

George A. Smathers Libraries  
Office of the Dean of University Libraries

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April 22, 2009

Frank P. Ward  
Business Manager  
Office of the Vice President for Research  
PO Box 115500  
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Dear Frank:

Thank you for your letter of April 6, 2009, requesting information about the use of the \$1,050,000 that the Division of Sponsored Research (DSR) provided in support of the Libraries for fiscal year 2008-2009. I am responding on behalf of the Smathers Libraries and the Health Science Center Libraries, since we share these funds and jointly purchase a number of significant electronic resources.

As you know, for fiscal year 2008-2009, the Division of Sponsored Research (in conjunction with the School of Engineering and the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science) distributed \$1,050,000 to the UF Libraries, of which \$882,000 went to the Smathers Libraries and \$168,000 went to the Health Science Center Libraries (HSCL). The Smathers Libraries and HSCL used the entire \$1,050,000 to pay approximately half of the costs for their shared subscription to the Science Direct electronic journals published by Elsevier. This year UF's annual fee for Science Direct was \$1,891,405, of which 72% was funded by the Smathers Libraries and 28% was funded by HSCL.

Without the DSR funds, the Science Direct subscriptions would have required 30.9% of the \$1.71 million in appropriated funds that HSCL has available this year to purchase materials for its faculty, clinicians, staff and students. Even with the DSR funds, Science Direct required 28.2% of the HSCL acquisition budget. Similarly, without DSR support, Science Direct would have required 18.3% of the Smathers Libraries appropriation for acquisition of materials. With the current level of DSR support, it required 16.2%.

\$323 million (58%) of last year's DSR funding came from federal sources. These funds supported research in many of the Science, Technology, Medicine, and Engineering (STME) disciplines, including IFAS-supported research areas. Elsevier's research and academic journals are the most heavily used resources for our STME research community at UF as well as the wider interdisciplinary studies community. It also has the best Return on Investment (ROI) for dollars spent versus number of uses in comparison to other research and scientific electronic resources that the Libraries acquire. During the 12 months from January through December 2008, UF faculty and student researchers executed 2.8 million requests for pages and downloaded 1.2 million full text journal articles from Science Direct, resulting in a net cost of only \$.68 per page request and only \$1.52 per download. Without this license, the cost per article downloaded would be \$25.

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Because of annual price increases that outpace inflation, the Libraries buying power is reduced even when our funding is not. A recent analysis shows that the Smathers Libraries, including the Health Science Center Libraries, will lose \$534,738 in purchasing power in 2009-2010, of which \$103,289 is from the increase in licensing fees for Science Direct. This is a 6.1% reduction in the purchasing power of our materials budgets. Cumulatively, the Libraries will have lost \$1.7 million in purchasing power in the three years from 2007-2008 through 2009-2010. DSR support is more important than ever as we endeavor to allocate increasingly scarce resources to support the information needs of research faculty, staff and students.

Last year the Smathers Libraries and HSCL approached the Division of Sponsored Research (DSR) with a proposal to fully fund the most heavily used and most expensive electronic research service available to our faculty, students and other patrons. Next year Elsevier Science Direct will cost the University \$1.99 million. By 2011-2012, it will cost \$2.2 million. Between 2006-2007 and 2011-2012, inflation in the cost of this one service will erode the purchasing power of the UF libraries by over \$510,000. This results in the repeated elimination and continuous decrease of other resources in order to maintain access to this one.

If DSR begins to fully fund Science Direct in 2009-2010, it will restore \$360,000 to the HSCL materials budget and \$476,000 to the rest of the Smathers Libraries materials budget, increasing access to other materials of significant value to our patrons. Under this scenario, DSR's commitment would be for \$1.99 million in 2009-2010, and \$2.09 million and \$2.20 million for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, respectively.

If DSR cannot immediately assume responsibility for full funding, it would be extremely beneficial to the UF research community for DSR to commit to fund the price increases so the Libraries' purchasing power is restored and protected against further erosion. An increase of \$261,267 in 2009-2010 would restore purchasing power lost since 2006-2007. Price increases for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 are an additional \$105,209 and \$111,177, respectively. Absorption of those price increases would bring the DSR contribution to the Libraries to \$1.53 million by 2011-2012.

Additional funding from DSR would allow the Smathers Libraries, including HSCL, to sustain the range of resources currently available to the many researchers who have been so successful in bringing research grants and contracts to the University.

I recognize that this is a difficult year for the University and that there are many demands being made for scarce resources. I hope that you will consider increasing your support for UF researchers through this investment in the Libraries as you make the DSR resource allocation decisions. Wallace and I would be happy to meet with you or to provide more information if that would be helpful.

Sincerely yours,



Judith C. Russell  
Dean of University Libraries

cc: Win Phillips, Vice President for Research  
Tom Walsh, Director, Division of Sponsored Research  
Joseph Glover, Provost and Senior Vice President  
Douglas Barrett, Senior Vice President, Health Affairs  
Wallace McLendon, Director, Health Science Center Libraries

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