



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION  
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December 19, 2019

KUM-KUM BHAVNANI, CHAIR  
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Re: UCOLASC statement requesting unspent subscription money be invested in open access publishing**

Dear Kum-Kum:

As you know, the University of California [announced](#) in February 2019 that it would not sign a new contract with Elsevier until it met UC's requirement for a [transformative open access agreement](#). That requirement remains unfulfilled. Meanwhile, the UC Libraries have substantial unspent budgeted funding for FY18/19 that had been allocated to pay for Elsevier subscriptions. If and when UC reaches a transformative agreement with Elsevier, some portion of that funding will be needed to backfill archived materials and for other purposes. The UCOLASC feels strongly that any additional portion should remain with UC Libraries and earmarked for UC's ongoing commitments to open access publishing. The UCOLASC feels equally strongly that FY19/20 funds be allocated and then safeguarded for the same purposes. To this end, on November 14, 2019, the UCOLASC voted unanimously to endorse the following statement:

*"The University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the UC Libraries to engage and collaborate with faculty, both at the systemwide and campus levels, during the ongoing journal negotiations between the [UC and Elsevier](#) and other journal publishers. In the interest of furthering this collaboration, UCOLASC's clear and expressed expectation is that any funding from the lapsed contract between UC and Elsevier will be (1) preserved to the extent required to strike a future Elsevier contract, and/or (2) reinvested in open access publishing and the free dissemination of UC scholarship.*

*We understand that the ten campus Libraries and CDL have taken steps to safeguard the funds originally designated for an Elsevier agreement in FY18/19, and, additionally, have budgeted for the expenses of an Elsevier agreement in FY19/20. We further understand that the UC Libraries are currently incurring costs to provide alternative access to Elsevier materials from 2019, and we appreciate the Libraries' foresight in ensuring that funding for a future transformative open access agreement with Elsevier remain available, including funds that may be needed to purchase the 2019 backfile.*

*We also appreciate the challenges of continuing to safeguard this funding, and budgeting for an expense that may only come due if we strike an agreement with Elsevier. All ten*

*UC campuses, through a process involving their respective library committees, have signed the Open Access 2020 (OA2020) expression of interest, which pledges their commitment to “pursue this transformation process by converting resources currently spent on journal subscriptions into funds to support sustainable OA business models.” In that spirit, we believe that it is in the interest of advancing open scholarship at UC that (1) UC budget offices keep those funds allocated to the UC Libraries both retrospectively and prospectively, regardless of a contract with Elsevier, so that (2) the Libraries may reinvest these funds in other contracts or activities that support the UC faculty in advancing the faculty’s open access goals if an Elsevier contract does not materialize.*

*In the absence of an Elsevier contract, the University should pursue open access more vigorously than ever by providing UC faculty with opportunities to publish open access in other venues. We expect the UC Libraries to rely on funds freed up due to the lapsed Elsevier contract for this purpose. We ask that Academic Council support the Libraries in this endeavor by (1) advocating for safeguarding funds until the Libraries have finalized a plan to reinvest these funds in open access, and (2) advocating against reductions in current and future budget allocations due to open or unknown contract negotiations.*

***Action Item: UCOLASC is requesting that Academic Council consider endorsing and issuing the above statement in support of reinvesting unspent journal subscription funds in open access publishing.***

Please let us know if you have any questions or need additional information.

We thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Dennis Ventry, **Chair**

Karen Ottemann, **Vice-Chair**

Ellen Simms, **UC Berkeley**  
Kathryn Olmsted, **UC Davis**  
Rebecca Davis, **UC Irvine**  
Derjung Mimi Tarn, **UC Los Angeles**  
Timothy Tangherlini, **UC Los Angeles (alternate)**  
Maria DePrano, **UC Merced**  
Leonid Pryadko, **UC Riverside**  
John Hildebrand, **UC San Diego**  
Marta Margeta, **UC San Francisco**  
Paul Berkowitz, **UC Santa Barbara**  
Jin Zhang, **UC Santa Cruz**

cc: Mary Gauvain, Academic Council Vice Chair  
Hilary Baxter, Academic Senate Executive Director  
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Associate Director