

# Fondren Fellows Project



Any questions can be directed to [fondrenfellows@rice.edu](mailto:fondrenfellows@rice.edu)

## Name

Cindy Pierard, Lisa Spiro, [Shannon Kipphut-Smith](#), Scott Vieira

## Project Title:

Open Access publishing at Rice: factors that influence researcher choices and sustainable funding models

## Description:

Open Access publishing provides researchers with the broadest possible dissemination of their work and aligns with Rice University's mission to "deepen the impact and visibility of Rice research." This project will study Rice faculty members' perceptions and experience with OA publishing, using findings to strengthen library and institutional support.

## Project Summary:

A central goal of Open Access (OA) publishing is to provide free and unrestricted access to research outputs such as articles, books, data, code, and other creative works. OA publishing provides researchers with the broadest possible dissemination of their work, which aligns with Rice University's mission and Fondren Library's commitment to "deepen the impact and visibility of Rice research."

Rice passed its Open Access Policy in 2012, which was designed to make faculty research broadly available through the locally-hosted Rice Research Repository (R3). Since that time, Fondren Library has made significant additional investments to support OA scholarship, which include: committing collections funds to help cover publishing fees for

authors sharing their work in open access journals and books; negotiating transformative agreements that shift from models based on subscription fees to models that pay publishers for open access publishing services; and advocating for equitable and sustainable scholarly publishing models.

This project aims to strengthen Fondren's support for open scholarship by deepening our understanding of Rice faculty members' perceptions of and experience with OA publishing. There is substantial literature on open access scholarship and business models. There are comparatively few published studies of faculty attitudes and experience. No studies have been undertaken at Rice and our current understanding is based on what we have learned from interactions with individual faculty members whom Fondren has supported with their OA publishing endeavors.

Case studies conducted at other research universities have found that faculty are interested in broad dissemination of their work and also worried about the legitimacy of some OA publishing venues. Faculty in these studies also express concern with unsustainable OA publishing costs. Humanities and social sciences researchers have expressed particular frustration with the unaffordability of OA publishing, as have early career researchers. We do not know if Rice faculty have similar questions and concerns. We need to build this understanding in order to better support them.

This project will involve designing and implementing a survey of Rice faculty to be conducted in fall 2024 and analyzed in spring 2025. We will draw upon the literature as we craft our approach. Through this project, we aim to surface concerns and interests expressed by Rice faculty, learn from their experience, and identify areas where

Fondren and Rice can better support faculty researchers who seek to make their work openly available. The project's scope of work can be completed within the academic year. This project will also benefit broader professional understanding. We plan to expand the project's impact by sharing findings through professional presentations and/or publication.

**How many fellows are you requesting?**

One fellow is requested.

**Outline the key tasks that the Fondren Fellow(s) would work on.**

## Fall 2024:

- Conduct literature review
- Co-author any IRB documentation
- Co-design and implement survey

## Spring 2025:

- Co-analyze findings from survey of Rice researchers
- Share findings at campus meetings and professional conferences

What qualifications would you expect from students working on this project?

- Interest in scholarly publishing, and especially open scholarship
- Experience or interest in survey administration
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Ability to meet deadlines

## What would students learn through their participation in this project?

- Knowledge of scholarly publishing practices and trends with open scholarship
- Experience with IRB
- Experience with survey research— design, implementation, analysis
- Opportunity (if interested) to share findings at a professional conference