

The Regional Library Facilities (RLFs): Essential to core UC shared services & emerging innovations

Shared Library Facilities Board (SLFB) reflections on the role of the RLFs in systemwide success

The UC [southern](#) and [northern](#) Regional Library Facilities (RLFs) preserve and provide access to the University's valued physical collections of enduring scholarly importance, directly advancing the teaching, research and patient care of current and future generations of UC scholars. As high-density, climate-controlled storage facilities, the RLFs play a longstanding and central role in enabling comprehensive and diverse library collection development across the system, while also generating economies and efficiencies at scale. Our resulting UC collective collection is second in size and breadth only to the Library of Congress within the United States.

The RLFs are unified, shared service environments, integral to collection strategies and activities at the local and systemwide levels:

- Equitable intercampus lending and borrowing of RLF collections, regardless of the original campus owner, to advance faculty, student and researcher access, UC-wide;
- Mass digitization of millions of UC print books through partnerships with Google and Internet Archive;
- Support for digitization of rare, fragile and deteriorating materials;
- Campus space reclamation, redesign projects and continued print acquisitions to best serve local user needs;
- Long-term retention of print books and journals on behalf of not only UC, but also regional, national and international shared print efforts; and
- Collaboratively optimizing the management of our physical information resources.

Given the scale and significance of the UC collective collection, the RLFs are unique shared assets. In centrally managing almost 40% of UC's 40 million volume print corpus, the University has developed trusted RLF preservation, access and management services that already represent a high return on investment. Because of the RLFs, UC is also especially well-positioned to investigate and lead broader collaborative collection efforts. Existing and emerging areas for transformation that intersect with and/or rely on the RLFs include:

- Exploration of new digitized book delivery systems and expanded conservation, providing improved and faster remote access to UC's growing collective collection and enabling new modalities of digital scholarship (see [Project LEND](#));
- Consideration of expanded service models to support growing special collections and archives;
- Leveraging our regional, national and international shared print partnerships to help target and diversify what we preserve and make accessible as a community, both through the RLFs and partner institutions ([UC Shared Print Initiatives](#)); and
- Leadership in co-creating shared print principles, practices and governance structures that ensure the preservation of and continued access to significant print collections across the United States and with international partners.