University of Colorado Boulder

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Memorandum

Date: September 21, 2023

To: Regent Callie Rennison

Topic: Shared and public access to subscriptions across CU System Libraries

From: Dean Robert H. McDonald, University Libraries CU Boulder; Dean Seth M. Porter; CU Colorado Springs; Director Melissa De Santis, CU Anschutz; Director Cinthya Ippoliti, Auraria Library CU Denver; Director Shamika Dalton, William H. Wise Law Library CU Boulder.

University of Colorado campus libraries currently have more than fifty collective purchase agreements for journal subscription packages, databases, and eBooks with an annual cost of approximately $4.8 million. (An appendix list of these resources can be delivered if needed.)

Research libraries across the University of Colorado have a long and established history of working together to share collectively acquired electronic resources including journal subscriptions, databases, and eBooks. Additionally, through the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries the CU System libraries share physical materials through the Prospector shared catalog and delivery service.

The CU System collaboration is formalized through the group, CU Libraries Electronic Resources Team (CLERT). The concept of CLERT was established in 1997 by CU President John C. Buechner to promote shared technology and e-resources, when possible, to reduce costs and provide shared value across the research libraries.

Today, CLERT is composed of librarians from all campuses (Anschutz, Auraria Library/CU Denver, CU Boulder, Law, and UCCS) and meets regularly throughout the year to work on shared resource acquisitions.

Question 1: Can we share access to subscriptions between campuses to save on costs?

- **If not, why not?**
- **Is there an opportunity to share some (or more) subscriptions between campus libraries? (If yes, provide a list or some brief detail about possible shared subscriptions.)**

It is not possible to expand subscription sharing and purchase agreements beyond current levels for a number of reasons.

- Each campus is unique in their information needs and not every campus requires all the subscriptions to support their specific missions for research and teaching. Each campus also serves specific populations of students, faculty, and researchers with needs unique to that campus. Such resources are often not shared, as the need does not exist among other campuses.

- Publishers and vendors typically consider each campus its own entity and develop pricing accordingly. They set licensing costs for electronically delivered information based on the total full-time equivalent headcount (FTE) of each campus receiving it and sharing subscriptions drives up the cost per-campus exponentially. If this resource is not required by all campuses, it increases the number of subscriptions that are paid for and unused. This is not a fair value proposition for the University of Colorado or its campuses.

Where subscription and resource sharing are possible, they are being utilized in a number of ways.

- Interlibrary loan provides a means of sharing articles and materials between campuses to meet student and faculty requests. Licensing agreements typically require each campus to download the electronic version for each request, print out and rescan to send via Interlibrary loan.
- Students and faculty across all campuses now share access to over 250,000 e-book titles because of cross-campus collaborative negotiations with some publishers.
- For print books and other physical resources each campus participates in lending networks regionally and nationally through interlibrary loan. The notable regional lending network, Prospector, is run through the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, which each CU campus participates in. Students and faculty from CU campuses can request materials from other CU campuses or regional libraries that are participants in Prospector.
- University libraries commonly engage in collective purchasing through consortium or other shared arrangements as one way to mitigate the financial pressures of increasing subscription costs. In addition to working collaboratively together as a CU system, CU libraries also engage in larger consortium bodies with other academic libraries, leveraging even greater negotiating power with more institutions. For example, one notable consortium is the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, consisting of sixteen primarily academic libraries across Colorado and Wyoming.

Question 2: Is public access currently available to campus libraries and library materials/subscriptions?
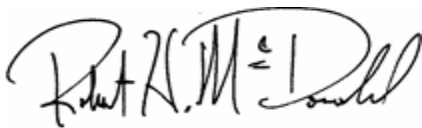- **If yes, is this access limited in any way?**
- **If no, could the campuses provide public access?**

University of Colorado Libraries allow some form of public access, although each campus will have differing processes and policies for how this access is managed.

Providing public access to online resources is a core principle of libraries in negotiating access with publishers and vendors via license agreements. For publishers and vendors, public access is typically defined as limited to online access from within the physical library, thus access to these resources is limited to specific library locations and computer terminals.

- **CU Boulder** - provides public access to most subscriptions and online resources via public access computer terminals at its Norlin, Earth Sciences, Mathematics/Physics, Business, and Music Libraries. The Law Library is open to the public during regular business hours and provides public access to online legal information via public access computer terminals.

- **UCCS Kraemer Family Library** is open to the public during regular business hours.

- **Auraria Library** is open to the public during regular business hours.

- **The Strauss Health Sciences Library building** is accessible to the public when pre-arranged with library staff per the library's Facility Access Policy webpage.

Sincerely,

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