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Chair of the Assembly of the Academic Senate
Faculty Representative to the Regents
University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

January 22, 2021

MICHAEL T. BROWN
PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Re: Statement of Concern about Possible Budget Cuts to the California Digital Library

Dear Michael,

The Academic Council has endorsed the attached letter from the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) expressing concern about significant budget cuts being considered for the California Digital Library (CDL).

The CDL is a critical component of information access across all UC campuses, and we are concerned that budget cuts will weaken its ability to acquire and provide access to scholarly information, harm faculty welfare, and impair UC's teaching, research, and public service missions.

We understand that during the 2008-2010 recession, the consolidated, shared, systemwide resources provided by the CDL became a solution to budget cuts that reduced individual campuses' library holdings and library personnel. Decisions about how UC campus libraries could absorb cuts were made then, in part, by considering which resources could be covered by the CDL. Cutting the CDL now will severely compromise its ability to compensate for those lost resources.

We understand that you will make budget decisions about the CDL later this month, and we urge you to consider these concerns as part of your decision-making process. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Gauvain".

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: UCOLASC Chair Margeta
CDL Director Waibel
Academic Council
Senate Directors
Executive Director Baxter

Encl.



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

Marta Margeta., Chair
Marta.Margeta@ucsf.edu

ACADEMIC SENATE

University of California
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

January 4, 2021

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL**Re: UCOLASC statement of concern regarding possible budget cuts to the California Digital Library (CDL)**

Dear Mary:

As you are well aware, the University of California is facing significant budget constraints due to the fiscal crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the UCOLASC supports measures needed to sustain the University through these challenging times, the committee feels strongly that any budget cuts that are being considered should minimize (i) the disruption of the CDL services that are shared by all ten campuses and (ii) the long-term damage to irreplaceable digital resources that were developed over many years and are only now starting to bear fruit. To this end, on November 18 2020, the UCOLASC voted unanimously to endorse this statement:

The University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) recognizes and appreciates the importance of the content and services provided by the California Digital Library (CDL), which form the infrastructure for the ten campus libraries, a foundation for research and teaching performed by the UC faculty, and a key resource for the UC graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, UCOLASC recognizes CDL's critical role as a member of the collaborative coalition of the UC Libraries and a faculty partner in a number of ambitious efforts, including transformation of the global publishing landscape towards universal open access.

Therefore, UCOLASC's clear and expressed expectation is that any cuts to the CDL budget will be strategic and will minimize both the disruption to the shared services and the long-term damage to irreplaceable digital resources. Significant reductions in CDL services will directly impact faculty productivity, reduce equitable library support of faculty across the system, diminish UC's competitiveness in attracting and retaining faculty and obtaining grants, and decrease UC's ability to attract the best students. Specifically:

- *Faculty productivity suffers when basic systemwide information resources and systems become unavailable.*
- *Systemwide equity degrades when common resources and systems become accessible only on our largest campuses.*
- *UC's ability to attract and retain a world-class faculty degrades if basic conditions for success and competitiveness in research and grant-writing fall behind institutions we consider our peers.*
- *UC's appeal to top students diminishes if the digital resources they need for their learning and research are not readily available.*

Given the substantial risk that significant CDL budget cuts would undermine the University's core missions, UCOLASC is very concerned about some of the proposed UCOP budget actions:

- *We are grateful that CDL continues to provide the same level of service while triaging for 5 frozen positions, but we recognize the strain this puts on the CDL staff.*
- *We are dismayed to hear that the budget that supports systemwide licensing and the open access transformation has been removed from CDL's budget at UCOP (a 46% budget reduction).*
- *We are concerned that CDL will face additional budget reductions in the FY21/22 budget process, with no ability to manage these reductions other than through service cuts.*
- *We understand that if services that took years to build get discontinued, re-establishing them will be a difficult task. In particular, we note that physical resources have been removed from the library stacks over many years, premised on the idea that they would remain available as digital resources. Under these circumstances, significant cuts to digital library services would produce irreparable harm to library collections, possibly imperiling successful University re-accreditation (which in part depends on the size of these collections).*
- *We recognize that some of the services that would be affected by significant CDL budget cuts include UC support of and participation in HathiTrust Digital Library and are dismayed by that possibility. HathiTrust began in 2008 as a collaboration of the universities of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (now the Big Ten Academic Alliance) and the University of California system, and has been a lifeline for the UC scholars that have lost access to the physical library collections during the COVID-19 crisis. Leaving HathiTrust now would be akin to quitting the World Health Organization in the middle of a pandemic, and cannot be justified by any budget constraints.*

*In summary, having a great library is a prerequisite for having a great university, and is not something we can opt into one year, and opt out of another year. In addition to acquiring essential scholarly works, a great library provides data and research preservation services, publishing services, digitization services, and platforms to enable discovery and access. **A great library depends on consistent investment.** Particularly in times of remote research, teaching and learning, having a great digital library supporting all students and faculty is not a luxury, but an absolute essential that must be maintained even in the most challenging times.*

Action Item: UCOLASC is requesting that Academic Council consider endorsing and forwarding the above statement to UC Provost Brown prior to January 26, 2021.

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

We thank you in advance for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Marta Margeta, **Chair**



Derjung Mimi Tarn, **Vice-Chair**

Ellen Simms, **UC Berkeley**
Eric Rauchway, **UC Davis**
Brian Reynolds, **UC Irvine**
Gregory Leazer, **UC Los Angeles**
Maria DePrano, **UC Merced**
Alejandra Dubcovsky, **UC Riverside**
John Hildebrand, **UC San Diego**
Keith Mostov, **UC San Francisco**
Karen Lunsford, **UC Santa Barbara**
Jin Zhang, **UC Santa Cruz**
Haipeng Li, **Ex-Officio (CoUL Chair)**
David Rabinowitz, **Ex-Officio (UCACC Chair)**
Guy Robinson, **Graduate Student Representative**
Liam Will, **Undergraduate Student Representative**

cc: Robert Horowitz, Academic Council Vice Chair
Hilary Baxter, Academic Senate Executive Director
Michael LaBriola, Academic Senate Associate Director