

**COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS (LASC)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2023-2024**

TO THE MERCED DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

In AY 2023-2024, LASC held a total of six regularly scheduled in-person meetings in order to conduct business with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced’s Senate Bylaw [II.IV.4](#).

Areas of Focus

LASC focused on four main issues this academic year:

1) Addressed Library Budgetary Issues

The Library's budget has been underfunded and not prioritized for many years. The Library and Scholarly Communications Committee (LASC) has worked to educate and spread awareness of the Library's importance in supporting campus research and instruction. The LASC White Paper makes a crucial point that adequate budgets for the Library would significantly contribute to the university's research and instruction goals. The Library's budget covers staff salaries and benefits, information resources, and operations. One of LASC's goals is to advocate for increased budgets for Library collections, staffing, and operating costs. The Library has submitted a budget request for the Fiscal Year 2023-2024, which included new staffing positions to expand services and better assist with new university programs.

2) Continued to Communicate and Promote Open Access and Transformative Agreements to Campus Faculty

To transition from subscription-based to Open Access (OA) publishing, the UC Libraries and California Digital Library (CDL) have been negotiating transformative agreements with publishers and academic societies. Open Access (OA) publishing increases the visibility and influence of research and improves access to scholarly publications for all readers globally.

Following the Open Access (OA) Ambassadors Retreat in Spring 2023, LASC members visited various faculty department meetings to share information on Open Access (OA)

and transformative agreements. Presentations were made to several Departments, with more planned for the future. So far, the Open Access (OA) presentations have been made to the following Departments: Life and Environmental Sciences (LES); Applied Mathematics; Political Science (POLI); Global Arts, Media and Writing Studies (GAMWS); Literature, Languages, & Cultures (LLC); Anthropology & Heritage Studies (AHS); Interdisciplinary Humanities Graduate Group (IHGG); Economics & Business Management (EBM); Cognitive & Informational Sciences (CIS); Physics (PHYS); and Molecular Cell Biology (MCB). Looking ahead, LASC plans to extend these presentations to the Public Health (PH) and Psychological Sciences Departments in the upcoming Fall 2024 semester.

UC Libraries, including the UC Merced Library, aim to increase Open Access (OA) publishing options for faculty and students, enhancing access to scholarly publications. With a sustainable budget, the UC Merced Library can fully participate in this transition, making research widely available. LASC will continue to educate faculty and students on this process.

3) *Finalized and Promoted the LASC Library White Paper*

Last academic year, LASC drafted the White Paper while actively discussing the areas of focus. The LASC White Paper highlights the UC Merced Library's critical role in the university's missions of research, teaching, learning, and service. This document outlines the Library's services, impact, resources, space, and finances, emphasizing its contribution to achieving the university's strategic planning goals and growing key R1 metrics. The White Paper underscores the Library's significance and offers recommendations to support its role in UC Merced's growth to R1 status.

This academic year, the LASC White Paper has been finalized and published on several platforms: the LASC committee webpage; Academic Senate News; eScholarship webpage; and included in the Senate Weekly Digest.

4) *Met with Administrative Leadership to Present the LASC White Paper*

LASC met with administrative leadership to promote the key messages of the LASC White Paper. This year, LASC met with Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Zatz; Vice Chancellor of Research, Innovation and Economic Development Wilson; and Vice Chancellor for Planning & Budget and Chief Financial Officer Schnier. LASC plans to continue the discussion of the White Paper in the Fall semester with Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Dumont.

Consultation with the University Librarian

LASC benefited from consultation and input from University Librarian Li on the topics including updates on the Library budget call allocation and planning and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) project proposal.

LASC was updated on the progress and challenges facing the establishment of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) project at the UC Merced Library during the Spring 2024 semester.

Campus Review Items

- LASC reviewed and commented on:
 - Graduate Council Policy for Hybrid Programs
 - SNS Proposal for a Biology B.A. Degree Program
 - SOE Proposal for an Aerospace Engineering B.S. Degree Program
 - Proposal for Establishment of a Department of Medical Education
 - Data Science and Policy Analysis Minor Proposal
 - Psychology B.S. Degree Program & Amendments to B.A. Degree Program
 - Policy on Transmission of Documents to the University Archive
 - Interim Implementing Procedures for Abusive Conduct in the Workplace
 - SoE Proposal for MIST B.A. Degree Program
 - SNS Proposal for a Biochemistry B.S. Degree Program
 - SNS Proposal for an Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology B.S. Degree Program
 - SSHA Proposal for a Science, Technology, and Ethics B.S. Degree Program
 - SSHA Proposal for a Communication and Media B.A. Degree Program
 - SSHA Proposal for a Neuroscience Degree Program

Systemwide Review Items

- LASC reviewed and commented on:
 - Interim Report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Working Group on the Future of Doctoral Education
 - UC Regents Policy on Use of University Administrative Websites
 - Proposed Academic Senate Statement on UC Quality
 - UC Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units

Systemwide Updates

LASC Chair Ojeda represented the committee on the systemwide University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC) and kept LASC informed of updates throughout the year. LASC Member DePrano represented as the Chair of the committee on the systemwide University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC). The main items of discussion at University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communications (UCOLASC) meetings included updates on: the California Digital Library (CDL), Author copyright and License-to-publish issues, DEI in scholarly communication, Open Educational Resources / Affordable Course Materials, and open access issues.

Respectfully submitted:

LASC members

Christopher Ojeda, Chair (SSHA) – UCOLASC Representative

Sholeh Quinn, Vice-Chair (SSHA)

Jessica Blois (SNS)

Maria DePrano (SSHA) – UCOLASC Chair

Ex officio, non-voting members

Haipeng Li, University Librarian

Olivia Olivares, Library Consultant

Val Mendoza, Undergraduate Student Representative

Staff

Sang Lee