

September 23, 2009

Open letter from liberal arts college presidents supporting the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009:

As liberal arts college presidents, we are writing to express our strong support for S. 1373, the Federal Research Public Access Act of 2009, which has been introduced into the U.S. Senate by Senators Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) and John Cornyn (R-TX). This bill would require federal agencies whose external research budgets exceed \$100 million to develop policies that would ensure public access via the Internet to their funded research.

Liberal arts colleges are important components of our nation's scientific and scholarly productivity. Studies have shown that our institutions are highly effective in producing graduates who go on to obtain Ph.D. degrees and become productive researchers. Our faculty actively pursue research, much of it with government funding, and often working in partnership with talented undergraduates. Unfortunately, access to research information paid for with tax dollars is severely limited at our institutions – and indeed at most universities. Academic libraries simply cannot afford ready access to most of the research literature that their faculty and students need.

The Federal Research Public Access Act would be a major step forward in ensuring equitable online access to research literature that is paid for by taxpayers. The federal government funds over \$60 billion in research annually. Research supported by the National Institutes of Health, which accounts for approximately one-third of federally funded research, produces an estimated 80,000 peer-reviewed journal articles each year. Given the scope of research literature that would become available online, it is clear that adoption of the bill would have significant benefits for the progress of science and the advancement of knowledge.

S. 1373 would build on a number of established public access policies that have been adopted by government agencies in both the U.S. and abroad. The National Institutes of Health has implemented a very successful

comprehensive public access policy, as required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2007. All seven of the Research Councils in the United Kingdom have public access policies as do the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The bill is also consistent with the growing number of institutional open access policies that have been adopted at universities such as Harvard, MIT, and the University of Kansas.

We are supportive of the Federal Research Public Access Act because it has been crafted in a way that provides ample protection for the system of peer review. It allows for a window of up to six months before final peer-reviewed manuscripts resulting from publicly funded research are made openly accessible on the Internet. In addition, it leaves control of the final published version of articles, which is generally used for citation purposes, in the hands of publishers.

Adoption of the Federal Research Public Access Act will democratize access to research information funded by tax dollars. It will benefit education, research, and the general public. We urge the higher education community, American taxpayers, and members of Congress to support its passage into law.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kiss, President, Agnes Scott College
Donna M. Randall, President, Albion College
Anthony W. Marx, President, Amherst College
Steven C. Bails, President, Augustana College
Marjorie Hass, President, Austin College
Leon Botstein, President, Bard College
Debora Spar, President, Barnard College
Elaine Tuttle Hansen, President, Bates College
Scott Bierman, President, Beloit College
Barry Mills, President, Bowdoin College
Jane McAuliffe, President, Bryn Mawr College

Brian C. Mitchell, President, Bucknell University
Robert A. Oden, President, Carleton
William D. Adams, President, Colby College
Grant H. Cornwell, President, The College of Wooster
Lyle D. Roelofs, Interim President, Colgate University
Michael McFarland, President, College of the Holy Cross
Richard F. Celeste, President, Colorado College
Leo I. Higdon Jr., President, Connecticut College
Thomas W. Ross, President, Davidson College
Dale Knobel, President, Denison University
Brian W. Casey, President, DePauw University
William G. Durden, President, Dickinson College
Douglas C. Bennett, President and Professor of Politics, Earlham College
Donald R. Eastman III, President, Eckerd College
John A. Fry, President, Franklin and Marshall College
David E. Shi, President, Furman University
Janet Riggs, President, Gettysburg College
Russell K. Osgood, President, Grinnell College
Jack R. Ohle, President, Gustavus Adolphus College
James E. Bultman, President, Hope College
Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran, President, Kalamazoo College
S. Georgia Nugent, President, Kenyon College
Daniel H. Weiss, President, Lafayette College
Jill Beck, President, Lawrence University
Brian C. Rosenberg, President, Macalester College
Ronald D. Liebowitz, President, Middlebury College
Robert Franklin, President, Morehouse College
Marvin Krislov, President, Oberlin College
Rock Jones, President, Ohio Wesleyan University
Colin S. Diver, President, Reed College
William Troutt, President, Rhodes College
Lewis M. Duncan, President, Rollins College
William L. Fox, President, St. Lawrence University
David R. Anderson, President, St. Olaf College

Karen R. Lawrence, President, Sarah Lawrence College
Philip A. Glotzbach, President, Skidmore College
Carol T. Christ, President, Smith College
Rebecca Chopp, President, Swarthmore College
Beverly Tatum, President, Spelman College
John R. Brazil, President, Trinity University (TX)
Catherine B. Hill, President, Vassar College
Patrick E. White, President, Wabash College
Kenneth P. Ruscio, President, Washington and Lee University
H. Kim Bottomly, President, Wellesley College
George Bridges, President, Whitman College
M. Lee Pelton, President, Willamette University