



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

April 29, 2013

Chairman Jim Frazier  
Accountability and Administrative Review Committee  
California State Assembly  
1020 N Street, Room 357  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chairman Frazier,

I am writing on behalf of the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) to ask for your support on AB 609: California Taxpayer Access to Publicly Funded Research Act, which will be discussed in your committee on May 1. This bill would establish a program to provide the results of state-funded research to the public in a way that is free and accessible. NAGPS strongly supports open access to publicly funded research at the state and national level, and we encourage you to support this bill by voting it out of committee.

NAGPS is an entirely student-run, non-profit organization representing more than 600,000 graduate and professional students across the nation. Our members include many California graduate student organizations including those at UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Merced, and UC San Diego as well as the University of California Student Association.

As graduate and professional students we have an acute interest in open access to publicly funded research since we are the future professors, professionals, government employees, and leaders of our state. Open access to state-funded research creates an opportunity for California to best utilize the investments it has already made by empowering taxpayers to access the resulting knowledge that their tax dollars have already purchased. Under the current status quo, the results of state-funded research are typically published in peer-reviewed journals. While these journals are often accessible for people working or studying in our state's top higher education institutions, they are prohibitively expensive for most Californians. This may be particularly true for smaller and less well-funded colleges and universities. A public access program like the one that would be established under AB 609 would enable all Californians to access and read the results of peer-reviewed articles funded by state dollars. Californians have paid for this work, and a public access policy evens the playing field so that California taxpayers don't pay for research twice—once to fund the original research and again to subscribe to high-priced journals.

In addition to benefits for all Californian taxpayers, public access to state-funded research has specific benefits for students. A public access policy can make higher education more effective and ensure that we have access to the important research conducted by our state. Journal subscriptions are increasingly expensive as libraries' subscription costs have risen more than 400% since 1986, or roughly four times the rate of inflation. These costs may prevent libraries from subscribing to certain journals, hindering academic achievement and performance. As well, many of our best and brightest students find that their library cards expire at graduation and they no longer have access to the latest research.

In addition to the clear benefits for Californians, perhaps the most compelling reason to support a public access policy in California is because we know they work. While California would be the first state to pass such a policy, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) public access policy is a proven success. The NIH policy began in 2008 and requires all peer-reviewed articles resulting from NIH funding be deposited in a public database, PubMed Central (PMC), within one year of publication. Over 1.5 million research articles are accessed by more than 700,000 users on PMC each day. Additionally, 57% of these users are

## NAGPS member schools:

Arizona State University  
Arkansas State University  
Armstrong Atlantic State University  
Auburn University  
Baylor University  
Bentley University  
Boston University  
Bryn Mawr College  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Case Western Reserve University  
Chatham University  
Colorado School of Mines  
Colorado State University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Drexel University  
Duke University  
East Carolina University  
East Tennessee State University  
Eastern Illinois University  
Emerson College  
Florida Atlantic University  
Florida International University  
Florida State University  
George Mason University  
Grand Valley State University  
Harvard University  
High Point University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Kent State University  
Loyola University Maryland  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Missouri University of Science and Technology  
North Carolina State University  
Northern Arizona University  
Northwestern University  
Ohio State University  
Oklahoma State University  
Old Dominion University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Regent University  
Rice University  
Southern University  
St. Cloud State University  
St. Louis University  
Stony Brook University  
Syracuse University  
Texas A&M University  
Texas Tech University  
Tufts University  
University of Akron  
University of Alabama, Birmingham  
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa  
University of Arizona  
University of Arkansas, Little Rock  
University of California  
University of California, Davis  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Merced  
University of California, San Diego  
University of Central Florida  
University of Cincinnati  
University of Colorado  
University of Florida  
University of Georgia  
University of Louisville  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
University of Maryland, College Park  
University of Miami  
University of Mississippi  
University of Missouri  
University of Missouri, St. Louis  
University of Montana  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
University of Nevada, Reno  
University of New England  
University of New Haven  
University of North Texas  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus  
University of South Dakota  
University of South Florida  
University of Southern California  
University of Tennessee Knoxville  
University of Toledo  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Washington State University  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Western Michigan University  
Xavier University

from the general public and industry—a clear indicator that this research is being utilized beyond academia . It is also important to note that the publishers have not been able to demonstrate economic harm as a result of this move toward public access, even though research funded by the NIH- roughly half of all federal non-defense research expenditures—are now covered by this policy. Despite the economic downturn of recent years and the implementation of the NIH policy, publishers have continued to profit consistently (with profit margins as high as 37% in some cases) and have seen increases over previous years .

A public access policy for the state of California makes sense. It will provide transparency and access for all Californians and correct a broken system that requires our taxpayers to pay twice for research. It will also ensure that California students have access to the information needed for an effective and up to date education. Importantly, California's public access policy comes on the heels of many other similar initiatives including open access policies at the NIH, The World Bank, The European Union and most recently, a federal directive from the Obama Administration requiring most of our federally funded research to be made freely available online. Please support AB 609 and empower Californians with public access to publicly funded research.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if NAGPS can be of any additional assistance. if I can be of any additional assistance.

Sincerely,



Meredith Niles  
Director of Legislative Affairs, NAGPS  
Ph.D. Candidate in Ecology, Class of 2014  
University of California, Davis

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[1] The Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Monograph & Serial Costs in ARL Libraries, 1986-2011.  
<http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/monograph-serial-costs.pdf>

[2] The National Institutes of Health Open Access Policy Overview and Impact. [http://publicaccess.nih.gov/public\\_access\\_policy\\_implications\\_2012.pdf](http://publicaccess.nih.gov/public_access_policy_implications_2012.pdf)

[3] The Economist. "Open Sesame". April 14, 2012. <http://www.economist.com/node/21552574>