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Title

Cutting Deep: Two Campuses Navigate Abrupt and Unexpected Collections Budget Reductions

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**Standing Up
& Standing Out:**
Libraries During Turbulent Times

Cutting Deep

Two Campuses Navigate Abrupt & Unexpected Collections Budget Reductions

October 23, 2025

Your Panelists Today

Abby Scheel

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- Collections Strategist, Physical Sciences & Engineering (UCSD)

Zemirah Ngow

- Collections Strategist, Life & Health Sciences (UCSD)



Session Outline

- We will cover the overall context of our respective projects
- Each panelist will cover how they navigated decision-making in their respective subject areas.
- Lessons learned
- A time for Questions & Answers

UC San Diego Overview

- Major Library budget cut for FY25/26, affecting all areas of expenditure
- Informed of collections budget late March, cancellations finalized by mid May
 - In order to implement cancellations before close of FY
 - Timeline meant essentially no user consultation
- Decided to not cut CDL (Tier 1 & 2), so full impact felt by local collections (~50% cut)
- Shift from “what do we need to cut” to “how to spend what we have”



UC San Diego Overview

- Allocation decisions were first made by expenditure type (one-time purchases, streaming, approval plans, DDA, continuations, etc.)
- For continuations, we generated a list of every continuation paid in FY24 (~1900)
 - Removed multi-year deals, OA funded, access fees; Investigated every skipped payment
 - Separated all resources into 6 subjects, aligning with strategists + multidisciplinary
 - Using FY24 cost data, made equal % reductions to each area to come up with new funding limits
- Gathered as much use data as possible (dozens of vendors)
- Every resource assigned a “Keep” or “Cut” decision

UC Berkeley Overview

\$1.7M reduction for FY2023

Two year phased approach using reserves:

- Year 1 (FY23): \$850k reduction to discretionary firm order funds
- Year 2 (FY24): \$850k reduction to subscription funds

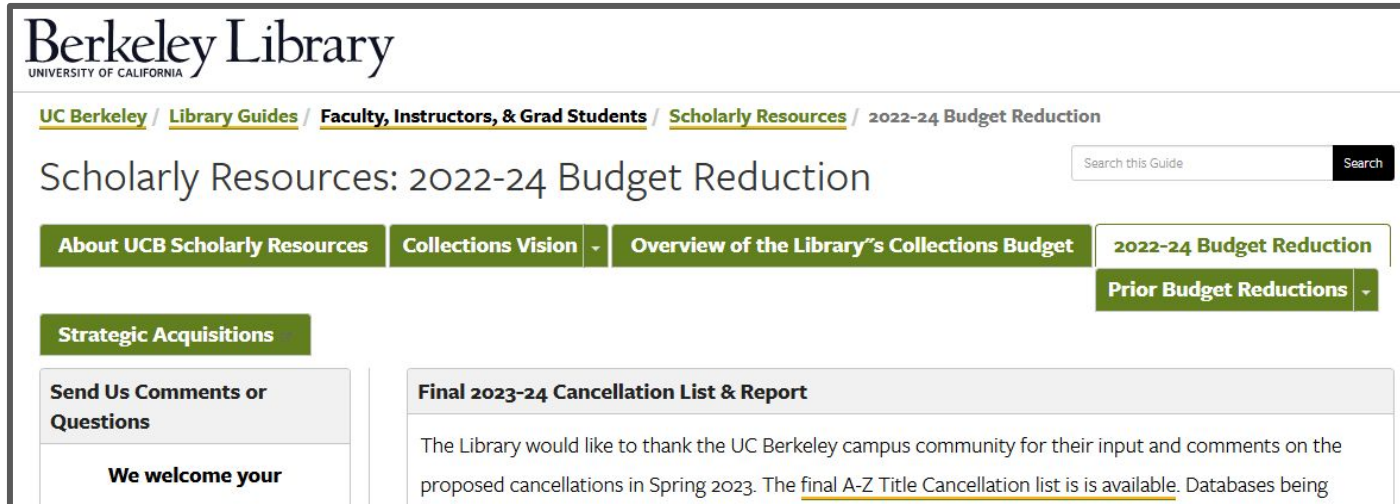
Background: Combined with previous budget cuts in 2018 and 2020, collections budget had lost \$4.425 million or roughly 35% in just over 5 years.

- Funds were already described as bare-boned
- Librarians and faculty were weary of budget cuts

UC Berkeley Overview

Transparency with stakeholders a challenge

- Library reduction only, not all of campus
- Immediate action required at start of FY23
- Public LibGuide: <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/scholarly-resources>



The screenshot displays the Berkeley Library website's 'Scholarly Resources: 2022-24 Budget Reduction' page. The header includes the Berkeley Library logo and a navigation bar with links to 'UC Berkeley', 'Library Guides', 'Faculty, Instructors, & Grad Students', 'Scholarly Resources', and '2022-24 Budget Reduction'. A search bar is located on the right. Below the header, a row of green buttons provides navigation: 'About UCB Scholarly Resources', 'Collections Vision', 'Overview of the Library's Collections Budget', '2022-24 Budget Reduction', and 'Prior Budget Reductions'. A 'Strategic Acquisitions' button is also visible. The main content area features a section titled 'Send Us Comments or Questions' with the text 'We welcome your' and a 'Final 2023-24 Cancellation List & Report' section. The report text states: 'The Library would like to thank the UC Berkeley campus community for their input and comments on the proposed cancellations in Spring 2023. The final A-Z Title Cancellation list is available. Databases being'. A '2025' graphic is partially visible in the bottom right corner.

Berkeley Library
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Scholarly Resources: 2022-24 Budget Reduction

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About UCB Scholarly Resources Collections Vision Overview of the Library's Collections Budget 2022-24 Budget Reduction Prior Budget Reductions

Strategic Acquisitions

Send Us Comments or Questions

We welcome your

Final 2023-24 Cancellation List & Report

The Library would like to thank the UC Berkeley campus community for their input and comments on the proposed cancellations in Spring 2023. The [final A-Z Title Cancellation list](#) is available. Databases being

2025

Disciplinary Perspectives



Arts and Humanities Division - UC Berkeley

Over 2 years, AHD budgets reduced by \$268k

Year 1 = Equality approach with discretionary funds

- At start of FY23 AHD needed to reduce by \$165k within weeks.
- Applied cuts to selector discretionary funds proportional to their share of the division budget.
- Every discretionary fund cut by 10.14%

Arts and Humanities Division - UC Berkeley

Year 2 = Equity approach with subscription funds

LOW PRIORITY → Future need is potential → Easy to provide at point of need	MEDIUM PRIORITY • Future need is potential • Difficult to provide later if needed
MEDIUM PRIORITY • Future need is expected • Easy to provide at point of need	HIGH PRIORITY • Future need is expected • Difficult to provide later if needed

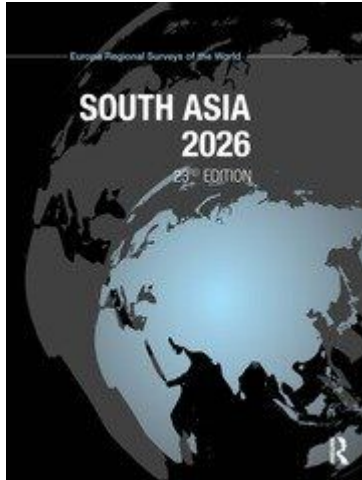
Potential ← Future use? → Expected

Easy ← Access without subscription? → Difficult

Arts and Humanities Division - UC Berkeley

Year 2 = Equity approach with subscription funds

- 6 funds saw no reduction
- 19 funds saw reductions of 1-12%



vs.

The Syria Report

Arts and Humanities - UC San Diego

Scope

- Disciplines covered: Visual Arts, Film Studies, Literature, Theater, Dance, Religion, Philosophy, Jewish Studies, Classics, Music, History
- Content types: Print Journals, Ejournals, Book Standing Orders, Databases, Ebook Packages
- → Comparatively more titles (~450 titles to review) that are individually less money (63% < \$200)

Arts and Humanities - UC San Diego

Notable Factors

- Quantifiable: overall cost, cost per use, recent circulation, ownership by other UCs, current availability from (other) online sources, embargoed availability from (other) online sources
- Qualifiable: restricted endowments, content core to campus, representation of underrepresented or minoritized groups, where are faculty publishing, administrative or technical complications

Arts and Humanities - UC San Diego

	Database - 20 POL Titles				EJournals -- 89 POL Titles				
CPU	Under \$20	Between \$20 and \$100 - or unknown	Over \$100		Other online access	No	With embargo > 5 years	With embargo < 5 years	Yes - current
		////////					////////		
Overall cost	Under \$100	Between \$100 and \$300	Over \$300		CPU	Under \$20	Between \$20 and \$100 - or unknown	Over \$100	
		////////					////////		
Representation		Yes	No		Overall cost	Under \$100	Between \$100 and \$300	Between \$300 and \$500	Over \$500
		////////					////////		
Core to campus		Yes	No		Circ for print version	Very active	Minimal or unknown	None	
		////////					////////		
Administrative or technical complications		No	Yes		Representation		Yes	No	
							////////		
					Core to campus		Yes	No	
							////////		
	EBook Packages - 3 POL Titles (+1 EJournal package)				Administrative or technical complications	No	Yes		
CPU	Under \$20	Between \$20 and \$100 - or unknown	Over \$100						
		////////							
Overall cost, by number of titles	Under \$10	Between \$10 and \$100	Over \$100						
		////////							
Representation		Yes	No		Online access	None	With embargo >= 5 years	With embargo < 5 years	Yes - current
		////////					////////		
Core to campus		Yes	No		Recent circulation	Since 2020 + >1	Since 2020 + <10 total	2000-2020	Pre-2000 or none
		////////					////////		
Administrative or technical complications		No	Yes		At other UCs	None	At 1 or 2	At several	
							////////		
					Overall cost	Under \$100	Between \$100 and \$300	\$300-\$500	Over \$500
							////////		
Recent circulation	Since 2020	2000-2020 or N/A (ref)	Pre-2000 or none		Representation		Yes	No	
		////////					////////		
At other UCs	None	At 1 or 2	At several		Core to campus		Yes	No	
		////////					////////		
Overall cost	Under \$200	Between \$200 and \$500	\$500-\$1000	Over \$1000	Administrative or technical complications	No	Yes		
		////////							
Representation		Yes	No						
		////////							
Core to campus		Yes	No						
		////////							
Administrative or technical complications		No	Yes						



East Asian Studies - UC San Diego

Print journals

- Check online access (are they included in journal databases or OA)
 - The importance of keeping print copies besides the online access (in the case of mainland China).
- Check UC holdings
 - This prompted a joint effort among EAS-CKG in preserving continuing access to unique titles
- Teaching and research needs

Databases

- Usage statistics (CPU)
- Hard decisions (e.g. CASS Analytical Reports / Pishu Database)
- Newer databases (without CPU, non-core/nice-to-have, e.g. Oripote)
- Feedback from users

Social Sciences - UC San Diego

Discipline	FY24	FY26 = x1.1	New limit	Keep	Total Cut
SS	\$ 679,470.80	\$747,417.88	\$455,159.41	\$374,892.99	\$372,524.89
Cost Shares	\$ 140,905.19	\$154,995.71	\$92,703.25	\$148,763.31	\$6,232.40
Total	\$820,375.99	\$902,413.59	\$547,862.65	\$523,656.30	\$378,757.29

🍏 Low hanging fruit, mostly wasn't deep enough

- CPU - seeing it all one one spreadsheet made some decisions clear
 - ProQuest Statistical Insight
- Faculty authors - very few subscriptions had a local author in the last 10 years

🔒 Locked in

- Multi-year deals
- Cost shares with other campus units

Social Sciences - UC San Diego

Format

- Print - minimal or unknown use, high maintenance; mostly inexpensive
- A&I databases - very few people use unless it is a key tool for systematic reviews
- Journals - more current content is available OA or available through ILL
- Monographic serials, STOs - can buy individual titles as needed
- Can we ILL this format? Prioritized keeping:
 - Full text/content databases
 - Data
 - News/Grey Literature

Social Sciences - UC San Diego

💡 Conversations with subject librarians about how resources are being used

- Equity across 17 disciplines with distinct information needs & publishing norms
- Instruction, reference, importance to key users
- Cost shares with other campus departments
- We have to cancel something, which one?
 - Tried to lead by example by canceling Westlaw

😓 Hard choices after staring into the spreadsheet abyss

- Cancel local option in favor of Tier ½
 - All our eggs are in the Nexis Uni basket (canceled Westlaw, BMI)
- Was answering a couple of reference questions worth \$5,000 for IEA Statistics?
- S2O, transformative agreements with low use/local authors
- Diversifying the collection (long tail) vs core big name resources

Life and Health Sciences

- **Budget Reality**
 - FY24: \$475K → FY25: \$267K (but had several cuts before this period)
 - Backdoor to exit a multi-year commitment for a core medical eTextbook/Journal database in the final year (\$108K → \$130K)
 - Available for decisions: \$70K (with database); \$180K (without)
- **Key Restrictions**
 - Multi-year contracts already in place
 - Known subscriptions required for accreditation
 - Multi-disciplinary resources with shared funding dependencies
- **Prioritization Criteria**
 - Service catalog essentials (e.g. Systematic Review Service = Embase, Covidence)
 - Databases over individual journal subscriptions
 - High cost-per use (CPU) subscriptions
 - Responsive vendors willing to negotiate

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Fund Code	PO Line Title	PO Line	FY24	FY24 + 5%	Material Type (Reporting Code - 4th)	Vendor Name	Strategist Note
2	med7		o12740731	\$ 30,735.00	\$ 31,657.00	ElectronicDatabase		
3	med7/bs7		Individual line for each product	bundled this year	\$ 20,219.00	EJournals		
4	med7		Individual line for each product	\$ 29,506.00	\$ 30,833.00			
5	med7			\$ 25,828.00	\$ 27,119.00	ElectronicDatabase		
6	-			\$ 103,740.00	\$ 108,927.00	ElectronicDatabase		
7	bs7		o13559242	\$ 18,560.00	\$ 19,488.00	ElectronicDatabase		
8	med7		o13559242	\$ 8,960.00	\$ 9,408.00	ElectronicDatabase		
9	pha7		o13559163	\$ 17,784.00	\$ 18,673.20	ElectronicDatabase		
10	bs7		o1276534x	\$ 11,507.63	\$ 12,083.01	ElectronicDatabase		
11	med7		o1276534x	\$ 5,479.83	\$ 5,753.82	ElectronicDatabase		
12	pha7		o1276534x	\$ 1,178.16	\$ 1,237.07	ElectronicDatabase		
13	med7		o8652685	\$ 30,581.00	\$ 45,377.00	EJournals		

Goal: \$70K/\$180K

Scenario 1

- Cancel all 88 LHS Journal subscription not locked in a multi-year *except for JAMA (~\$125K)*
- Attempt to retain core medical eTextbook database

Sum = \$221K

Shifting Budget Lines:

April 1 \$267K

April 24 \$274K

May 7 \$298K

FY25/26 \$321K

Collections Decisions in LHS - Local Continuations - Scenario 1 of 5

Unique Considerations: Health Sciences Pricing

Pricing Model Challenges

- Hospital v. Academic pricing structures vary significantly across vendors
- New hospital acquisition (Dec 2023) triggered population-based pricing recalculations.
- Vendors *adjusting* rates for both existing multi-year contracts and renewals upon discovery

Strategic Dilemma

- *Proactive approach*: Disclose population changes upfront for accurate quotes to justify budget requests, OR;
- *Reactive approach*: Wait for vendor discovery and negotiate increases as they arise

Physical Sciences & Engineering - UC San Diego

- Where it started....where it ended
 - Projected 2026 renewal: \$372K (~212 orders)**
 - Renewal target: \$175K (late March) ---> \$229K (mid-May)
 - Actual renewal: \$209K (~85 orders)
- Heavy STEM coverage in CDL overall, but local subject disparity

Chem/Astro/Physics - 25	Math/Statistics - 33 (~55)
Engineering - 38	Multidisciplinary - 6
Earth Sciences (SIO) - 30	Marine Sciences (SIO) - 80
- New reality for marine science collections

**Based on active orders for individual print/online journals, journal packages, ebook & A&I databases, print standing orders. One database counted for earth/marine sciences; one journal package counted for math/engineering Multidisciplinary: orders with costs split across PSE, LHS, SS budgets (e.g. JoVE)

Physical Sciences & Engineering - Evaluation Criteria

- CPU / Cost Per Use
- Faculty Activity - Articles / Cites (Web of Science)
- Other Criteria
 - Teaching impact
 - Formats and resource types (print, A&I vs text/content)
 - Alternative access (duplication in full-text databases, open access)
 - Subject scope
 - ILL availability
 - UC (+US) Holdings
 - Discipline Equity - locally and local vs CDL
 - Subject Librarian feedback, but limited

Physical Sciences & Engineering - Decisions

Physics journal: \$62 CPU, 6 recent** articles (most same author). 5 self-cites. But heavy physics coverage at CDL level, plus teaching impact of JoVE on undergrad labs.	Cancelled
Math journal: \$30 CPU, higher CPU than most in discipline, also most expensive single title. But 14 recent articles and 25 cites.	Kept
SIO marine journal: no usage or CPU, most expensive SIO journal, but 15 recent articles, 34 cites.	Kept
SIO earth journal: no usage or CPU, no recent articles, 1 cite.	Cancelled
Engineering journal: \$27 CPU, improving but 5x higher than other title from that publisher. 4 recent articles, 13 cites. However, all articles and most (self)-cites from same author, editorial board member.	Nearly cancelled
SIO marine journal: CPU increased 10x in 2024. Last article 2019, 12 recent cites. But compared with other remaining (\$1,000-\$3,000) marine journals, opted to save for another year.	Nearly cancelled
Chemistry journal: \$9.65 CPU, 1 recent article, 4 cites. But heavy chemistry coverage at CDL level.	Nearly cancelled

Recent: articles published since 2020 (maybe back a few more years), or articles published since 2020 that have been cited.



Lessons Learned



Thank You For Joining Us Today!

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