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The UC Libraries: collaborating for mission, leadership and efficiency

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# **The UC Libraries: collaborating for mission, leadership and efficiency**

SLASIAC Study Group Report

June 29, 2020

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## Executive summary

The uniquely collaborative work of the University of California (UC) Libraries creates cost savings, operational efficiencies and mission-aligned services for faculty, students, researchers and clinicians, all while also extending the reach and influence of UC's leadership and values.

In September 2019, the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) Study Group was charged to examine the UC Libraries' collaborative work and the impact and challenges faced both within current collaborations and in forging new partnerships. The study group's report, titled "The UC Libraries: collaborating for mission, leadership and efficiency," was completed in June and submitted to the UC Provost and Executive Vice President for distribution to the Council of Chancellors in July 2020. The report includes the following recommendations:

1. The UC Chancellors and President, in consultation with the Executive Vice Chancellors and systemwide Provost, should charge a task force to assess current budget mechanisms and establish a UC financial structure to support (and by extension incentivize) systemwide library collaboration. Task force membership should include budget and library experts. The UC Libraries budget coalition for licensed content may serve as a prominent exemplar for the task force to consider.
2. The Council of University Librarians should build upon the success of existing collaborative efforts and further shift library activities and services along the collaboration continuum (as defined below and in this report). In doing this, the libraries should evaluate which new systemwide partners outside of the libraries would enhance the effectiveness of the coalition. The libraries should engage and seek feedback from the Council of Vice Chancellors.
3. The Council of University Librarians meets annually with the UC President; they should also regularly engage the Council of Chancellors to discuss current and potential systemwide initiatives, and how to sustain collective work.

The SLASIAC Study Group's report does not provide an exhaustive record of library collaboration; rather, it examines a series of case studies across a continuum of collaboration (i.e. at local, systemwide, regional, national and international levels). As an activity moves from being standalone to a collaborative effort, opportunity and shared capacity expand, increasing scale and efficiency. Each library's capacity also broadens as local resources are reinvested into high-touch services and activities best managed at the campus level.

The report's case studies are organized by three core themes:

- Collaboration advances the University's teaching, research and public service mission;
  - *Teaching:* Campus library spaces and services advance student learning and education, often in collaboration with campus partners that share the library's academic mission; the UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) STEM Scholars Hub is a Hispanic-Service Institution (HSI) initiative developed in partnership with UCSC's Division of Student Success to improve retention and graduation rates for women and minority students in STEM fields;
  - *Research:* The California Digital Library's (CDL) DMPTool and partnership with Dryad support the UC system, as well as researchers worldwide, with planning, publishing, and finding research data and complying with research funder requirements;
  - *Public Service:* CDL's Online Archive of California and Calisphere provide public access to archival collection descriptions and digital collections from across the state; the California State Library has invested almost \$3.5 million into both services since 1997;

- Collaboration furthers the University’s reputation and leadership;
  - By proposing a new model for transformative publisher agreements, and enacting it with a diverse set of publishers, UC has become a global leader in moving from paywalls to open access, projecting its leadership through community consultations and broad media coverage;
- Collaboration secures cost savings and operational efficiencies;
  - For every \$1 spent on systemwide licensing, \$4.50 worth of content is acquired (the University currently spends \$50 million to secure systemwide access to important scholarly resources);
  - Storage in a UC Regional Library Facility, where most of UC’s shared physical collections are held, costs 75% less in annualized capital costs, compared to campus bookstacks; unnecessary duplicate holdings are eliminated with cooperative collection management;
  - Together, the libraries are migrating to a shared library enterprise system to manage the discovery and circulation of UC’s collections; if each campus had pursued this migration independently, the cost would have been 40% higher and required customized connective systems to support systemwide sharing.

As the study group’s work unfolded, so too did the COVID-19 global pandemic. As a result of their existing cooperative work practices, the libraries were able to quickly respond to new remote teaching and learning needs with additional systemwide resources. New resources included expanded access to the JoVE Video Journal, which provides videos on new experimental methods and techniques for the health sciences and other disciplines. Longstanding library investments in digitization and external digital collection partnerships have also greatly benefitted the University during this unprecedented crisis. For example, the non-profit HathiTrust Digital Library, co-founded by the UC Libraries, is providing eligible members with lawful emergency access to in-copyright digital volumes. This service ensures that UC faculty, students and researchers systemwide have access to over 13 million digitized volumes, representing almost 40% of the UC’s currently inaccessible physical collection.

Beyond collections, the UC Libraries have long provided reciprocal services and building access to students and faculty visiting from other UC campuses. As UC begins the phased process of reopening campus space closed due to COVID-19, the libraries will resume reciprocal building access and in-person services to UC-affiliated users, as safety and health protocols allow.

The success of the UC Libraries’ coalition has required the participation of all 11 constituents: the ten campus libraries and the Office of the President (OP), which is typically expressed through CDL. Continued partnership and mutual investment have advanced the libraries’ systemwide work, but so too has investment from the center: sizeable OP investments have built the systemwide scholarly licensed content coalition, and enabled the shared library enterprise system (also referred to as the “SILS”) and recent expansion of the Northern Regional Library Facility.

The SLASIAC Study Group’s recommendations aim to advance and incentivize collaborative efforts, within the libraries, University and with external partners more broadly. The study group also seeks a financial structure that better enables the UC Libraries and their mission-aligned, marquee systemwide work.

## Introduction

The University of California (UC) Libraries, established in 1945, utilize a uniquely collaborative approach to advance the University's mission and optimize expenditures and efforts. At the request of the Council of Chancellors, UC Provost and Executive Vice President Brown charged the Systemwide Library and Scholarly Information Advisory Committee (SLASIAC) to convene a study group to review systemwide library collaborations and report on achievements, challenges and the ways in which the President and Chancellors might better support the libraries in their shared endeavors (see Appendix A).

The SLASIAC Study Group commenced work in fall 2019 and concluded its charge with this June 2020 report. The group included administrative, faculty, student, finance, information technology and library representatives. While campus contexts were considered, the group was primarily charged to study library collaboration across the University. This report does not review all facets of the UC Libraries, campus-based or systemwide, but instead outlines a selection of collaborative initiatives that fulfill the University's mission, advance the University's standing and generate cost savings. The study group's analysis also reveals potential areas for collaborative growth, ongoing and emerging obstacles, and recommendations for furthering systemwide work and partnerships.

### **The establishment of “an interdependent, collective and integrated enterprise...”**

The UC Libraries, which includes the campus libraries, Regional Library Facilities (RLFs) and the California Digital Library (CDL), collaborate as “an interdependent, collective and integrated enterprise.”<sup>1</sup> This practice of deep collaboration is neither new nor accidental. It is the result of specific directives from University and library leadership, and a long history of working together:

- In the face of significant resource limitations, the [University of California Academic Plan: 1974-1978](#) called for university-wide, collaborative thinking as a means for UC to remain at the forefront of the pursuit and transmission of knowledge. The plan identified specific programs and areas of work, such as the libraries, where campus-based processes and activities could further transition to a level of “system-consciousness.”
- The [University of California Libraries: A Plan for Development \(1978-1988\)](#) outlined the basis for designing a multi-level system for local, regional, systemwide, national and international library work and collaboration. This now 40-year-old UC Libraries plan established a strategy to maximize the cost effectiveness and quality of library services and collections, and included a new systemwide approach to utilize computerized systems and technologies to enable inter-campus sharing.
- The 1996 [Library Planning and Action Advisory Task Force's report and recommendations](#) led to further library collaboration and success, including the establishment of the CDL to develop systemwide digital collections, technological infrastructure and programs, and guidance to strategically collaborate even more deeply.

Throughout their history, the UC Libraries have increasingly worked together and built coalitions in support of campus and systemwide advancement. This collaborative action has enabled the libraries to adapt to changing academic landscapes and user needs.

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<sup>1</sup> University of California Systemwide Libraries. (1977). *The University of California Libraries: A Plan for Development: 1978 – 1988*. UC Office of the President: University of California Systemwide Libraries. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5f86d0bb>, p. 194.

## The UC Libraries today

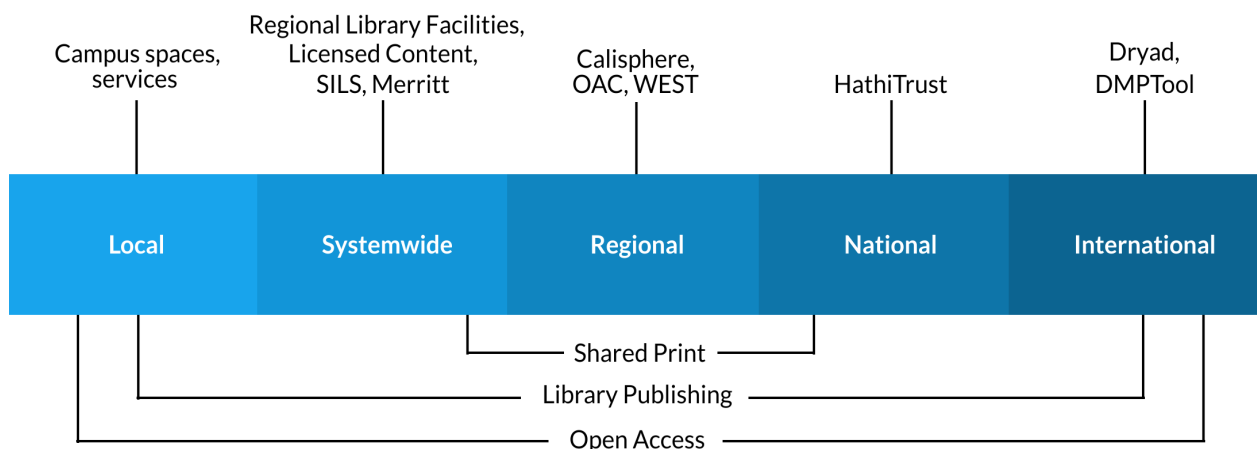
With the growth of digital information and technology, libraries are more essential than ever to academic life; they provide a series of spaces and services through which information is curated so that it can be effectively used. Skillful curation requires increasingly sophisticated tools for finding, sorting, evaluating and storing information, and highly-trained library staff ensure that their patrons possess the expertise and intellectual dispositions to navigate the ever-rising sea of content. Further still, not everything is online and not everything digital is available for free. Together, the UC Libraries:

- Ensure quick--often instant--and ongoing access to the world's knowledge for the UC campuses and the communities they serve;
- Help manage the research data of UC offices, labs and classrooms;
- Teach the UC community to be information-literate thinkers;
- Provide a variety of spaces and technologies to foster deep learning and innovation.

The UC Libraries have a national and international reputation for leadership and excellence. With more than 40 million print holdings, UC's physical collection is surpassed in the United States only by the Library of Congress. On average, each campus also provides access to 1.3 million ebooks and over 100 thousand electronic journal titles; in 2018/2019, UC students and faculty downloaded over 40 million digital articles from these resources. In addition to systemwide content, each campus has built local collections, including unique special collections, tailored to meet local scholarly needs. The libraries offer inclusive and technology-rich learning spaces to meet a multitude of user needs and maximize student potential and success. Through systemwide and local efforts, the libraries are also leading and actively shaping national and global initiatives that inform the future of scholarly communication.

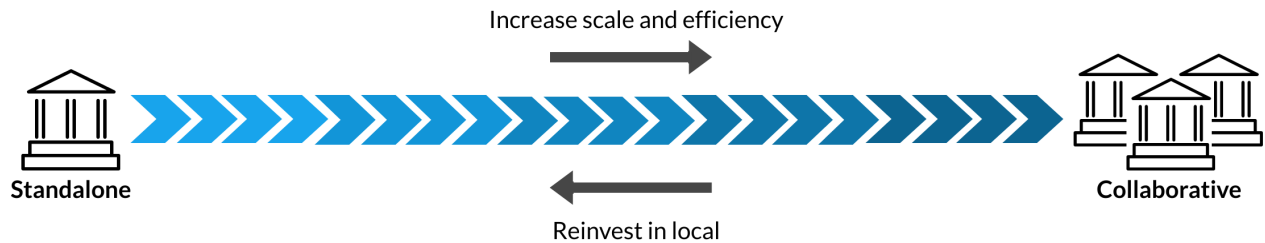
## Continuum of collaboration

Library partnerships and coalitions create a continuum of collaboration that enables the libraries to efficiently serve the University's mission through core technical infrastructure, collections and services of distinction. The UC Libraries have a spectrum of possible responses to end-user and institutional needs: they continue to develop local services; work together on UC systemwide services; and engage and invest in regional, national and international infrastructure.



**Figure 1.** Shared activities, partnerships and coalitions across the collaboration continuum (note: the figure provides examples and not an exhaustive representation of all UC Libraries' collaborations).

As an activity moves from being standalone to a collaborative effort, opportunity and shared capacity expand, increasing scale and efficiency. An individual library's capacity also broadens as local resources are reinvested, at least in part, into high-touch services and activities best managed at the campus level. The UC Libraries have strategically shifted services and activities to shared endeavors and partnerships not only to respond to critical issues but also to maintain essential services and infrastructure.



**Figure 2.** As activities move from being standalone to local, systemwide, regional, national and/or international collaborative efforts, scale and efficiencies increase, which creates opportunity to support those services best managed individually by the campus libraries.

New collaborative opportunities lie in broadening the coalition to include partners beyond the libraries and UC. For instance, hands-on support for researchers' data management becomes more tractable when tackled by library, research and information technology units in partnership. UC's coalitions increasingly include partners beyond the University, as many online services and programs are most cost efficient and responsive to user needs on a national and international scale. Our researchers, for example, would rather share their data with peers around the world in a domain-specific or community-led repository, as opposed to UC-provisioned infrastructure. Cross-institutional library services mirror the borderless way in which our researchers work.

When the libraries invest through external partnerships, UC expertise and funds often provide the greatest benefit to the University's faculty and students; in addition, we invite the global academy and research enterprise to invest with us, extending the reach and influence of UC's leadership and values as a preeminent public research institution.

### **The value and impact of collaboration**

The libraries have activated a broad range of collaborations to fully maximize opportunity and output, from local partnerships to international coalitions. These ventures allow the libraries to provide essential services with immediate and long-term advantages to the University, including:

- Fulfillment of the University's tripartite teaching, research and public service mission;
- Advancement of the University's reputation and leadership; and
- Cost savings.

The following case studies are just some examples of what shared library action and cooperative work has brought about.



## **Fulfillment of the University's research, teaching and public service mission**

The work of the UC Libraries supports and furthers the research, teaching and public service mission of the University. To fulfill this responsibility, the libraries collaborate locally, systemwide and in regional, national and international partnerships.

### ***UC's mission: research success***

While the entire UC Libraries collection and suite of services advances the University's research enterprise, the libraries have also strategically invested in shared infrastructure and core services to better support research data management and publishing.

Case Study 1 - Research Data Management: Exponential growth in research data has led global funders, publishers and institutions to establish research data management (RDM) policies and best practices. Two CDL-supported RDM services, the [DMPTool](#) and [Dryad](#), assist the UC system, as well as researchers and authors worldwide, with planning, publishing, and finding research data and complying with research funder requirements.

In response to the emerging need for guidance on funder-specific data policies and writing data management plans (DMPs), CDL developed the DMPTool, which is now used globally at 280+ participating institutions, including all ten UC campuses. The DMPTool actively connects UC researchers to local library teams ready to support their data management work, and both CDL and the campus libraries provide outreach and training on how to utilize the tool and best comply with funder data requirements. Since 2016, CDL and the UK-based Digital Curation Centre (DCC) have partnered to co-develop and maintain a single open-source platform upon which the DMPTool and DCC's DMPOnline are run. This partnership allows CDL to defray development costs and shape best practices globally while offering best-in-class service to our campus communities.

In 2018, CDL partnered with Dryad, a leading open data repository with various researcher and publisher workflow integrations. This partnership allows all UC researchers to deposit and preserve their data with Dryad at no cost. In the first four months of 2020, UC researchers submitted, published or versioned more datasets (600+) than were published over six years in UC's former, institution-specific data repository. CDL staff co-manage and co-develop Dryad, and campus library staff utilize Dryad as a synergistic platform to engage campus researchers and support their RDM work. Dryad employs the CDL Merritt digital preservation repository to provide long-term preservation assurance for all deposited datasets, which is a typical requirement for grant-funded research.

Case Study 2 - Library publishing: CDL's [eScholarship publishing](#) service offers a comprehensive systemwide open access publishing program for UC-affiliated scholarly works. The service includes production tools, such as a full editorial and peer review system, and professional publishing support. In addition to monographs, conference proceedings and other scholarly works, eScholarship publishes over 80 academic journals, from international publications led by UC faculty editors to law reviews affiliated with UC law schools and campus-based graduate and undergraduate journals. eScholarship also recently expanded its services to begin hosting the EarthArXiv preprint service.

eScholarship publishing is complementary to UC Press; each entity plays a distinct and mutually reinforcing role in the scholarly communication ecosystem. CDL and UC Press also partner regularly, most recently on the UC Publishing Inventory, which aims to identify campus and departmental publishing activities that might benefit from institutional services offered by CDL and the Press.

New partnerships have also been pursued to further the development of open publishing infrastructure. The Next Generation Library Publishing Partnership, which brings together Educopia, CDL and others, was awarded a [\\$2.2 million grant from the Arcadia Foundation](#) to advance open infrastructure and tools that support community-minded open access library publishing. The Community-Led Open Infrastructure for Monographs project, of which the UC Santa Barbara Library is a principal partner, was awarded [\\$3.6 million from Research England, the Arcadia Foundation and other funders](#) to address the technological, structural and organizational barriers to open access monograph publishing.

### ***UC's mission: student success***

The UC Libraries actively enhance student success with programming, services and spaces that foster deep learning, critical thinking and information literacy skills. Specific to each campus' unique needs, campus libraries deliver flexible learning environments and services that provide high-touch local engagement in support of student development and knowledge-creation. In many cases, such spaces and services are created with campus partners that share the library's academic mission. The libraries' systemwide efforts, such as collaborative collection management through systemwide licensed content and the Regional Library Facilities (both of which are highlighted in use cases later on in this report), also generate the operational efficiencies, cost and space savings that help enable the campuses to meet emerging space, resource and service needs best managed at the local level.

Case Study 3 - Reimagining library spaces and services: Campus libraries meet the practical needs of students with quiet study areas, group study rooms, research and writing services, and information commons that support collaboration with digital tools. New, technology-rich learning spaces, staffed with the necessary experts, are also transforming the libraries' footprint and service offerings in support of innovation and student success. These core but ever-changing spaces exist on every campus and many have been built in collaboration with campus partners.

At the UC Riverside (UCR) Library, the [Creat'R Lab](#) is an innovation space where new technologies, scientific curiosity and entrepreneurship come together across the disciplines. The Creat'R Lab was established in partnership with the UCR Office of the Vice Chancellor of Research and Economic Development. In addition to providing access to a wide-range of tools, including 3D printers, robotics and programmable electronics, the lab supports a variety of services including student-led workshops and an Entrepreneur-in-Residence program.

The UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) Library STEM Scholars Hub, located in the Science & Engineering Library, is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) initiative developed in partnership with the UCSC Division of Student Success. The learning center provides tutoring and academic guidance, and actively builds community through both the space and programming offered. The overarching aim of the Hub is to improve UCSC retention and graduation rates for women and underrepresented minority students in STEM fields.

The UC San Diego Library has developed an academic and space-centered partnership with the [Triton Transfer Hub](#), a newly implemented center that actively engages transfer students through peer coaching, meet-ups and forums. By serving as a community space and academic programming partner, for not only the Transfer Hub but also other campus groups, the UC San Diego Library is directly supporting students' academic, personal and professional success.

### ***UC's mission: public service***

The libraries' acclaimed research collections, highly trained staff, and innovative services and facilities provide an unparalleled resource for UC and all Californians. In support of access and knowledge creation even more broadly, the UC Libraries' collaborative digital collection activities aim to further expand the University's impact on the public.

Case Study 4 - Rare and unique treasures: CDL's [Online Archive of California](#) (OAC) provides centralized access to 50,000 online archival collection descriptions, enabling researchers to locate unique archival materials from nearly 300 libraries, archives and museums across the state, including those within UC. For content that has already been digitized, CDL's [Calisphere](#) platform provides free online access to over 1.7 million digital objects, including images, texts and recordings, from throughout California. Calisphere also features online exhibitions created by content experts and a selection of Calisphere-based K-12 lesson plans, teaching tools and resources freely available for educators. The state of California has invested almost \$3.5 million in OAC and Calisphere since 1997, through the Library Services and Technology Act grants. Calisphere contributes its content to the Digital Public Library of America, further exposing California's exceptional digital collections and ensuring their representation in a broader, national context.

Case Study 5 - Mass digitization: The UC Libraries are founding partners in the HathiTrust Digital Library, a collaboration of more than 100 top-tier research universities to archive and share digitized book collections. Through HathiTrust, UC gains access to millions of digitized books in the public domain and benefits from cost-effective and reliable storage and preservation of its own digitized book collections. Of the 4.5 million digitized volumes contributed by UC to HathiTrust, nearly 1.3 million are in the public domain and freely available to the public.

However, UC is not just a member of the HathiTrust. CDL developed and now maintains Zephir, the system that manages bibliographic metadata for the entire HathiTrust corpus. At the time of this report, the Zephir infrastructure has proven invaluable as a core component supporting the HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service (ETAS). During the COVID-19 pandemic, ETAS provides eligible members, including the ten UC campuses, with lawful access to in-copyright digital items that correspond with physical volumes, owned by member libraries, that are unavailable due to building closures. Through ETAS, UC faculty, students, researchers and staff have access to over 13 million digitized volumes, representing almost 40% of the UC physical collection, the bulk of which would otherwise be inaccessible during the pandemic.

### **Advancement of the University's reputation and leadership**

The UC Libraries are committed to working collaboratively with a variety of partners and stakeholders to transform scholarly communication and publishing into a system that is economically sustainable and ensures the widest possible access to the scholarly record. This commitment to collaborative action has showcased the dynamism and strength of UC's internal coalitions and advanced the University's reputation and role as a global leader among research institutions that aim to further knowledge creation for the betterment of society.

Case Study 6 - Open Access: In their pursuit of open access, the UC Libraries are leading participants in national and international dialogues around how to enact large-scale scholarly communication transformation. Such public contributions include: [the release](#) of the [Pathways to Open Access](#) report and toolkit; hosting the [Choosing Pathways to Open Access](#) (CP2OA) working forum, which brought

together 125 library leaders and academic stakeholders from the United States and Canada; the release of UC's transformative open access [negotiation toolkit](#); and the [Open Access Tipping Point \(OATIP\) Workshop](#) co-sponsored by the UC Academic Senate and Libraries.

As a result of the UC Libraries' transparent open access goals and community engagement, UC leaders have been invited to speak to consortia, peer institutions, policy makers and higher education audiences across the United States and in Canada, South Africa, China, and throughout Europe. The UC Libraries have been invited by the Max Planck Society (Germany) to host the next international [Berlin Open Access Conference](#) in California, and consulted by The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy as it considers revisions to its [2013 policy memo](#) on public access to the published results of federally funded research. In all these endeavors, the credibility of UC's approach rests in the deep partnership the libraries have cultivated with the Academic Senate, emphatically including the direct participation of faculty in open access negotiations with publishers.

Over 200 media stories have covered UC's push for transformative open access; the University's negotiation with Elsevier, though it has not yet resulted in an agreement, has garnered support statements from libraries, academic senates and consortia across the United States and Canada, representing over 250 institutions. The UC Libraries have successfully struck transformative open access agreements with [Springer Nature](#), [Cambridge University Press](#), the [Association of Computing Machinery \(ACM\)](#), [Journals of Medical Internet Research \(JMIR\) Press](#), and the [Public Library of Science \(PLOS\)](#). Under the current agreements, 12% of UC publishing will be open access. UC continues to work with publishers to further increase the University's open access publishing output.

To achieve even better economies of scale and impact, the UC negotiation team has engaged the California State University (CSU) system and Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) about pursuing California-wide transformative open access agreements with scholarly publishers.

UC's collaborative efforts have also involved direct publisher engagement outside of negotiations, such as UC Davis Library's Mellon-funded [Move it Forward workshop](#), which brought together publishers to collectively identify transitional open access business models.

## **Cost savings**

The UC Libraries coalition brings about significant savings and cost avoidances for core systemwide services and infrastructure. While several previously mentioned case studies also bring about operational efficiencies and financial savings, three additional examples of note are: systemwide content licensing; shared print; and the Systemwide Integrated Library System.

Case Study 7 - Systemwide scholarly licensed content: Through systemwide content licensing, a robust UC baseline of electronic resource access is ensured at a significantly reduced cost. The libraries' budget coalition harnesses UC's "power of ten" to negotiate lower contract costs and millions of dollars in savings annually; for every \$1 spent on systemwide licenses, \$4.50 worth of content is acquired. As a system, UC is also able to secure multi-year contracts with low capped annual increases--typically 2-3%, compared to the 5-7% annual increases seen in standalone campus contracts. At present, the UC Libraries are engaged in transforming a major portion of the budget coalition for purchasing licensed content into a coalition for advancing open access.

CDL's centralized negotiation, acquisitions and cataloging teams streamline the procurement and resource management processes. This has created significant operational efficiencies and reduced the

number of licensing and technical services staff required systemwide. CDL has become a recognized center of excellence in content licensing, a major factor in the success of UC's publisher negotiations and systemwide licensed content development efforts.

Case Study 8 - Shared print and the Regional Library Facilities: In the UC Libraries' shared print initiative, campuses preserve and maintain physical resources on behalf of the system. This activity enables others to discard their local, duplicative copy if it is no longer needed, and instead rely on the shared volume. Most shared print volumes are stored in the Southern and Northern Regional Library Facilities (RLFs), operated on behalf of the system by UCLA Library and UC Berkeley Library respectively. Storage in an RLF costs 75% less in annualized capital costs and requires 65% less space, compared to campus library bookstacks. By shifting select holdings to an RLF or discarding a local copy in lieu of a pre-existing RLF holding, campuses cost-effectively preserve the scholarly record and generate space for new print acquisitions, which remain critical to the University's teaching and research mission, and student-focused space and service redesign projects, as described earlier in this report.

The libraries are founding members of the Western Regional Storage Trust (WEST), a distributed shared print journal archiving program established in 2009 and now with 65 member institutions in the Western United States. WEST was conceived out of the UC Libraries' desire to more cost-effectively preserve print journal archives. Of the 32,000 journal backfiles archived for WEST (representing 850,000 volumes), UC has contributed 30 percent. WEST provides guaranteed access to titles not previously part of UC's collections and allows UC to rely on the stewardship commitment of WEST's regional partners. Building on the success of WEST, the UC Libraries are now also leaders in transitioning regional shared print activities to the national and international network levels to achieve even better scale and cost savings.

Case Study 9 - Systemwide ILS: An integrated library system (ILS) is a library's largest enterprise system, through which the university acquires, manages and circulates its print and electronic collections. With the pending implementation of the Systemwide ILS (SILS), the UC Libraries are moving from ten independent systems to a single, shared state-of-the-art solution.

The current configuration of ten separate systems creates increasing infrastructure instability and puts essential end-user services at risk. Upgrading to a shared, modern system, mitigates these risks and secures significant cost avoidance. The total annual contract cost to UC for a shared system is \$2.1 million and the need for additional systems infrastructure is greatly reduced. If a shared solution were not being pursued, several campuses would still need to individually update their legacy, end-of-life systems. If carried out independently, UC's total annual cost would have been 40% higher, totaling \$3 million plus customized connective systems to support systemwide sharing and collaboration.

## **Challenges and opportunities**

While the libraries' collaborative endeavors have resulted in local and systemwide advancement, existing and potential coalitions still face significant challenges. Though financial constraints are not unique to the libraries, significant multi-year financial commitments with mandatory cost increases place a strain on local and systemwide library budgets. And though the University values, advocates for and rewards collaboration, the system as a whole lacks the necessary organizational and financial infrastructure to support and sustain partnerships, be they among like-groups or inter-unit.

The shared work of the libraries requires effective means of sharing and pooling local resources, and investing those resources as a collective. The libraries' budget coalition supports contractual obligations

such as licensed content, infrastructural costs such as the SILS, and service memberships like HathiTrust and WEST. These obligations represent significant portions of the campus and CDL budgets and bring about annual cost increases. If even just a single library is unable to fully fund a particular obligation, the budget coalition and service are jeopardized; if our collective is decreased to even just nine or eight participating campuses, the University's negotiation stance is weakened, costs increase for remaining members of the collective and the viability of the libraries' budget coalition is threatened. Budget scenarios presented to the UC Council of Vice Chancellors in 2018 revealed that a \$100,000 budget cut to a small campus library, such as UCSC, would actually result in a \$1.5 million reduction in systemwide spending power because of the necessary shortfall adjustments required in the libraries' FTE-based cost allocation model. When collaborative endeavors rely on the success of eleven independent budget requests, they are continually at-risk.

The success of the UC Libraries' coalition requires the participation of the ten campus libraries and the Office of the President (OP), which is typically expressed through CDL. The case studies outlined in this report are the result of continued partnership and mutual investment; for systemwide collaborations, investment from the center has critically incentivized shared work and enabled shared benefit. For example, as part of the budget coalition underwriting UC's HathiTrust expenses, CDL supported over 65% of the approximately \$450,000 membership fee. In the SILS budget coalition, CDL has committed to fund approximately 15% of the ongoing system costs and OP has invested almost \$5 million into SILS implementation and staffing. Without OP's investment in the Northern Regional Library Facility, which has created storage for an additional 3.1 million volumes (on top of the 14.5 million volumes already held in the southern and northern library facilities), the libraries would be facing a space crisis that would have undermined the University's ability to preserve the scholarly print record and service student, faculty and researcher needs. In FY 2019-2020, as part of the libraries' licensed content coalition, CDL's budget contribution equaled that of a large campus. (In FY 2020-2021, the CDL licensed content budget will be relocated to UC San Diego. While this change preserves CDL's financial share in the budget coalition, it does not address the underlying fragility of the library budget coalition.)

Reductions in CDL's budget will directly impact campus finances and services, either through a reduced CDL cost share, or the elimination of essential campus services, many of which are faculty- and student-facing. The deeply collaborative work of the UC Libraries has delivered the efficiencies the University deliberately sought; but alongside those efficiencies, it has also created an interdependence that makes budget decisions at OP, or on any campus, ripple through the entire coalition.

While at the campus and systemwide levels, the libraries have successfully collaborated with other entities on common causes, UC service and administrative units do not always have sufficient knowledge of the libraries' capacities and mission to appropriately invoke them as partners. Given limited staffing and competing interests systemwide, it can be difficult to forge and sustain new partnerships. To meaningfully partner at the University, to avoid and/or reduce costs and improve services and infrastructure for UC faculty, students, researchers, staff and clinicians, requires bandwidth. Once the will to collaborate is fostered, there are then limited tools and incentives to support the deep and ongoing collaboration that the libraries undertake on a daily basis. Core operational and financial infrastructure--from shared communications and calendaring systems to shared budgets and appointments-- are lacking, which increases the required effort and overhead to successfully work together. The libraries have the potential to collaborate even more deeply and broadly; an intentional, systemwide infrastructure would support not only the libraries, but other systemwide groups, in pursuing such collaborative work.

Within UC, the libraries' partnership with the Academic Senate University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC) demonstrates the ways in which systemwide, cross-committee collaboration can be productive and in service of shared goals. The UC Council of University Librarians (CoUL) and UCOLASC hold an annual joint meeting, and the CoUL chair sits on UCOLASC as an ex-officio member. These connections have acted as a springboard for shared work, such as the faculty and libraries standing shoulder-to-shoulder in advancing open access. Beyond their common cause, both groups regard their charge as including systemwide action, consultation and collaboration.

More broadly, there are opportunities to pursue shared initiatives at the state level. With the UC migration to a SILS in 2021, UC, CSU and the California Community Colleges (CCC) will all share the same vendor platform for their enterprise library system, which may create new collaborative opportunities. Already, the UC Libraries have begun engaging CSU to scale and extend the transition from licensing content to publishing open access, which will directly benefit the citizens of California, highlight the impact of the state's higher education investment and bolster California's leadership in science and education, nationally and internationally.

Opportunities for further innovation and cost savings lie in broadening the libraries' coalition, with new campus and systemwide partnerships outside of the libraries, and with new coalitions outside of the University. Such opportunities will only be further realized and accelerated with a systemwide infrastructure that better enables such work.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The collaborative case studies outlined in this report showcase that the UC Libraries are a marquee systemwide activity. This work stems from the Libraries' storied history of collaborative problem-solving, leadership, innovation and resourcefulness. In service of the University and its faculty, students,



**Figure 3.** Division of Library Automation employees with the satellite located at the Berkeley campus. Photo taken by Mary Engle, formerly of UC.

researchers and clinicians, the libraries have regularly adopted and adapted new technologies. For instance, in 1981 the libraries developed and deployed Melvyl, the first online union catalog, for systemwide use at UC. Melvyl enabled all UC faculty and students to access the entire UC Libraries collection, rather than just their local campus collection. By 1985, the libraries had harnessed satellites stationed across UC to improve Melvyl and establish an automated information retrieval system that was faster, more reliable and more economical.<sup>2</sup> The UC's satellites also marked the first time on record that such technology had been used to support a consortial library catalog. These

practices of creativity, innovation and collaboration have created the tangible benefits and savings outlined in this report. The UC Libraries have been exemplary fiscal stewards and innovators, amplifying

<sup>2</sup> "[UCSD Library Has State-of-the-Art Technology With Automated Information Retrieval System,](#)" *University Bulletin: A Weekly Bulletin for the Staff of the University of California*, Volume 33, 1984, p. 49.

their limited resources through the power of collaboration and generating an outsized benefit at the heart of UC's research, teaching and public service mission. UC will continue to reap the benefit of this shared work if it preserves the bandwidth for curiosity, exploration and execution of shared initiatives; to do so, the University must not only continue to incentivize and celebrate the achievements of collaborative work, but also implement the necessary infrastructure to better enable and advance critical collaborative endeavors.

While the libraries have demonstrated the ways in which working together leads to both local and systemwide advancement, their work also reveals the challenges and barriers present to establishing sustainable, optimized partnerships and coalitions. Accordingly, the SLASIAC Study Group puts forth the following recommendations for the consideration of the UC Chancellors and President:

1. The UC Chancellors and President, in consultation with the Executive Vice Chancellors and systemwide Provost, should charge a task force to assess current budget mechanisms and establish a UC financial structure to support (and by extension incentivize) systemwide library collaboration. Task force membership should include budget and library experts. The UC Libraries budget coalition for licensed content may serve as a prominent exemplar for the task force to consider.
2. The Council of University Librarians should build upon the success of existing collaborative efforts and further shift library activities and services along the collaboration continuum. In doing this, the libraries should evaluate which new systemwide partners outside of the libraries would enhance the effectiveness of the coalition. The libraries should engage and seek feedback from the Council of Vice Chancellors.
3. The Council of University Librarians meets annually with the UC President; they should also regularly engage the Council of Chancellors to discuss current and potential systemwide initiatives, and how to sustain collective work.

As the SLASIAC Study Group's work unfolded, so too did the COVID-19 global pandemic. The quick and profound impact of the virus and shelter-in-place orders has been acutely humbling. However, this crisis has accentuated the critical need for collaborative action that seeks to raise all ships and the importance of long-term investments for long-term gains, such as those that have been realized in the HathiTrust Emergency Temporary Access Service and the ability of the UC Libraries coalition to quickly acquire new resources for systemwide remote teaching, including the acquisition of the JoVE Video Journal, which provides videos on new experimental methods and techniques for the health sciences and other disciplines. The coming years will undoubtedly present budgetary challenges for the University and higher education broadly; alongside these challenges and difficult decisions are opportunities to re-evaluate and re-envision how we work together.



## Appendix A: SLASIAC Study Group charge

Libraries continue to play a key role in UC's research, teaching, and service missions, through acclaimed research collections, innovative services and technology-rich facilities, and direct support of students, faculty, and staff. This SLASIAC study group will review systemwide library collaboration in this era of Open Access (OA), new uses of library spaces, and the continuing need to collaborate on collections and other library functions. The study group should pay particular attention to cost-efficient ways to maintain our leadership in library collections and scholarly innovation. The study group should address the following questions:

- What are the successes and challenges in current library collaborations across the system? Please include a review of the Regional Library Facilities, collaborative collections purchasing, and current and proposed projects: Open Access and scholarly innovation initiatives; collaborative technical platforms, including the Systemwide Integrated Library System; and digital preservation of research data and other assets.
- How well is the work of UC libraries integrated into the campuses? How broadly are library objectives shared? And do others on the campuses and systemwide have sufficient knowledge of library capacities and mission to invoke libraries appropriately as partners? As appropriate, consider partnerships with faculty, students, academic administrators (EVC/Provosts, Deans, Research VCs), teaching and learning centers, and IT leaders. In addition, how do UC libraries respond to key issues with national and international partnerships external to UC?
- Are shared expenditures and efforts optimal or might they be improved?
- How can the President and Chancellors better support these library partnerships?

While the study group needs to contextualize this systemwide work in the context of campus-funded and campus-centered work, the group is not being asked to study operations at individual campuses. The study group should produce a report that can be shared with the President and Chancellors in spring 2020.

### Roster

- Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Gregg Camfield, UC Merced (Chair)
- Chief Financial Officer and Vice Chancellor Gerry Bomotti, UC Riverside
- Academic Senate Chair Kum-Kum Bhavnani
- Professor and Dean of the Graduate Division Shaun Bowler, UC Riverside
- University Librarian and CoUL Chair M. Elizabeth Cowell, UC Santa Cruz
- Kyle Stafford, UC Riverside (student representative)
- Associate Vice Chancellor IT and Chief Information Officer Jenn Stringer, UC Berkeley
- Associate Vice Provost and Executive Director Günter Waibel, California Digital Library

Staff: Danielle Watters Westbrook, Systemwide Library Planning Analyst, California Digital Library