the signing with a series of events the week of Oct. 24, International Open Access Week, including a panel discussion with leaders in the field of open access and higher education. The event, “The Future of Scholarly Publishing: Alternative Perspectives on the Commercialization of Knowledge” will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 26, in the Alderson Auditorium, Kansas Union. David Shulenburg, former president of the Association of



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Public and Land Grant Universities and former KU provost, is on the panel. Shulenburger was instrumental in spearheading efforts for open access at KU and has championed the cause for more than a decade. Heather Joseph, executive director of the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, and Clifford A. Lynch, executive director of the Coalition for Networked Information, will join Shulenburger to discuss the future of scholarly publishing in this rapidly changing environment.

KU has been a leader in the open access movement. Earlier this year the university took the lead in forming the Coalition of Open Access Policy Institutions, known as COAPI, a growing organization of 36 North American universities that collaborates and shares policy implementation strategies and advocates on a national level for institutions with open access policies. In 2009, the University of Kansas became the first public institution in the United States to adopt a faculty open access policy.

The University of Kansas is a major comprehensive research and teaching university. The university's mission is to lift students and society by educating leaders, building healthy communities and making discoveries that change the world. The KU News Service is the central public relations office for the Lawrence campus.

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