

Letter From the Editor

Juanita Richardson, MLIS, MBA

¹ Michener Institute of Education at UHN, Toronto, ON Canada

E-mail: jrichardson@michener.ca

Received 01/07/2021

Published 4/10/2021

Copyright © 2021 by the Authors. Published by the Michener Institute for Education at UHN's Learning Resource Centre. Open access under CC-BY license.

Introduction

This has been a year of changes and challenges for the Michener school – and, indeed, for all post-secondary education institutions – as we navigated our way through the rocky shoals of this COVID-19 pandemic. From an initial expectation that we would be “back to normal” after a few weeks ... then a few months ... then (surely!) by January, we slowly realized that we were living the “new” normal perhaps without even realizing it and that hybrid was going to be the new standard for teaching and learning.

Hybrid is what we are featuring this year in our student open access journal, MICH, as well! When Graham Lavender, our Associate Librarian, and I presented on this initiative to the Canadian Health Library Association / Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada conference in June 2021 (see abstract below), a question of great interest for us was: “What’s next – how will you continue to grow the OAJ?” To which we replied: “Hybrid content! We don’t just need to support text-based content – we’d like to see other formats like illustrations, videos, anything!” Our call was answered in this issue with a poster submitted by our students. Of course, we still take articles too – as you will see in this issue – but we think that more diversity in content types will also make for a more interesting journal. Students and Faculty: keep them coming!

Abstract of our paper presented at CHLA/ABSC:

Establishing an open access journal for student work: library leadership in scholarly communications

In 2019, incited by conversations with faculty, the LRC embarked upon a project to create a student open access journal (OAJ). The Michener Institute is committed to simulation – and our student OAJ, MICH, offers a scholarly communications simulation experience from which our students can learn.

Student journals are common in undergraduate and graduate programs. The typical format is that the students not only write the articles but also manage the journal. However, at Michener, we concluded that it made better sense for the LRC to manage the journal with support from an editorial board and TIER reviewers – allowing our students to submit articles and go through the publication process without the additional work of running the journal.

Our goals were to show off the talent of Michener students as well as to teach students about the scholarly ecosystem. Our students are consumers of scholarly information without necessarily learning about the systems and processes that go on behind the scenes. When students learn about the scholarly ecosystem, it not only helps to provide context for the materials they read for class, it also shows them their own work can contribute to the broader systems of

learning and knowledge and how they can contribute to the scholarly conversation.

We've kept the submission process as straightforward as possible so that students won't be intimidated by it. There are only 3 requirements for submission: authors must be current or recent Michener students; the work must be related to the student's field of study; the work must be approved by a Michener faculty member as the subject matter expert. Before publication, we recommend that students create an ORCID iD as a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes them from other scholars and sets them up with an iD they can use throughout their careers.

Developing a library-led student OAJ has been a rewarding project for the LRC staff and provides an interesting opportunity for our students. A big thank you to the faculty who have supported this initiative and who have encouraged the students to submit their work.

Shout out: The idea for an OAJ was sparked by faculty member Sheena Bhimji Hewitt who remarked that, given the improved quality of assignments submitted due to the LRC's workshops in digital information literacy and follow-up engagement, it was a shame that our students' works were lost after they were marked and returned. Sheena's support and further conversations with program chair Catherine Ladhani about student writing inspired us to develop our open access journal for Michener students and to further support them in their writing endeavours.

Thank you!

Juanita Richardson

Manager, Learning Resource Centre