How the York University Open Access Policy for Librarians and Archivists came to be:

Formal work in promoting scholarly communications began at York University Libraries with two representatives attending the ARL scholarly communications institute in 2007. A Scholarly Communications Committee (scholcom) was formed shortly thereafter.

A scholarly communications retreat for librarians and archivists was held in late 2007. Here the basic concepts of scholarly communications were introduced so that liaisons would have some background info primarily so that they know where to direct faculty. During this retreat, we discussed author rights, open access, the role of the repository.

Following the retreat, the committee pre-populated the repository with their scholarly outputs.

A workshop was organized to create uniform librarian/archivist profiles; essentially a standardized web page for each of us. A repository deposit component was included in the agenda, as we wanted to encourage our librarians and archivists to link to items in the repository from their profiles. At the workshop repository accounts were created, copyright was discussed, and attendees were trained to use the repository.

Some early adopters had amazing results; one colleague who put in a book chapter on FRBR would get over 2000 downloads a month for just that item! This helped to build momentum among librarians.

This earlier repository training and excellent visibility afforded by the repository helped to demonstrate that complying with OA is not overly onerous, and that it has many benefits.

Hurdles that had to be overcome:

Opinions about open access vary across faculties.

Some faculties are very vocally opposed to OA and bristle when subject is breached. The Schulich School of Business at York is one of the top ranking business schools in North America, and the school’s ranking is partially calculated by where faculty publish. (They have their own collection of high impact journals.) OA is perceived as a threat to the school’s standing and as a result discussions about OA are difficult.

In 2008, when our Chief Librarian tabled an open access discussion paper at a senate meeting several influential and vocal faculty members objected to the concept being discussed and the idea of raising more awareness of open access was put on hold.

If we could even hope to begin discussions about open access policies on campus, we realized that we should lead by example.

Worried about potential local librarian/archivist resistance to a mandate, the scholcom committee decided to draft a policy instead of a mandate. The word mandate to us seemed to impose a top down directive, while the word policy was something that we would all need to agree on and uphold. A policy implies the assent of a community, which is something we wanted to aim for.
With the idea of moving to adopt a policy, we decided to present a draft to our librarian and archivist complement at our local council which we call Librarian's Group.

To prepare our policy, we compared existing resolutions/policies/mandates from ROARMAP. Our policy is essentially a combination of ideas and texts from many mandates, resolutions and policies, including the mandate passed at the University of Calgary in 2008.

This policy was carefully written to not be too demanding and rigid, in hopes of easy adoption.

(1) colleagues will endeavour to secure the right to self-archive their published materials
(2) colleagues will deposit these works in YorkSpace
(3) colleagues will grant the Libraries the non-exclusive right to make their scholarly publications accessible through self-archiving in the YorkSpace institutional repository subject to copyright restrictions
(4) retrospective deposit is encouraged
(5) work should be deposited in YorkSpace as soon as is possible, recognizing that some publishers may impose an embargo period

We also included a line about the policy being assessed a year after implementation. This to us was important to include, because it allows us to open up discussion a year later. This can give us an opportunity to tighten the policy if needed, while at the same time offers our compliment the opportunity to provide feedback about what has worked for them and what hasn’t

We tabled this policy at Librarian’s Group, and explained that at the heart of the policy is a commitment to make informed decisions. We should formally recognize the consequences of choosing one publisher or venue over another.

To our surprise, when the policy was tabled, a brief discussion followed. When a vote was called, it passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Effect that it has had on other departments:

We are very lucky to have a strong OA advocate that is also a librarian with the ear of those in high places. Louis Mirando is the Chief librarian at Osgoode Hall Law Library at York University. Louis considers OA a personal priority.

The Osgoode Hall Law Library is the largest law library in Canada and the British Commonwealth. It is the largest in the world (outside of the US) based on size of collection.

Last year, students submitted a written report on open access to the Osgoode Hall Faculty Council, but the timing was not optimal and the committee did not have a chance to act on it.

This year, Louis brought an OA report to Faculty Council and has earned the support of the Dean of the law school. The Dean supports the idea of an OA policy at Osgoode because it supports the mandate of social justice upheld at the law school. It’s a moral obligation and is the right thing to do.

Osgoode’s Associate Dean of Research has also shown interest in supporting a mandate and has been very supportive. She is calling together meetings to discuss potential support on campus. These meetings will hopefully encourage faculty to discuss open access and will be an important first step.

Notes from the adoption of an open access resolution at Concordia:
(Personal notes taken at the CARL Institutional Repositories Meeting in May 2010)

A resolution on open access was passed by Concordia’s senate on April 22, 2010.
The Concordia resolution is not a mandate. It’s essentially about making a decision: faculty member can either chose to comply with the resolution and deposit their articles, or let the university librarian know why they are opting out. At that point, the UL invites a discussion with the faculty member to learn why they have chosen to opt out.

The Congress for the Social Sciences and Humanities was to be held at Concordia in May 2010. Ronald Rundin, History Professor and Academic Convenor for the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences came up with the idea that there should be a legacy to mark Concordia’s hosting of the congress. Rundin thought that an open access resolution would be ideal.

At Concordia, the leadership and initiative of the University Librarian, Gerald Beasley, was very important. The UL was able to secure high level support from the Provost and VP Research, among others. Grassroots conversations were facilitated by the top level with faculty to ensure that their input was heard over an 8 month period.

As a result of all the conversations, the policy resolution passed by strong majorities through all four faculty councils and through the Council of the School of Graduate Studies. Senate voted to support the recommendations. Kathleen Shearer, an independent consultant who works for the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, helped to build buzz on campus.

Some arguments used in discussions with faculty:
- Open access is a hearts and minds resolution. Its about doing what’s right. This was a good point from where to start, because faculty are not really concerned with who has access because they are looked after by the current scholarly communications system.
- Concordia has a very strong commitment to community, so they used the community engagement angle.
- There are currently 9 Canadian funder-mandates which require authors to make openly available any funded research by these agencies. In other words, open access mandates are already a reality, it is not a big stretch to consider one at Concordia.
- Faculty are not altruistic, they are concerned about copyright permissions. What this translates into is that if you are not prepared to help them, the resolution idea will not fly, and they will not deposit their articles. The libraries realized that the resolution would not succeed unless they put in the resources to help faculty do the archiving.

It is important to note that Concordia’s local faculty union CUFA does not endorse the resolution. The executive was not in favour, and they voted against it.

What I have learned so far in this process:

(1) The arguments for open access, such as increased impact and citations, are not very effective, as faculty know how to use the current system to get the exposure they need.

(2) In my opinion, the best argument for open access is that it’s the right thing to do. I tend to equate these efforts to preserve the environment. For example, we are morally obligated to recycle and to not pollute our environment. We may not see the immediate effects of making these little choices, but they are very important to the world as a whole. With respect to open access, we all need to do what’s right to ensure equitable access to research outputs, instead of heavily favouring the rich developed world.

(3) The grassroots model for passing an open access policy worked for us at the library, but I think this worked because we had shown our complement that compliance was not difficult. I think it is important to prepare faculty and to let them know that the libraries are there to help.

(4) For reaching out to campus, however, I think it is important to have someone who can call meetings at a higher level on your team. At the ARL Scholarly Communications institute, they
recommend having faculty members sit on your scholarly communications committee. I think that it is even more important to have the support of a higher ranking university official.

We see at Concordia, that the UL shopped the idea of the resolution around to faculty councils. He understood the mechanisms required and had the clout to arrange the meetings. For us at York, we are fortunate that our Chief Law Librarian was able to convince the VP research at the Law School the value of an open access resolution. We can only hope that this will lead to more discussions about open access at York.

**Canadian policies from ROARMAP**

**funder-mandates** (9 in force, 1 proposed)
- National Research Council (NRC) Canada
- Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR)
- Canadian Breast Cancer Research Alliance (CBCRA)
- (proposed) Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)
- Canadian Cancer Society (CCS)
- Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF)
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
- Fonds de la recherche en santé Québec (FRSQ)
- funder-mandate Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR)
- Genome Canada

**departmental-mandates** (4)
- University of Calgary: Library and Cultural Resources
- University of Guelph Faculty of Environmental Sciences
- York University Librarians and Archivists
- Queen’s University Library Faculty

**institutional-mandate** (2)
- Athabasca University
- Concordia University