

Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee

Resolution G: Digital Library Journal Collecting Principles

Resolved: *To align costs with value, the Committee recommends that UC libraries, in close consultation with the faculty, initiate a Systemwide review and renegotiation of the University's contracts with publishers whose pricing practices are not sustainable. The Committee recognizes that this advice may lead to canceling access to some journals in some formats in order to assure funding is available to support other higher quality and cost effective scholarly materials. It is in the long-term interest of the University and the scholarly community selectively to support high quality publications.*

Background: The University libraries face financial constraints due to a dismal State budget situation and the ever-escalating prices of journals. Systemwide licensing of electronic journals is the current primary strategy for sharing the journal literature among campuses. This strategy has been successful; among the benefits are cumulative "savings" through multi-year inflation caps that approach \$1 million over 3-4 years for all publishers. In other words, without these agreements the University would have spent an additional \$1 million for journals or would have further reduced titles available to each campus. There are currently nearly 9,000 electronic journals in the shared UC collection. With a total investment of about \$20 million, ongoing subscriptions and their escalating costs have now become a serious threat to the libraries' ability to flexibly manage their acquisitions and adjust their expenditures. Many large publishers want UC to license packages of electronic journals. These packages include high quality titles of relevance to UC academic programs as well as some mediocre titles. Due to historical investments in print journals that have in many cases determined the cost of our digital licenses, the cost of some of the UC packages is considerably higher than what is charged to other institutions. To manage our expenditures and focus on acquiring relevant, high-quality publications, particularly from professional societies, UC will need to convince publishers to lower their prices or to unbundle their offerings to allow us to select among their titles, or be prepared to cancel the package subscriptions entirely.

Flexibility is essential in assuring that UC money is used to purchase the highest quality of journals first and other journals only as funds permit. However, faculty members and researchers have become increasingly dependent on around-the-clock, remote electronic access to large numbers of digital journals. It will be important to balance this convenience against the need to maintain quality and tailor collections to University needs by retaining the ability to drop titles that are not in demand by UC scholars, or to acquire these in only the lowest-cost format, and use the money to purchase other high quality publications.