Abstract: An undergraduate course in American Studies at Macalester College has been developed and taught in collaboration with a faculty member to produce and publish an open-access student peer-reviewed journal. A discussion of the development of the course, "Engaging the Public: Writing and Publishing in American Studies", the course content, the integration of scholarly communication and information fluency concepts into the course, as well as student learning outcomes, and integration into existing library workflows are presented. In addition to introducing students to the process of producing a scholarly journal, students are involved in all processes including marketing, soliciting submissions, conducting blind peer reviews, editing, and layout and design. Suggestions on how other academic libraries can implement similar programs into their curriculum and existing workflows will be provided.

Introduction

I’ll be sharing information on how this course developed, what the goals and objectives are, along with the content, how we intend to continue to support it, and some of the lessons we’ve learned. I need you to know that I am the Library Director so in developing this project, I didn't need to ask for permission. Also, until this past summer, I was the library liaison to the American Studies department. This project also blended three of my long-time interests. I have been an open access advocate for as long as SPARC has been in existence. I have also been involved in information fluency efforts for a significant period of time. We do use the term "fluency" instead of "literacy" because on our campus, we were not able to start seeing real progress until we replaced "literacy" with "fluency." And the third interest is my focus on promoting the teaching role of librarians. I think it is critical that faculty and librarians partner in developing course-integrated library instruction components that advance both information fluency and scholarly communication concepts in undergraduate education and librarians, even if working in technical services, do have opportunities to provide instruction, both in class and in the course of supervising student employees. I intend to keep my presentation to 30 minutes to allow for questions and discussion for the last 15 minutes.

Background
I need to give a brief background on how we got involved in publishing student journals. Macalester College is a four-year, undergraduate, liberal arts college with a current student population of about 2000. In the spring of 2005 the library implemented our institutional repository (IR) and the main purpose was to implement a solution to a long time problem we had been trying to address which was how to improve access to our student Honors projects. The number of projects varies by year, but ranges from 60-150 student projects each year. Previously these projects were only accessible by visiting the library Archives that had limited access because at that time we had no archivist. We catalog every project in OCLC, so we also had a high volume of interlibrary loan requests for copies of our projects. We had been trying to find a solution to managing digital files of these projects for several years and we finally found our solution with a hosted IR. When we implemented the IR, we saw this as an opportunity to showcase our student work and we wanted to make as many honors papers as possible openly accessible. This provided us with a teaching opportunity to educate the students on open access as this was still a new concept to them as well as to many of our faculty members. Over time we developed policies related to copyright and intellectual property issues, but always stipulated that students would retain copyright to the materials deposited in the IR.

**Getting Started with Journals**

Getting involved in journal publishing came about largely because of my long-time interest and involvement in scholarly communication advocacy efforts on my campus. In the fall of 2007, after speaking to the social science faculty division about open access, I became involved in working with one of our faculty members in Anthropology who served as the editor for a scholarly society journal, *Himalaya: the journal of the association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*. After hearing me speak about open access and opportunities for faculty to share their scholarship in our institutional repository, he expressed interest in making back files of their journal openly accessible in our IR. I agreed to support this project and over the course of the summer of 2008 with the assistance of a student employee and my reserves supervisor, we digitized print copies

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1 *Himalaya: the journal of the association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*

http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/
and uploaded the backfiles of the journal before the fall of 2008. After completing the project, I was able to introduce him to the journal publishing features available as part of our IR system; features that would allow him to electronically manage the current journal submissions process as well as tracking the review process. It was through the process of arranging for tutorials and sitting in on those sessions that I become more familiar with the publishing tools available within our IR and the possibilities of establishing new journals. The professor and I eventually worked out an agreement where the library would not only host the journal in our institutional repository, but also provide him with access to the backend publishing side of the system in order to manage and produce new issues. In a short period of time, we also expanded our involvement to include support for the layout and design of the finished publication.

The reason for doing this is that I do believe that the “library as publisher” is one of the areas in which our future lies and thus I firmly believe it is a role that academic librarians can and should undertake. In a recent article in the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, Purdue reported that in 2011, "an estimated 55% of academic libraries of all sizes were either developing or implementing publishing services". Since I am the library director, I realize I have a bit more leeway in that I was able to make the decisions that led to the development of a publishing program. However, I also did so because I work closely with our library office manager and she had developed expertise in using InDesign to produce and publish our library annual reports. Since the *Himalaya* journal was also produced using InDesign, I saw this as a natural fit. As I recognized that my office manager has exceptional organizational skills as well as creativity, I wanted to ensure that her job responsibilities expanded and allowed her to more fully utilize these skills. So about three years ago, we developed a job description for her that includes a formal designation that her job responsibilities include supporting not only the library’s publishing efforts and the scholarly society journal, but any and all ejournal publishing that occurs through our IR system. My real success story for *Himalaya* is the fact that

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we were finally able to make the journal completely OA this past fall with the society no longer placing an embargo on the most recent current issue by limiting access to paid subscribers only. I tried to be brief, but wanted to share this background as one piece of how we became involved in publishing.

**Integrating scholarly communication into the curriculum**

The other piece relates to the integration of scholarly communication into our information fluency program. I have been intentional in working with our library liaisons to increase their knowledge and help them become better advocates when talking with faculty and students about scholarly communication issues. About three years ago we revised our library liaison job descriptions to include scholarly communication. This means that the librarians are expected to be knowledgeable about author rights, copyright, intellectual property, and stay abreast of legislative issues related to OA for federally funded research. It was also important to me that they serve as advocates when meeting with classes or faculty members to promote our own efforts to showcase student and faculty scholarship in our IR. While I have served as a contact for faculty who have questions about copyright and their rights as authors, I wanted the liaisons to accept a certain level of responsibility to help advise faculty who may have questions about signing away their copyrights to journal publishers.

We have also been intentional about integrating scholarly communication concepts into our library instruction efforts beginning with our first year course. The FYC involves every first year course meeting with their liaison librarian and an information technologist in at least one 50 minute library session that provides a basic introduction to library research methods and our networked services. We’ve also developed a series of instruction modules and include one specifically on scholarly communication for faculty who choose to add sessions within our first year courses as well as for advanced research methods courses. It was in fact while working with the Research Methods course for American Studies that I first started to conceptualize the possibility of developing a student research journal in American Studies. In the fall of 2008 an opportunity presented itself that helped me in moving my idea forward.
Presidential Initiative on Curricular Renewal

In October 2008, our college president issued a renewal of his program established in 2005 on curricular renewal. The President offered to provide funds for developing new courses that met one of three potential categories. One of these categories was on public scholarship and funds were available to those who submitted a proposal that met the following criteria:

“[t]he development of ‘synergy’ courses in which faculty and students engage in classroom-based scholarly collaborations leading to peer-reviewed publications, presentations at academic conferences, or public scholarship.” The College's definition of, and criteria for, public scholarship can be found at: www.macalester.edu/curricularrenewal/publicscholarshipcourses2.pdf

I was the library liaison to the American Studies department and I had established a relationship with the Chair of the American Studies department working with students in her senior Research Methods course. I sent her an email mentioning the funding opportunity and asking if she would be interested in working with me to develop a course proposal “that follows up on the Research methods course that would lead to a finished product that would be a student peer-reviewed open access journal (to be hosted in the Digital Commons) that could showcase the work done by students in American Studies.”

She was interested, although her first question was “what is open access?” It was a start and we met to discuss how the course could be developed and then submitted a proposal in December and it was approved for funding. Course development would include a stipend for Prof. Rhodes and course development would be done over the summer. Librarians do not have faculty status at Macalester, so while Prof. Rhodes would get a stipend for the summer, I was doing this as a “labor of love” in addition to my regular workload.

My Mission and Objectives

3 Email message dated 11/07/08
When classifying this as a "labor of love", I saw it as an opportunity to combine some of my passions about information fluency as well as advocacy for open access and needed changes in scholarly communication. I see our current students as future scholars and the more they know about scholarly publishing including the economic aspects and barriers that exist, the better the chance that they themselves can become future change agents. It also meshed with my view that academic libraries needed to take a role in becoming publishing partners with members of our communities. When introducing students to library research in our first year courses, we emphasize that in the course of their four years they will develop an understanding and knowledge of their chosen field or discipline and eventually become contributors to the scholarly conversations by creating new knowledge as a result of their own scholarship. When teaching first year courses I emphasized during the discussion about scholarship that they will find their “voice” and eventually contribute to “the conversation” that takes place in journals and scholarly discourse. Thus, I was building on these concepts in the original proposal which was intended to build on the work students did in their Research Methods course and share that work with a broader audience through the openly accessible journal. David Lankes has reinforced our vision when he more stated in his *Atlas for New Librarianship*, the “mission of librarians is to improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities.”

**Course Goals and Objectives**

As part of our work during the summer of 2009, Prof. Rhodes and I developed our class schedule to address the specific goals and objectives we had prepared for the proposal. The course objectives as outlined in our original proposal included students learning:

- Improved skills in writing and editing
- Understanding the peer review process used in scholarly publishing
- How to evaluate and provide constructive feedback
- How to conduct fact verification and proof read for accuracy
- Proper citation techniques
- How to function as a member of an editorial board

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• How to produce new scholarship in a collaborative manner
• How to share American Studies Scholarship beyond the classroom
• How to develop marketing techniques to promote the journal as well as solicit contributions

We divided up responsibilities for developing the weekly class session according to topics covered. We also wanted to provide opportunities for students to learn about issues related to new forms of publishing and to hear from publishers, writers, and other professional scholars about publishing issues. This included learning about economic and social factors related to scholarly publishing. One goal we also hope to achieve was to encourage student attendance at the annual American Studies Conference.

**Course Content: Engaging the Public: Writing and Publishing in American Studies**

The original course description which we still use states:

“This course will focus on ways to disseminate research findings and knowledge beyond the American Studies classroom. Course content will focus on writing, editing, and the art of preparing a journal for publication. It will also consider how to engage various publics, including other students, the College, and local communities, through digital publishing. Students will be involved in preparing a student peer-reviewed open access journal and will be part of a collaborative model for circulating research and criticism. Students will design and launch the journal, organize a peer-review process, and learn about some of the broader issues involved in publishing including verifying facts, copyright, intellectual property, author rights, and open access.”

Course readings have changed each year, but we do include an article that gives a comprehensive overview of changes in journal publishing in American Studies, “E Pluribus Multitudinum: The New World of Journal Publishing in American Studies”^5.

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We also have articles on peer review including – “Writing a Helpful Referee Report” as well as sections from the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Publishing* – section on legal issues, copyright and fair use. (Include course reading list at end.)

As part of the course, we have included several invited guest speakers, including our Anthropology professor who was the editor of the *Himalaya*. Prof. Rhodes also had a close colleague who was a faculty member from a neighboring university and who participated as an editor for a feminist journal published by a collective and she has visited with the class as well.

My role in this course includes covering scholarly communication issues introducing them to economic issues, explanation of open access, introduction to SPARC and federal legislation related to open access issues. I also cover author rights, intellectual property issues, copyright, and fair use. I spend time explaining that the publication requires understanding that this is a permanent publication. So the students in the class need to understand and be able to explain to those submitting their work that this is a permanent publication. And authors, when submitting their work, need to acknowledge that by submitting their work they are agreeing to having it published and made available permanently. We have had some requests from students regarding removal of their works from the IR, so I spend time explaining roles and responsibilities in publishing and making it part of a permanent record.

I also cover the mechanics for using the online journal publishing. So I covered how to submit and how the backend looked once someone submitted an article. We discuss blind peer reviews and how to manage sending requests to review contributions while keeping the name of the author suppressed.

**Class Timeframe**

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The first part of the course includes conversations on the overall design of the journal. After we completed the first issue, future classes also include history and background on the journal itself. Each class takes complete control and ownership for the journal issue. The first time this course was offered, it took us two semesters to complete the journal aims and scope, complete the guidelines and policies, and agree on a title. The final title, *Tapestries: Interwoven Voices of Local and Global Identity*, probably was the greatest test of reaching consensus with the group as it required a significant amount of deliberation, and not a small amount of “give and take” to get to the final result. Each class decides on layout and design as well. As you will notice, each issue has a distinct look and appearance as well as content. Again, requiring significant discussion in order to reach agreement.

Once we reach midterm break, we start discussion on marketing and soliciting submissions. Each class has taken a different approach on how they engaged in promoting the journal to solicit contributions. Students have chosen to visit classes, create flyers and bookmarks, as well as utilize two campus promotional activities that are available. One is table-tents that can be scheduled for one week periods to be put up on tables in the student dining area. The second option is advertising on the screen savers on our public computers in the library. We can create advertising space on our computers for various events and students reserved time to promote the journal and request submissions. The students have also utilized the student newspaper to run ads or as in the case in the fall 2012 class, they did an opinion piece. In the fall 2011 course, students also used social media including creating a Facebook page.

Towards the end of the semester, we bring in my resident InDesign expert to just discuss the mechanics of layout and design. We’ve found that many of the students in this class have some exposure to InDesign, and we had one course where there were two students who did the entire layout and design because of their expertise. One of these students actually worked in our computer lab and assisted students who came in to use the

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8 Tapestries, [https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tapestries/263800080325802](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tapestries/263800080325802)
software package. So, for each issue we had at least one student who knew how to use InDesign and so my Office Manager mainly works with them on managing the final publication and uploading of the completed issue.

This whole course is student directed. They identify who will act as managing editor and they establish goals and how they want the journal to look. Group decision making and reaching consensus are important. As Prof. Rhodes shared in her introduction to the first volume,

“From the beginning, the guiding principle was that students should be the key decision-makers—to come up with a concept for the journal, develop its mission, think about what constitutes knowledge and cultural expression, and be conscious of their potential audience”

In fall 2013, the last time the course was offered, the content was changed slightly as I was teaching with a different faculty member, but we maintained the emphasis on this being a student directed publication. Prof. Harris who had been involved in publishing an online law review taught the 2013 fall course. As a result of her publishing experience, her course content was slightly different than Prof. Rhodes. She also encouraged the students to set a theme for their issue, so the third iteration of the journal focuses on generational politics.

Students earn two credits for completing the course. Regular class attendance is expected, and assignments must be submitted by the deadlines established. Each student is expected to "carry their weight" with regard to the work of the journal; those who do not complete assignments or tasks, or who drop out of the project, will not receive a passing grade. The journal is usually not completed within the semester that the course is taught, so students who put the final product together do so in the spring for an independent credit.

**Highlights and Lessons Learned**

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http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/tapestries/vol1/iss1/4/
This course has been offered 4 times, with three issues produced and we are in the planning stages for the fall 2014 course. The first time the course was offered in the spring of 2010, 8 students participated. We repeated the course in the fall 2010 with 10 students and this course included some of the students from the spring semester who were participating for no credit. A combination of students from the spring and fall courses worked on completing the first issue that was published in the spring of 2011. In the fall 2011 course, 8 students completed the course and we published the second issue in the spring of 2012. Our smallest class was the year that Prof. Rhodes was on sabbatical and I taught with Prof. Harris. We had 6 students in the fall 2012 offering and 5 completed the course. The entire journal content was completed within the fall 2012 offering, and a single student took responsibility for completing the layout and design for the 2013 issue.

This course was not offered in fall 2013 because Prof. Rhodes was just returning from a sabbatical and we agreed we both needed a break for that one year. Taking a year off helped me think about some of the challenges we had faced and having just one student take responsibility for producing the spring 2013 issue was just one issue that needed to be addressed. So one of the lessons we learned from this last experience was the need to offer some continuity from the fall to the spring. So in planning our course for fall 2014, we are offering this as a two course, 2 credit sequence in the fall and spring. This will provide students with a total of 4 credits if they take the fall-spring sequence. The course in the fall will primarily be led by Prof. Rhodes and a course in the spring where I assist the students in creating the final publication. We are also planning to use a new publication, The Handbook of Journal Publishing (Cambridge University Press, 2013) as our main reading.

Highlights include the fact that the students are highly engaged in this class. As I mentioned, each class group identifies who will act as managing editor and then they each take on various roles and responsibilities. They take their responsibilities seriously and one of my proudest moments was when the first group was putting the first issue together and had approved an article that was submitted, but as they were creating the final layout realized that it included images that were copyright protected and the author had not obtained permission to use them. So they pulled the article.

My goal is to introduce students to open access publishing and help them not only become better consumers of information, but also acquire some specific skills related to
peer review, publishing a journal, and ultimately acquire a better understanding of the economics behind scholarly publishing. They get to see the full cycle of scholarship and I feel that is one of the major accomplishments of the course. Two of our course goals also related to working in a collaborative manner. We work with them in terms of working as a member of an editorial board and spend time discussing how to produce new scholarship in a collaborative process. While the sciences have a long tradition of collaborative work and publishing and we have a long list of Macalester student/faculty publications in the sciences, not all students have the same opportunity to co-author with a faculty member. So introducing students in the humanities and social sciences to collaborative publishing is a means of providing them with an opportunity that they might not otherwise have.

And I am quite proud of the work some of our graduates have engaged in after our course. One of our class members last year, this year is co-editor of our campus newspaper. Two of our graduates have gone on to create a blog, about Mixed Identities at the Intersection of Race & Culture.10

Ongoing Efforts and Sustainability

In terms of ongoing sustainability, because I have been heavily involved, but am no longer the liaison to American Studies, we'll be evaluating in this next year whether I continue to participate or turn this over to the reference librarian who is the liaison to American Studies. As I mentioned, this is a "labor of love", so I'm not quite ready to walk away. Besides I really enjoy working with the students. In terms of teaching, it takes approximately 2-3 hours per week for 15 weeks, and that includes class preparation time. We use Moodle for our course management, so we have archives of previous courses, so I can pretty much cut and paste as needed from year to year. The Moodle archives also help us keep a history of the course and changes in the development from year to year. In terms of our staff position, the Office Manager’s job description includes supporting students in the production

10 http://remixedamerica.com/
mode, and this takes place in the spring when she has time to support their needs. As next year will be the first time we have done the fall/spring sequence, we will evaluate and assess how the overall course objectives were met and how the journal production went based on the new format.

Conclusion

In thinking about how you might integrate a student journal into your own curriculum, I recognize that every institution has different constraints as well as resources. While we use the bepress Digital Commons, there are other low cost options available if you want to pursue this activity. Another resource that you may have available is in your faculty. Many faculty members serve as editors for scholarly journals as well as doing peer reviews. Identifying potential partners from your faculty is one possibility for getting started.

As I have tried to make clear, I have a strong interest in scholarly communication and information fluency and I have incorporated scholarly communication into our library instruction and information fluency efforts in a variety of ways. If your own library has not developed a similar culture, it may require a bit more effort, but it is an effort that will result in a wide array of benefits. The overall benefits are greater student awareness of the scholarly communication environment, an opportunity to learn more about the scholarly publishing process, as well as an opportunity for them to engage in an activity that does provide skills for future employment. But I want to close with a perspective that Barbara Fister wrote in LJ recently in support of OA publishing. I'm hoping her name is familiar as she is a frequent contributor to LJ as well as the Inside Higher Education blog, Library Babel Fish.11 I had just heard Barbara speak at our annual Library Technology conference and she expressed the same opinion. In this article she is expressing why she supports a new open access publishing initiative and she stated:

“Because I believe in the transformative value of knowledge, and because I believe that our students are not merely information consumers and degree seekers. They are people who are finding their place in the great conversations that give this world meaning. It makes no sense to me to cut them off as soon as they graduate. I want to help create a world where they can continue to participate in those conversations wherever their lives take them.”

I believe this opportunity to help them create a world where they can continue to participate in scholarly conversations in combination with our mission to “improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in [our] communities” are reasons to explore on your own campus how you might integrate publishing student journals in your own curriculum.

Thank you.

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