

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Joint Resolution 6 (Delegates Hornberger and Boteler)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Higher Education - Publishers of Academic Publications - cOAlition S and Plan S

This joint resolution encourages each publisher of an academic publication of research funded by public grants, including institutions of higher education in Maryland, to join cOAlition S and commit to fully implementing Plan S by 2024.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The joint resolution does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: As stated by the preamble, [cOAlition S](#) is an international group of academic publishers committed to providing full and immediate open access to publications from publically funded research institutions. According to its website, cOAlition S currently comprises 13 national research funding organizations and 4 charitable foundations from 13 countries who have agreed to implement the 10 principles of Plan S in a coordinated way, together with the European Commission and the European Research Council. Other research funders from across the world, both public and private, are invited to join cOAlition S.

Plan S is an initiative for open access publishing that was launched in September 2018. The plan is supported by cOAlition S, an international consortium of research funders. Plan S requires that, from 2020, scientific publications that result from research funded by public grants must be published in compliant open access journals or platforms.

Plan S was established under the belief that publication paywalls are withholding a substantial amount of research results from a large fraction of the scientific community and from society as a whole. Additionally, cOAlition S asserts that research can only function properly if research results are made openly available to the community so that they can be submitted to the test and scrutiny of other researchers. Further, they believe that new discoveries are built on previously established results works and the system operates optimally if all research results are made openly available.

Under the conventional publishing model the cost of publication and the review process is born by access tolls such as subscribers, site licenses, and pay-per-view models. Under the conventional model institutions of higher education and researchers usually pay the access tolls. There are a number of open access business models, including the following:

- hybrid open access journals that are at least partially funded by subscriptions, and only provide open access for those individual articles for which the authors (or research sponsor) pay a publication fee;
- open access journals funded by article processing charges paid by authors or research sponsors;
- open access journals funded by an academic institution, society, or government;
- delayed open access journals that provide open access after an embargo period, typically 6 to 12 months; and
- self-archiving, in which after peer review by a journal, the author posts the same content the journal will be publishing to a website controlled by the author, the research institution that funded or hosted the work, or which has been set up as a central open access repository.

State public four-year institutions of higher education receive and spend hundreds of millions of dollars in research funds each year. The funding comes from both public (State and federal) sources as well as private sources.

State Fiscal Effect: *Encouraging* each publisher of an academic publication of research funded by public grants, including institutions of higher education in Maryland, to join cOAlition S and commit to fully implementing Plan S does not directly affect State finances; however, actual implementation of the actions encouraged by the joint resolution could potentially increase higher education expenditures on open access publication fees.

In the long term, higher education expenditures on nonopen access journal subscription fees may decrease if other institutions around the world commit to Plan S due to the proliferation of open access journals.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Community College; University System of Maryland; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Maryland Independent College and University Association; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2019
mag/rhh

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