February 28, 2011

To: Dr. Daniel Greenstein
Vice Provost, Academic Planning, Programs and Coordination
University of California Office of the President
Oakland, California 94607

From: California Digital Library Review Steering Committee

Dear Dan:

As you know, the CDL is undergoing a review to delineate the value of CDL services to the campuses and the University overall and to identify ways to enhance or increase the value of those services. The review is nearing completion, with a final report expected in the next few weeks. Because the current budget crisis facing the University of California is forcing an intense examination of value, especially value to the academic core, the Review Steering Committee feels some urgency to share with you now some findings from the report. The committee has spoken with a wide range of stakeholders both inside and outside UC, stakeholders who consistently rated the value of the services CDL provides, both in aggregate and in particular, as extremely high. Again and again, both direct and indirect benefits of CDL services were assessed by respondents as providing a generous return on the investment needed to provide them. Even against the backdrop of other services that our university and its libraries provide, CDL's value is understood to be well above the mean. Examples most often cited include the following.

- CDL acts as a negotiating agent and broker for licensing scholarly content on behalf of the UC. In this role, the CDL has negotiated agreements with the providers of more than 34,500 electronic journals and 508,000 e-books, enabling campuses to collectively avoid more than $25 million in independent subscription fees. If not for this service many of the campuses would be unable to purchase these materials on their own, which would impact the research community's ability to access materials vital to the success of research.
- CDL provides scholars and staff of UC with essential electronic resources and information services (discovery, retrieval, publishing, and preservation) needed to increase the competitiveness of UC faculty for winning grants and extramural funding and to enrich the student learning experience. CDL services are particularly essential for supporting data access, management, and preservation needs now emphasized by Federal granting agencies, particularly the National Science Foundation, and in some cases, the National Institutes of Health.
- CDL has built an affordable digital library infrastructure to support the ways in which scholarly information is accessed, shared, and preserved. This infrastructure includes:
    - the Melvyl catalog, which contains records for the collections of the ten UC libraries and many others
    - the Request Service, which facilitates interlibrary loans and document delivery
    - UC-eLinks, which connects scholars from an article or book citation directly to the actual publication
    - eScholarship, an institutional repository enhanced with open access publishing services

    - the Online Archive of California, which provides free public access to detailed descriptions of primary resource collections from UC and 150 other institutions across the state
    - Merritt, the preservation repository which allows users to manage, archive, and share digital content.
- CDL is involved in a number of regional, national, and international community initiatives to develop and deliver quality and cost-effective solutions that require greater scale, sustainability, than even UC is able to provide on its own. Among others, these initiatives include HathiTrust, DataCite, and DataOne.
- CDL acts as a neutral broker to facilitate collaboration among the campuses and with a multiplicity of external partners on this continent and around the world.

CDL and its services are deeply woven into the fabric of the operations of the campus libraries. In many if not most cases, the services CDL provides —infrastructural and otherwise—are now inextricably integrated into campus library operations. It is, therefore, difficult and indeed counterproductive to try to assess CDL's delivery of value at a systemwide level, absent consideration of its campus context.

As a result, present and future decisions about CDL's size and shape (including, of course, budgetary decisions) must, in our view, be taken in conjunction with similar decisions about the campus libraries. We believe that the University Librarians, as a body, are in the most direct position to weigh CDL's value against that of the other services the campus libraries are called upon to provide. Their relationship with the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication, as well as their campus relationships with faculty, provide a means for ensuring that faculty interests are taken into account. Therefore, this Steering Committee recommends that the Council of University Librarians (on which CDL is represented) be charged to take on this role.

C: Provost Pitts