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Evaluating the impact of open access at Berkeley: a qualitative analysis of the BRll program

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# Evaluating the impact of open access at Berkeley: a qualitative analysis of the BRII program



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## Introduction

The Berkeley Research Impact Initiative (BRII) was one of the first campus-based open access (OA) funds to be established in North America and one of the most active, distributing more than \$244,000 to support UC Berkeley authors. In April 2015, we conducted a qualitative study of 138 individuals who had received BRII funding to survey their opinions about the benefits and funding of open access.

Most respondents:

- believe that their articles had a **greater impact as open access**
- expect to tap **multiple funding sources** to pay OA fees
- support the UC Open Access Policy** but prefer gold OA

## Survey

1. Did the availability of the Berkeley Research Impact Initiative (BRII) to help pay the Article Processing Charge (APC) or open access fee for this article affect your decision about where to publish?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

2. If you had not received funds from BRII to publish your article open access, would you have:

- Looked for another funding source
- Published the article as subscription access
- Not sure
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many open access articles had you published prior to the one you received funds for?

- 0
- 1-5
- 6 or more
- Not sure

4. Do you believe that your article had a greater overall impact because it was open access?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

5. Compared to articles you have published in subscription-based journals, do you believe your open access article benefited from any of the following? (check all that apply)

- Increased citations
- Greater number of views
- More downloads
- More shares via social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.)
- More reader comments
- More mainstream media coverage
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. How have you previously covered Article Processing Charges (APCs) for open access publications? (check all that apply)

- Departmental funds
- Grant funds
- Personal funds
- APC paid by co-author(s)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Not applicable

7. In your opinion, how should open access publishing costs be covered?

8. With the UC Open Access Policy, faculty can post the final author's version of their scholarly articles on eScholarship. Please indicate how (if at all) these policies impact your decision to publish in an open access journal that requires an article process charge:

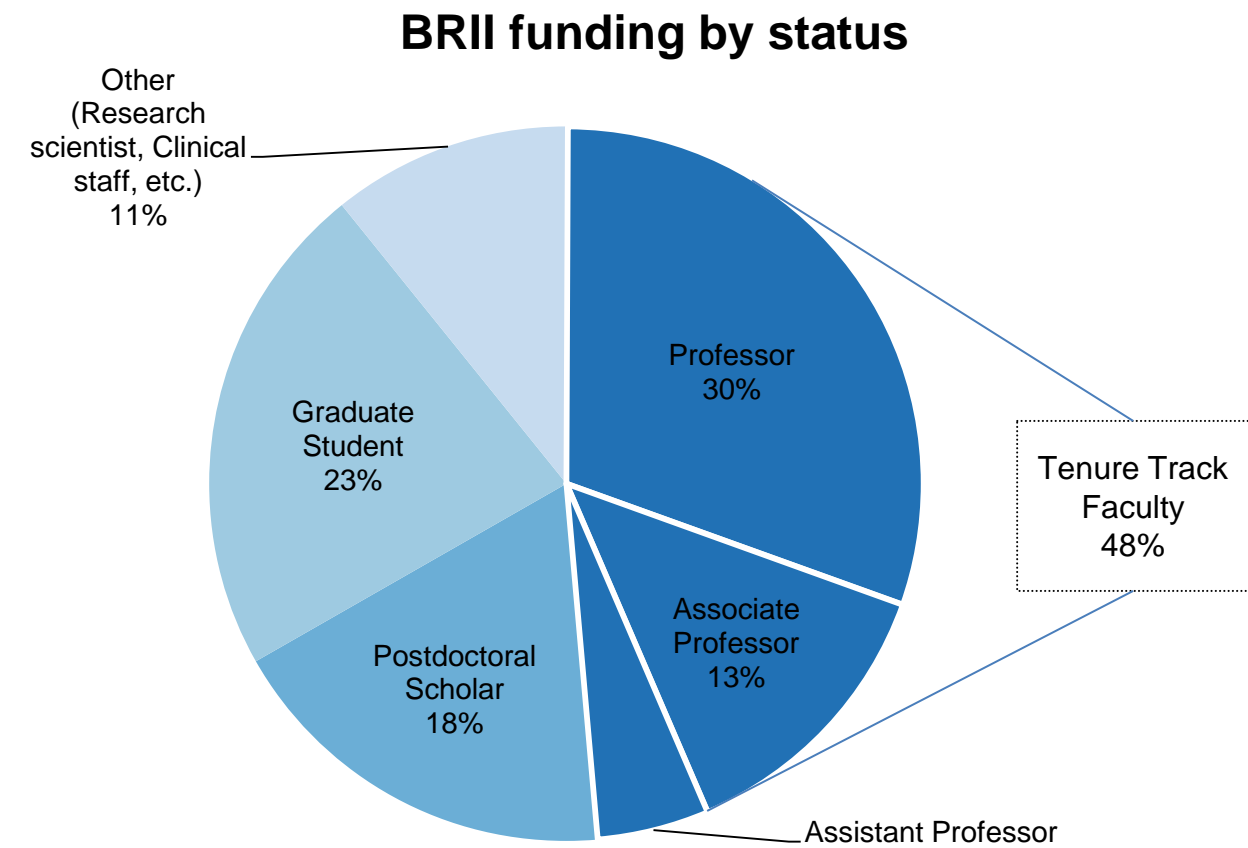
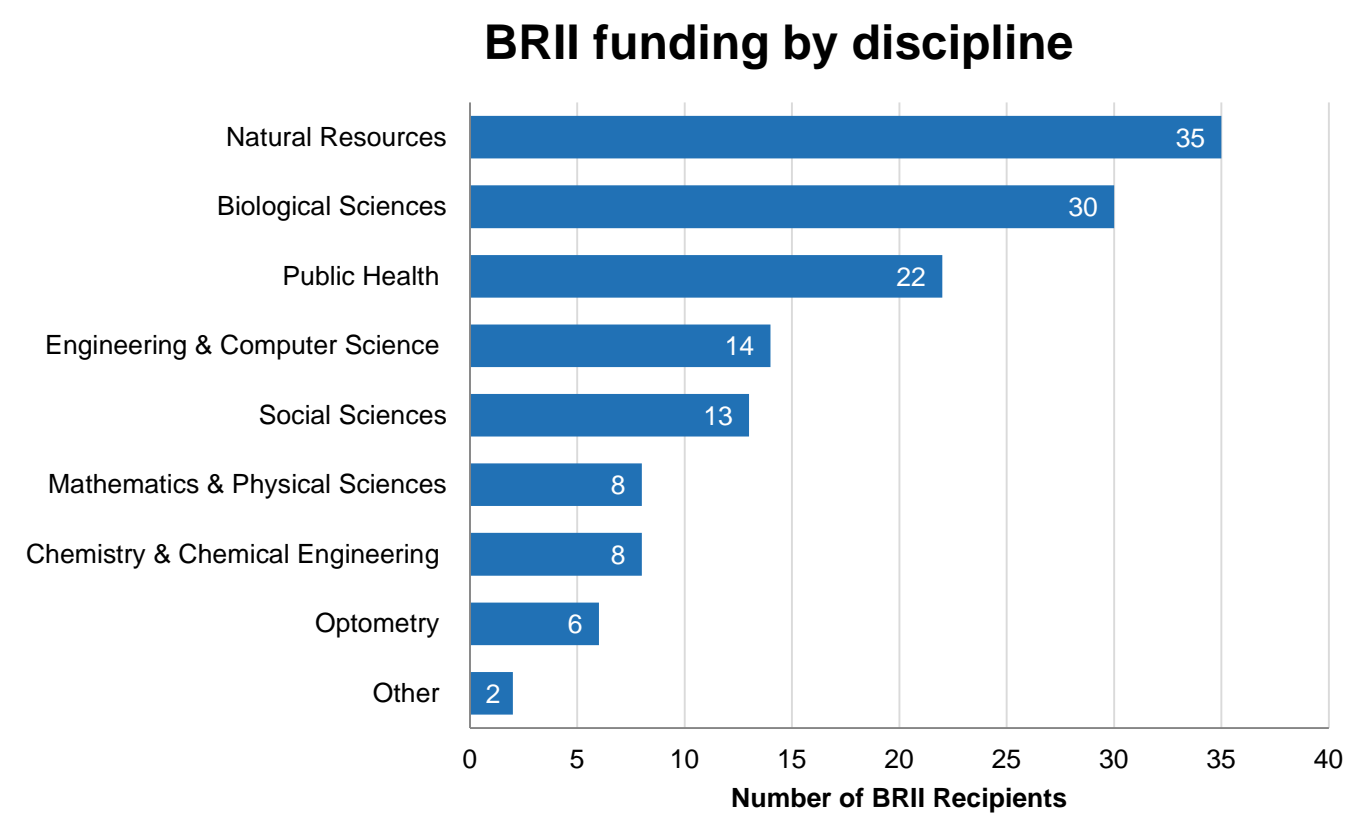
- I would have still paid an article processing charge to publish it in an open access journal so that the final version of my article is immediately available as open access.
- I no longer feel the need to publish in an open access journal because of the UC Open Access Policy and/or funding agency open access policies.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are there other comments you wish to share about the BRII or open access in general?

## BRII Recipients

We surveyed BRII-funded authors who fit our current criteria. This is the breakdown of the 138 individuals surveyed:



## Results

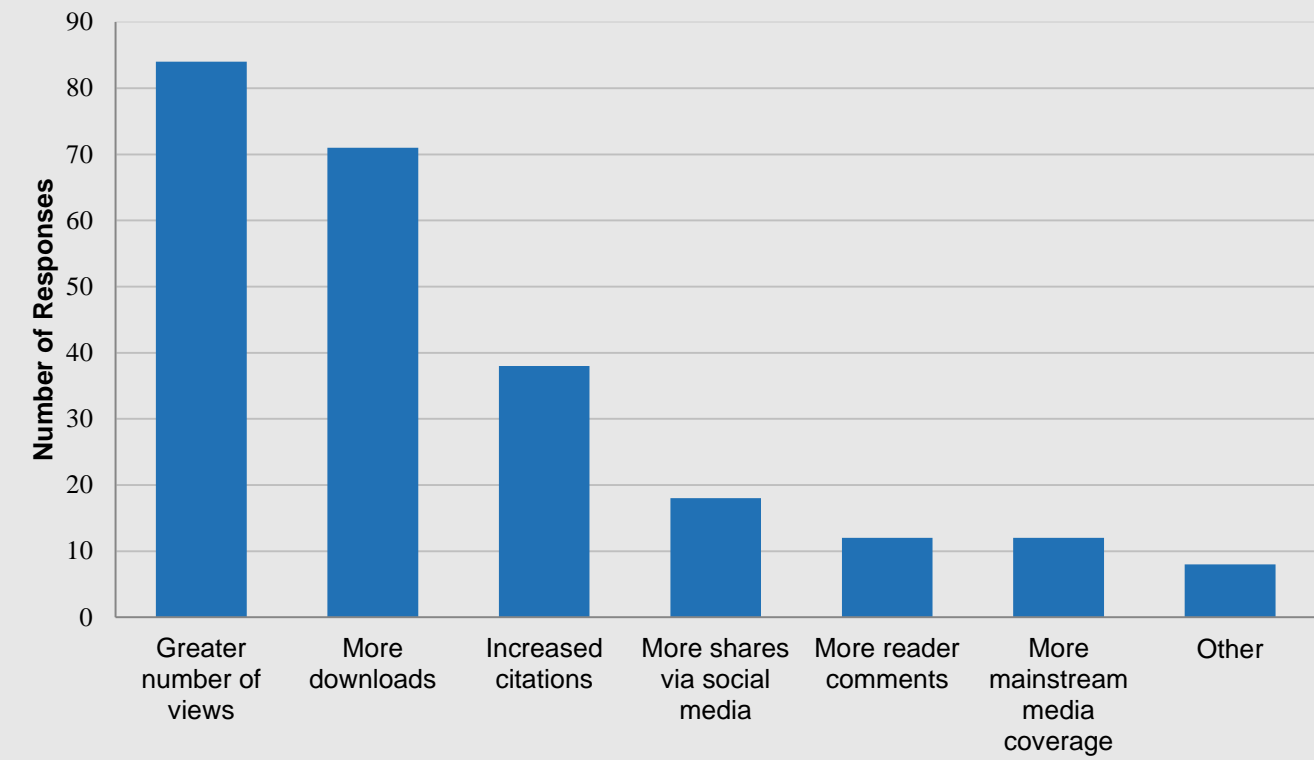
BRII recipients were surveyed in April 2015 using Berkeley licensed Qualtrics software. Our survey response rate was **72%**: 99 out of 138 of our pool completed the survey.

### Greater impact:

Most respondents (82%) believed that their article had a greater overall impact because it was open access. They listed greater number of views and more downloads as the primary benefits of open access.

"The press office wrote a release, and we got a front page story in the SF Chronicle on day of publication. A Gordon and Betty Moore Fdn program officer read the article, and reached out to me. That contact has since resulted in almost \$2M in funding, and had a major impact on the direction of my research. I think Open Access makes a difference in reporter's interest in covering stories, though I can't prove it!"

### Benefits of open access for BRII funded article



### Funding from multiple sources:

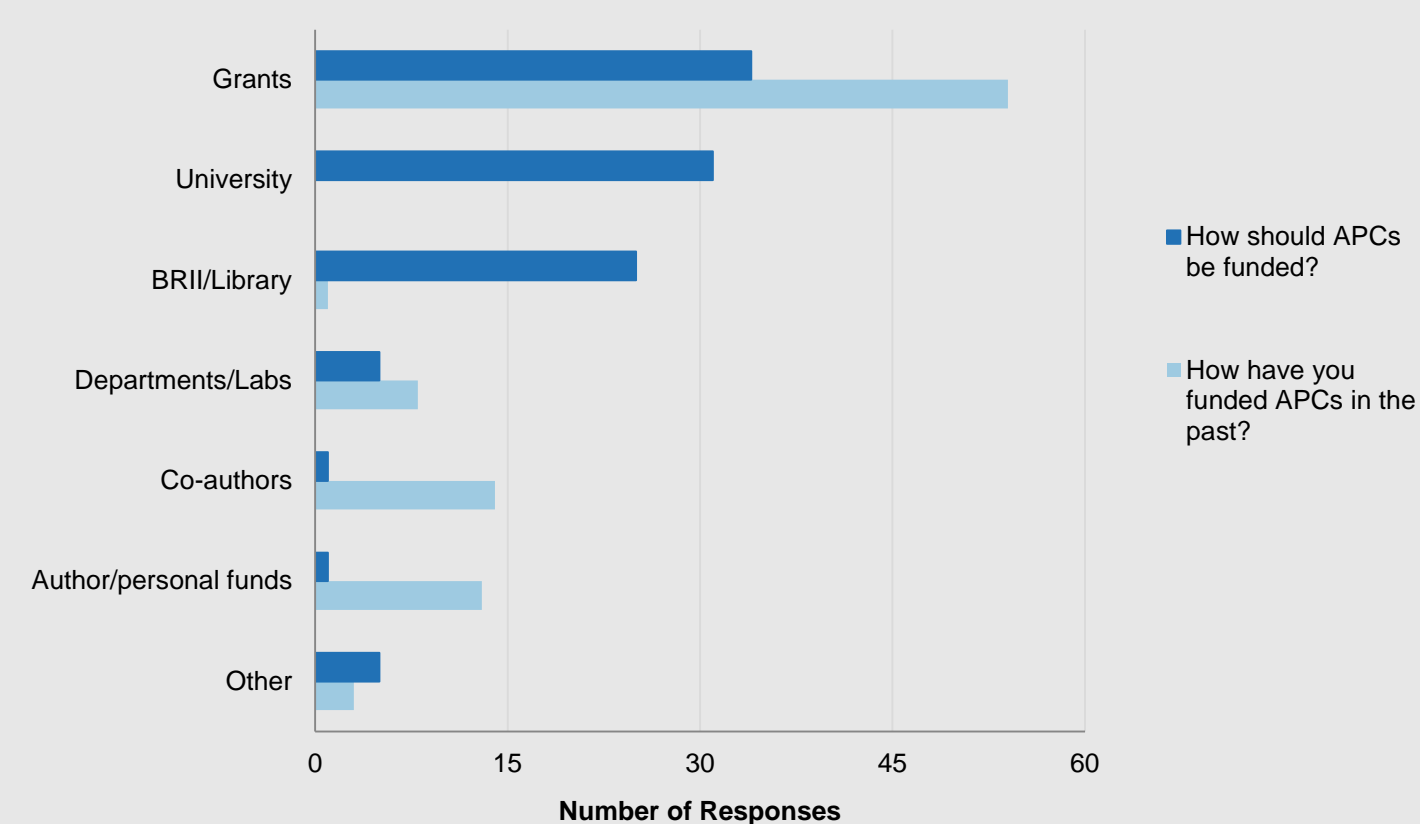
Respondents support the use of multiple funding sources to pay APCs, but feel that the university should offer greater contributions.

"If grant funding is available then open access charges should come from the grant. But when the grant is finished and there are no alternate funds ... there needs to be some other source to pay the APC."

"...universities/departments should pick up some proportion ... not covered by external grants."

"If the university wants professors to publish open access, it needs to provide resources for professors to do so."

### Funding of Article Processing Charges for open access



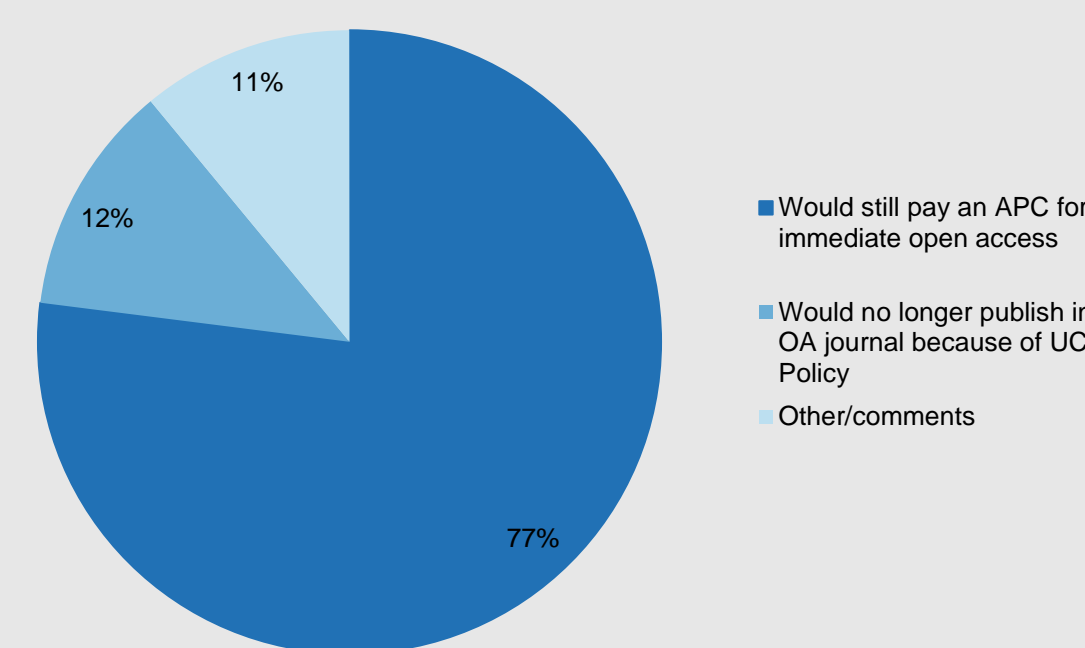
### Gold over Green:

Many respondents were supportive of the UC Open Access policy but stated that it would not influence where they publish.

"...open access journals are still preferred to me over posting my paper on my own website (or a repository such as the one at UCB) because it removes one step in the process for other scientists trying to get a hold of some paper of mine they discovered on Pubmed."

"I think the UC open access policy is great, but it doesn't influence where I publish."

### How does the UC Open Access Policy impact decision to publish in an OA journal with Article Processing Charges?



## Conclusions

- Survey respondents believe that their **open access articles** received **more attention** and had a **greater impact** than they might have had in a subscription journal.
- They are willing to **draw from multiple sources** to fund open access fees, including **grants** and **campus OA funds** like BRII.
- Respondents believe that the **university should do more** to defray costs and **support researchers**, especially those with limited or no funding.
- Respondents **support the goals of the UC Open Access Policy**, but overwhelmingly **prefer to publish in OA journals that provide immediate access** to their articles.
- Berkeley researchers are **concerned about the future of scholarly publishing** and knowledgeable about how to maximize the reach of their work within the present system.
- The **Berkeley Research Impact Initiative** remains a **valued resource for these authors** and **fills a vital role** as a funding source for open access publications.



## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Tom Leonard for acting as our Principal Investigator, Jeffery Loo for his invaluable assistance with our study, and the University of California Open Access Fund Assessment Questions Task Group.

## Sources

Greg Tananbaum of SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) has reported extensively on campus-based OA funds. Among the reports consulted for our study and available on the SPARC website are: *Campus-Based Open-Access Publishing Funds*, *North American Campus-Based Open Access Funds: A Five-Year Progress Report*, and *Open Access Funds in Action*.

## Further information

Samantha Teplitzky and Margaret Phillips. Evaluating the impact of open access at Berkeley: Results from the 2015 survey of Berkeley Research Impact Initiative (BRII) funding recipients. College and Research Libraries. Accepted: September 28, 2015; Anticipated Publication Date: September 1, 2016