



January 7, 2004

Dear UC Faculty,

We are pleased to report the successful conclusion of the UC libraries' negotiations with the publisher Reed Elsevier, and to announce actions being taken by UC Libraries and the Academic Senate to address the crisis inherent in a scholarly communication process that is economically no longer sustainable.

Elsevier contract

From January 1, 2004, the UC community will have access to a selected list of c.1,200 of the company's scholarly journals, including titles produced by Harcourt Health Sciences, Academic Press, and Cell Press.* The five-year contract accommodates the University's deteriorating budget situation without sacrificing access to the titles selected by each campus. We are not announcing the negotiated price but we have arrested for now the price inflation that has been common in this market.

We believe that this outcome which is in harmony with UC proposals, is sensitive to the significant concerns expressed by faculty and others, including:

- individual faculty actions (such as the protest raised by Professors Walter and Yamamoto, and by the faculty editors, authors, and reviewers of Elsevier publications who voiced their opinions and concern via a variety of means);
- the formal actions of divisional senates as reflected in a resolution passed at UC Santa Cruz on 10/24/03 (see <http://senate.ucsc.edu/>);
- the numerous formal and informal actions of divisional senate library committees including letters to campus faculty circulated at Berkeley (<http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/committees/coms/LIBR.html>) and San Francisco (<http://senate.ucsc.edu/>), and public meetings convened at, Davis, Irvine, Riverside, and UCLA; and
- the consistent support and leadership shown by the Academic Council, the Systemwide Senate leadership, and by the Councils of Chancellors and Vice Chancellors.

Actions addressing the economic challenges of scholarly communication

However great our success in securing an acceptable contract with a single publisher, we have only just begun to address the deeper structural problems in scholarly communication that fundamentally threaten the academy.

The economics of scholarly journal publishing are incontrovertibly unsustainable. Taming price inflation is not enough. Unless we change the current model, academic libraries and universities will be unable to continue providing faculty, students, and staff with the access they require to the world's scholarship and knowledge. Scholars will be unable to make the results of their research widely available.

These are not statements about any single company, about the strengths and weaknesses of for- and not-for-profit publishing, or about the prospects of open-access versus subscription-based journal models. They are merely observations about economic reality. The unit cost of scholarly journals increased 200% between 1986 and 2002, while the Consumer Price Index rose only 50%. Some of this increase undoubtedly reflects the knowledge explosion; some may reflect inefficiencies in the market. In any case, in recent years we have been paying more for access to a smaller proportion of the world's published knowledge. If we are to halt or even reverse that trend, we must aggressively ramp up and institutionalize our efforts to change the scholarly communication process. Harvard, Cornell, and many other leading universities are also grappling with these same issues.

Of course we appreciate the value contributed voluntarily to the publishing process by scholars (as authors, reviewers, and editors) and by libraries (who facilitate and manage the use and availability of the scholarly record). We also appreciate the value that publishers add, yet we question the equitability of its price tag in a number of cases. At a time when so many US universities are fundamentally re-thinking how they can continue to support high-quality research and teaching, it would be irresponsible not to do so.

Accordingly, the University's libraries, the Systemwide Senate leadership, and the UC administration are taking action and committing themselves to evaluating scholarly communication in all forms including periodicals and monographs, and to finding the most cost effective methods of making scholarly work available to the world.

The UC Libraries are working aggressively to:

- stretch collections dollars by acting consortially to license online journals and reference databases;
- inform themselves and faculty colleagues about the dimensions of and possible ways to address the crisis in the economics of scholarly communication; and
- support alternative means for publishing scholarly materials that make high-quality peer-reviewed work available at an affordable price.

In the years ahead our work will be accelerated and expanded, and described along with periodic updates at <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu>.

The University of California Academic Council has recently established a Special Committee on Scholarly Communication (SCSC). It will soon begin a careful analysis of alternative publications methods for both scholarly periodicals and monographs; methods of evaluating and ensuring high-quality publications that can be used in academic promotion and tenure; the most appropriate business model(s) for publications; and possible effects on scholarly societies of different publication methods, among topics related to scholarly communications.

(http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/news/source/source2_2.pdf). The SCSC looks forward to working with other universities to optimize dissemination of faculties' discovery of knowledge, both in terms of availability and cost.

The success of these actions, like that of our negotiations with Elsevier, will depend inevitably on faculty's proactive support. We look forward to and encourage that support

and activism over the coming years. Faculty will be consulted closely in our work and kept informed about our progress. This level of consultation is essential because, ultimately, the power to change the economics of scholarly publishing lies with those who produce its intellectual contents.

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Daniel Greenstein, California Digital Library
Marilyn Sharrow, Davis
Gerald Munoff, Irvine
Gary Strong, Los Angeles
Bruce Miller, Merced
Ruth M. Jackson, Riverside
Brian Schottlaender, San Diego
Karen Butter, San Francisco
Sarah Pritchard, Santa Barbara
Robert White (Acting), Santa Cruz

Lawrence H. Pitts, Chair
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* From January 1, 2004, the University of California will lose access to approximately 200 journals that were not selected by any campus.