

June 29, 2006

Senator Arlen Specter
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter,

As Dean of Carnegie Mellon University Libraries in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor **S. 2695, the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006 (FRPAA)**. Currently sponsored by Senator John Cornyn of Texas and Senator Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, the FRPAA is pending before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The FRPAA will ensure that all U.S. taxpayers have free and timely access to the published results of federally funded research projects. It will require the eleven federal departments and agencies that invest more than \$100 million annually in research to implement a public access policy whereby the peer-reviewed results of all unclassified research they fund must be deposited in an open access (free-to-read) online repository within six months of publication.

There is a compelling economic reason to support the FRPAA. Empirical evidence from citation studies demonstrates that open access increases the impact of scientific and scholarly work, fostering further research and innovation. Open access leverages the initial economic investment in the research and is therefore a public good. The public will benefit from having direct access to the research, but more importantly they will benefit from the research community's access to this work, which will yield more research and application in a shortened timeframe. To maximize the benefits of open access, the embargo period between the deposit of a work and its public availability should be as short as possible.

Currently scientists, scholars, and the general public do not have sufficient access to the published literature. Few public libraries subscribe to scholarly journals, and academic library budgets cannot keep pace with escalating journal prices, which have risen three times faster than inflation for the past twenty years. We need to improve dissemination of federally funded research. Access to this work is essential to everyone who wishes to apply or build upon it and should be a public right given that taxpayers underwrite tens of billions of dollars worth of research annually.

Requiring such a public access policy is critical to achieve the goal of swiftly leveraging the initial investment to foster additional research and innovation. The year that has passed since the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued its open access policy demonstrates that simply *encouraging* deposit is insufficient; less than 4% of the 65,000 published research articles funded

by the NIH was deposited under the policy. The NIH's Public Access Working Group and the National Library of Medicine's Board of Regents concluded that the NIH policy failed *not* because of insufficient information about the policy or because of technical difficulties in the submission process, but because it was voluntary. Exceedingly busy people, even if they embrace the principles of open access, do not have time to volunteer.

However, studies show that 95% of researchers and scholars *will* provide open access to their work if there is a mandate that requires them to do it. Studies also show that 93% of publishers *already endorse* immediate deposit of published work into an open access repository.

There is no evidence that open access has a negative impact on the economics of journal publishing. In fact, there is evidence from the American Physical Society and the Institute of Physics that open access has *not* generated a decline in journal subscriptions. Furthermore, the FRPAA allows for the deposit of either the published article or the final peer-reviewed manuscript. Publishers can retain exclusive rights to the article versions to which they have added value through copy editing, formatting, and bundling with other quality articles. Peer review, value added by uncompensated researchers and scholars, is not threatened by a public access policy.

As members of the higher education community, we believe research articles that result from federal funding should be freely available to all taxpayers with minimal delay. A mandated policy would maximize return on the government's investment in research, advance science and improve the lives and welfare of people in the United States and throughout the world. This is an achievable goal today, thanks in large part to advancements made possible by the Internet.

The cost for government departments and agencies to implement the public access policy would be relatively small. The NIH estimates that even with 100% compliance, its public access program would cost 0.01% of its annual budget. The NIH and Carnegie Mellon believe that making this investment is in the public interest.

By co-sponsoring this important legislation, you will ensure that federal dollars are well spent and help accelerate innovation and discovery.

Thank you for taking the time to review my request. I look forward to hearing from you about possible co-sponsorship. If you have any questions about the benefits of public access, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gloriana St. Clair,
Dean of University Libraries

cc: Senator John Cornyn
Senator Joe Lieberman