

# Northern Regional Library Facility expansion Project FAQ - March 2017

## **What are the Regional Library Facilities (RLFs) and how do they benefit UC libraries?**

The RLFs are facilities owned by UCOP and supervised by the Shared Library Facilities Board (SLFB<sup>1</sup>) that shelve and provide access to nearly 14 million books and other items for the UC libraries. The Northern Regional Library Facility (NRLF), located on the Berkeley Global Campus and the Southern Regional Library Facility (SRLF) located on the UCLA campus, provide preservation quality shelving for 35% of the collections of the UC libraries. Opened in the 1980s, the RLFs have been expanded three times (NRLF 2, SRLF 2, NRLF 3).

## **How do the RLFs benefit the UC system?**

As a shared facility, the RLFs provide shelving and access services at a lower cost than campuses could do so on their own. In turn they allow campuses to use space for higher priority research and teaching needs. The aggregated collections of the RLFs constitute one of the largest research libraries in the US, available to every member of the UC community. The RLFs are a shared resource that allow the UC libraries to collaborate through shared collection investment and programs such as digitization and preservation.

## **What is the proposed NRLF project and what will it cost?**

The proposed project will add a fourth phase to the NRLF. This phase will store 3.1 million volumes for the 10 UC campuses, supplying 10 years of new shelving capacity; construction is planned for July 2018. The project will cost \$32.5 million.

## **Who has reviewed and approved this project?**

At various stages of development the project has been reviewed and approved by the 10 University Librarians, the Executive Director of the California Digital Library, the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) and the library committees of each of the 10 campuses. President Napolitano approved moving ahead with planning when she met with the University Librarians in February 2016. In Fall 2016 the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) and the Council of Vice Chancellors (COVC) reviewed this project and unanimously recommended proceeding with construction to Provost Dorr. The plan was developed under the leadership of Susan Carlson and Aimee Dorr, the project owner.

## **Why do the UC libraries need to expand NRLF and why now?**

Last expanded in 2005, the NRLF is projected to reach capacity in 2018 with SRLF filling soon after. Even with library efforts to purchase digital content, and with coordinated efforts at de-duplication (see below), UC libraries are adding 300,000 volumes per year in general and archival collections. Expanding NRLF will allow libraries at each campus to manage space according to local needs.

## **Should libraries just move to all digital content?**

Although the UC libraries have made considerable progress in shifting collections to digital and shared formats, a fully digital library is not possible or preferable for all areas. UC libraries need to purchase and keep print for archival collections, materials published in geographic regions where print publishing is still the primary method and materials where the print format is more usable than digital. In addition, more recent items are in copyright and digitized copies cannot be legally used.

## **What other options have you considered?**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/slfb>

The SLFB has studied options for collection management and RLF expansion since early 2014. None of the evaluated alternatives to expansion provide the same return on investment as the expansion of NRLF.

Summaries of considered alternatives are included below:

1. **Ensure that collections housed in the RLFs are not duplicative:** Policies implemented in the early 2000s ensure that the UC campuses only deposit unique items (i.e. not already held) in the RLFs. A 2014 study of duplication found that between 5% and 10% of general collections may be duplicated (due to deposits prior to this policy) and in 2017 a pilot study found that it would cost \$1.6 million to de-duplicate 300,000 volumes (1 years' worth of deposits). This considerable cost combined with overall limited duplication indicates that de-duplication alone is not a sufficient alternative to expanded capacity.
2. **Increase capacity of the existing shelving:** During the 2016-17 engineering study the NRLF team studied options for increasing the utilization of current facilities. The review of NRLF Phases 1-3 found that altogether it could support up to 800,000 but also found that the cost of doing this work in situ is prohibitive due to the need to move all volumes and implement new systems.
3. **Build a third RLF in a low-cost location:** The SLFB studied the possibility of building a new RLF in a central valley location given the potential for lower construction costs. Compared to the expansion project at NRLF, the "new RLF" would involve the development of all new facilities including workspace, loading docks, HVAC and other infrastructure. In addition, the "new RLF" would require the purchase of land and an annual operation budget of approximately \$1.2 million. In contrast the land for NRLF Phase 4 is already owned by UC and is designated for this purpose in the master plan. The expansion project leverages existing infrastructure and we anticipate no new staffing costs for NRLF Phase 4.
4. **Use outsourced solutions for collection storage:** The SLFB worked with a major vendor in the collection storage business to explore the feasibility of an outsourced solution. The team collaborated with the vendor over two years to explore potential solutions. The best solution identified included per-item costs for deposit, storage and access with the risk of inflation over time. The analysis of the outsourced solution found that there were no projected cost savings after 15 years and thereafter the incremental storage costs would exceed \$2 million per year for a similar size facility.

### **Why is this building so expensive?**

A major cost driver of NRLF4 is the location of the facility in Richmond, CA. This is not due to land costs as land has been allocated to NRLF4 on the Richmond Campus long range development plan (LRDP) but rather to the construction requirements for a seismically active zone with marginal soil conditions. Despite these factors, the building design is cheaper per volume than NRLF Phase 3 and a similar facility in Livermore, CA.

### **Should we consider a smaller facility?**

Previous RLF expansion efforts have served an approximate 15 year timeframe and the initial design of NRLF 4 met that scope. Due to capital constraints the design was reduced to a 10 year capacity. Given high fixed planning and construction costs, shrinking further would be cost-per-volume prohibitive.

### **What is the timeline for the NRLF Phase 4 expansion?**

If the project Preliminary and Working drawings (P&W) process is funded in FY2017 and 2018 and construction is funded in July 2018, as proposed by UCOP staff, NRLF 4 will be open for deposits in May 2020. This timeline will leave an 18 month period where the NRLF will be unable to accept deposits. Full project details are available at [http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/slfb/projects/uc\\_nrlf\\_phase4\\_expansion](http://libraries.universityofcalifornia.edu/slfb/projects/uc_nrlf_phase4_expansion). The RLFs and SLFB are currently working on plans to help campuses bridge this gap through collection management projects.