



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SCELC SUPPORTS THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA'S PUSH FOR OPEN ACCESS TO RESEARCH**

An Open Letter from the SCELC Board of Directors  
(Approved September 13, 2019)

LOS ANGELES, CA—SCELC, a California based consortium of 113 private academic and nonprofit research libraries, fully supports the University of California in their decision to not renew their Elsevier subscriptions until a transformative open access agreement can be reached. As North America's largest publicly funded research university system, UC's position puts it in the forefront of the global movement to shift the publication of research to open access, placing control of researchers' output in the hands of its creators. Unsustainable journal subscription price increases have far exceeded the capacity of library budgets, and open access models such as that being negotiated by the UCs offer a long-term viable alternative that benefits both libraries and public access to the research that is often supported by public and grant funds.

California is in a unique position. As the world's fifth largest economy, with a rich mix of academic institutions that are both public and private, the state is poised to lead the way to new models of publication and support for research, while preserving access to research for libraries of all types. In California SCELC libraries represent nearly all academic institutions that are not part of a state system, and the collective expenditure of SCELC libraries on electronic journal packages from some of the major publishers exceeds aggregate expenditures of the state systems. Consequently, SCELC plays an important economic role in support of future publication models in California, in particular for open access efforts such as those being led by the University of California.

SCELC maintains excellent relationships with our publishing partners, and we believe that we can create mutually beneficial arrangements with these publishers while also helping to transform unsustainable subscription models into new economic models. Our support of the UCs, and of transformative changes in scholarly communication, are part of a larger strategy to bring about greater collaboration in the state of California, benefitting both SCELC libraries and those in the state systems, while also acknowledging the important role in publication and distribution that publishers provide. Through honest negotiation and collaboration across library systems and publishers, our goal is to transcend our differences and strive to achieve new understandings that are economically viable for all parties.

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We are continuing conversations with our libraries and librarians, many of whom are grappling with how to sustain the true costs of academic publishing and research, and provide affordable access to that research for the many institutions with extremely limited grant research funding. We are actively promoting open educational resources to save our students money otherwise spent on unaffordable textbooks, and we are encouraging support of other open access efforts, such as the Open Library of the Humanities. At the same time, we recognize the value of our partnerships with our longtime content providers from whom we have licensed content for many years.

We are thankful to our UC colleagues, who have brought this issue to the forefront for all California academic institutions, North America, and internationally. The imprint of private academic institutions and nonprofit research libraries in California is also formidable, and thus we add our voice to the chorus of support for open access. We will continue to be both creative and entrepreneurial in seeking new solutions, and, in support of the University of California, help our institutions to work together in support of a new era of scholarly communication and the preservation of knowledge.

Signed,

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## **About SCEL**

SCEL, the Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium, is in the top tier of North American library consortia in licensing revenue, representing 113 member institutions, 223 affiliate institutions, an aggregate student population of approximately 500,000, and more than \$200 million in library budgets. SCEL libraries can choose from nearly 2,500 electronic resources through 100+ vendors. A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation, SCEL was established in 1986 to develop resource sharing among the libraries of private academic institutions in Southern California, has evolved to provide a diverse suite of programs, and now includes libraries throughout all of California and 38 other states.