



January 14, 2005

Dear UC Faculty Colleagues:

The rising costs of online scholarly publications continue to plague UC libraries. We are currently negotiating new contracts with Blackwell (a commercial publisher of over 600 titles, including many scholarly society titles), Springer (who now owns Kluwer), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), among others. Initial proposals from some of these publishers are at odds with both the extent and severity of UC's budget situation and the seriousness of our purpose in pursuing a sustainable, long-term acquisition policy. These publishers uniformly derive their base subscription pricing for electronic journals from historical and outmoded campus expenditures for print materials; in addition, they often propose annual price increases that significantly outpace the Consumer Price Index.

As you know, because of faculty action during the Elsevier negotiations, UC libraries achieved a multi-year agreement for access to over 1200 journal titles, lowered the base subscription cost, and eliminated the hyperinflation in the yearly price increases sought by the publisher. Now we ask you to support us in our resolve to say no to similar unfair or hyperinflationary price increases. There will be hard choices as we work within our means and prove our resolve with publishers. For example, saying no to unreasonable prices may result in selected title cutting in the short term, while we continue to pursue a balance of interests and greater flexibility in the long term.

The challenge is particularly troubling this year as we find ourselves negotiating subscription renewals for a large number of academic society publications. Over the past 15 years U.S. society journals have averaged 7.5% in yearly price increases, while, for the same time period, the Consumer Price Index has averaged a 3.1% yearly rise.<sup>1</sup> Although there are notable exceptions - the American Physical Society lowered its journal prices this year - it appears that many societies are relying on similar hyperinflation library subscription price models. Some UC faculty serve as editors for journals produced by these publishers. They may wish to discuss these broader issues of fair and reasonable pricing for electronic access with their contacts within these organizations. With a unified voice, we must underscore the importance of maintaining content at an affordable cost while sustaining adequate support for our academic societies. At the end of the day one simple fact remains: price increases at current levels are unacceptable and will restrict the number of scholarly publications available to each of us.

The Academic Council and the UC Libraries continue to work with you and others in the university to examine, document, and suggest action on these issues and opportunities. The Academic Council established a Special Committee on Scholarly Communication (SCSC) to

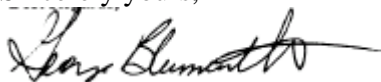
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<sup>1</sup> The annual average price changes for US society journals are from annual studies produced by the Allen Press. Consumer Price Index data is from the US Department of Labor.

steer a systemwide Senate response, and an Office of Scholarly Communication (OSC) was established at the Office of the President as a locus of operational and administrative support. The OSC website (<http://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/>) provides background information, new services (including a list of over 3,000 journal titles with information about prices and UC use), and links to full descriptions of the libraries' strategic plans to maintain great collections and influence scholarly communication. Please contact your University Librarian or your Library's Collection Development Officer if you have questions.

We are all determined to ensure that scholarly publications remain both affordable and accessible.

Sincerely yours,



George Blumenthal, Chair  
Academic Council

University Librarians

Thomas Leonard, Berkeley

Daniel Greenstein, California Digital Library

Marilyn Sharrow, Davis

Gerald Munoff, Irvine

Gary Strong, Los Angeles

Brunce Miller, Merced

Ruth Jackson, Riverside

Brian Schottlaender, San Diego

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Sara Pritchard, Santa Barbara

Robert White (Acting), Santa Cruz