Colleagues,

By now, you have read the announcement related to the current status and outcome of the University of California’s negotiations to renew its systemwide license with scholarly journal publisher Elsevier.

Many of you are worried about how you’ll access articles you need to support your work in the event Elsevier cuts off access to UC researchers and may wonder why the University of California is not renewing its subscription to many Elsevier journals.  The UC did not take this course of action without considering the impact and is providing alternatives through inter-library loan and other options.  And as much as we do not wish to add even minor inconvenience to your access, we are finally at a breaking point over the cost of subscription services.  Elsevier at best takes for free the research product that is funded by public agencies and charges exorbitant rates to provide access.  In many cases, they even charge researchers publishing costs.  They then bundle articles and charge subscription rates to give access.

Their business model is not only crushing library budgets at research universities around the world, it is fundamentally at odds with the point of research:  to share the fruits of scholarship widely so that all—not just the well-to-do—may benefit.  The UC is committed to facilitating open access publishing for all UC scholars while also containing the rapidly escalating cost associated with for-profit journals.  UC sought an agreement that would secure universal open access to UC research while integrating open access publishing fees and subscription fees into a single cost-controlled contract.  The university stands united by these principles.  Because UC accounts for nearly 10% of all US publishing output – the most of any public educational institution in the country – UC is in a position to lead the way.

As a result, UC is not willing to accept a deal that increases Elsevier’s profits.  UC is prepared to return to the negotiating table at a future point if and when we perceive an opportunity for substantive progress.  In the meantime, we look forward to further engagement with our UC community of scholars and editors about the future shape of research dissemination at UC and elsewhere.

Details related to how we are locally affected are outlined in the joint communication from our UCM Academic Senate Chair, Vice Provost for Faculty, LASC Chair and University Librarian, which you received a short time ago.  Along with that announcement is the statement made by the Academic Council of the Academic Senate of the University of California:<https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/academic-council-statement-elsevier-feb28.pdf>

The UC Office of Scholarly Communication has developed a guide to Alternative Access to Elsevier Articles if cutoff happens at <https://osc.universityofcalifornia.edu/open-access-at-uc/publisher-negotiations/alternative-access-to-articles/>. If you are in doubt about why you can’t reach a particular article, please contact the library at ucmill@ucmerced.edu.

Sincerely,

Gregg Camfield

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost