UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Academic Senate

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON LIBRARY AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION (UCOLASC)

Abraham Stone, Chair
abestone@ucsc.edu

July 8, 2026

Office of Management and Budget

Re: Comment on Proposed Rule, “Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance”
Docket No. OMB-2026-0034

To Whom It May Concern:

We write as members of the University Committee on Library and Scholarly Communication (UCOLASC), a systemwide committee of the Academic Senate of the University of California, to provide comments on the proposed changes in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (commonly known as “Uniform Guidance”). All committee members, including the Chair, the Vice Chair, and representatives from each of the ten University of California campuses, have reviewed these comments, and we have unanimously approved them. In this way, we speak for the collective faculty of the University of California system.

These proposed changes are problematic for many reasons, but we focus here on two that fall within the remit of our committee. The two problem areas are:

1. **Funding of library subscriptions by indirect costs.** The proposed new policy, in §200.454b, disallows use of federal research grant funds to pay for “[C]osts of the recipient’s or subrecipient’s subscriptions to business, professional, academic, and technical periodicals.” Although this might conceivably have an impact on some individual researchers, our main concern is with the possibly catastrophic impact of this policy on the UC Library’s journal subscription budget. Our library’s costs, along with many others, are

taken into account when indirect cost rates are set on our researchers' grants. Under a plausible interpretation of the proposed new regulation, this would mean that the entire library budget is mixed with federal grant funds in such a way that it could no longer be used to pay for subscriptions.

This is likely not the intended effect of the change. Still, there seems to be a real danger that the new regulations would be interpreted in that way. It is not clear what would then happen, but, in a worst-case scenario, all major research universities, ourselves included, might find themselves unable to make any new payments to journal publishers: obviously a very bad outcome for us (not to mention for the publishers!). Assuming this is not the intended effect, the regulation needs to be clarified to head off any such interpretation.

2. **Multi-payer model transformative agreements.** In §200.461a, the proposed new policy disallows the use of federal grant funds for "page charges, article processing charges (APCs), or similar fees such as open access fees for professional journal publications and other peer-reviewed publications." This is a particularly troubling provision for the University of California library because of the many years we have put into negotiating a particular type of transformative open access agreement with publishers.

Before these negotiations began, the status quo was a double-charging system in which the University paid high costs to publishers for subscription access, while at the same time some of our authors paid APC's to the very same publishers to make their articles open access. The goal of negotiations was to lower total costs (to the University plus the authors) while at the same time making most or, ideally, all of our research openly accessible. Even with a reduced total cost, however, it was determined that it would not be sustainable, given the UC's high research output, for the library to bear all of it. Nor was it our ambition either to restrict our authors' choices of where to publish or to put private sector publishers out of business and replace them with something new. Thus we adopted the strategy of reaching "multi-payer" agreements in which authors who have research funding are asked to contribute towards the publisher's APC. These agreements have on the whole been extremely successful: costs have been significantly limited, while at the same time the rate of open access publication has greatly increased, making more and more of our research results available to the public who support us. In this way we have made great progress towards two goals (cost-cutting and opening access to research) which, on our understanding, are also goals of the federal government in this area.

The proposed new regulation is, no doubt, aimed at attacking the old, double-charging system, by preventing individual authors from charging APC's to their grants. But in the process it would also undermine the UC's carefully constructed agreements, which both promote open access and reduce our research community's total cost. In this case, therefore, we would not just request clarification, but rather register a protest. There are arguments to be made on behalf of various different approaches to open access publication, but the federal government should not be legislating away ours.

We urge that both of these problems be addressed in the final version of the new regulations.

Sincerely,

Abraham Stone Chair, UCOLASC

Déborah Blocker, Vice Chair
Jennifer LaFleur, Berkeley
John Roberts, Berkeley
Michael Foster, Irvine
Alan Fiske, Los Angeles
Christopher Ojeda, Merced
Sholeh Quinn, Merced
Joseph Genereux, Riverside
Sebastian Salegh, San Diego
Michael Oldham, San Francisco
Teresa Shewry, Santa Barbara
Michael Hance, Santa Cruz

cc: UCOLASC