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Communication from the Chair of the Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication
Richard A. Schneider, PhD, Chair

May 4, 2012

MEMBERS OF THE UCSF ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Divisional Vote on an Open Access Policy for UCSF

Dear Colleagues,

The predominant system for scholarly communication has become economically unsustainable, restrictive, and critically limited in its ability to disseminate our research. *We are asking you to endorse a policy that will make our publications more accessible and ultimately help control costs.*

Despite our University's diminishing budget, there remains a real need to access increasing amounts of scholarly materials. The costs of purchasing such materials continue to rise exponentially due largely to aggressive practices of many commercial publishers who extract billions of dollars in profits every year from the business of scholarly communication, particularly in the digital marketplace.

Traditional "fee-for-access" publishing models restrict the distribution of scholarly publications to those who can afford journal subscriptions or per-article download prices. System-wide, UC spends more than $40 million dollars annually to access scholarly materials, including the work of UC authors, which we give away, edit, and peer-review for free. Most other Universities and especially the taxpaying public have substantially less access, and thus our research is not achieving its full impact. Even if we had unlimited amounts of money and could keep up with the pricing of commercial publishers, there are many other reasons to transform the current system of scholarly communication.

Accordingly, the Academic Senate Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (COLASC) has worked closely with the System-Wide Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) to develop an Open Access Policy that we anticipate will be adopted by all ten UC campuses. This policy is very similar to those already in place at more than 140 other peer Institutions, including Harvard, Stanford, MIT, Duke, and Princeton. Although these policies vary in some details, at their core they operate in the same way: by default Faculty grant their Institution permission to disseminate their scholarship freely through an open-access repository. These policies all allow Faculty members to deny or delay this permission very easily (that is, to trigger a waiver of the policy) for any specific work—no questions asked. UCSF is ready to vote on such a policy, which has been vetted through Academic Senate Committees and Faculty Councils. Their letters of support are enclosed. Also enclosed is the policy itself, some FAQs, and an accompanying slide presentation that contextualizes the various complex issues related to scholarly communication. If you have any questions about these materials or the policy, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

As Faculty authors, you can empower viable alternatives to the present system, regain control over your publications, and increase the reach, visibility, and impact of your research. We look forward to your attendance and vote at the May 21st Division Meeting, which will be held from noon-2pm in room HSW-300 on Parnassus and the Arthur and Toni Rembe Auditorium in Rock Hall at Mission Bay.

On behalf of the numerous individuals and committees that have worked tirelessly on this policy, I thank you in advance for your help in reshaping the future of scholarly communication at UCSF.

Yours truly,

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Enclosures: Letters of Support
                Open Access Policy
                Open Access Policy FAQ
                Open Access Policy Presentation