



## ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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### **AAU STATEMENT ON THE LINGUA-ELSEVIER DISPUTE AND THE FUTURE OF SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING**

*Following is a statement by Hunter Rawlings, President of the Association of American Universities, on the dispute between the editors of *Lingua* and Elsevier and on the future of open access publishing.*

The recent resignation of the editors and editorial board members of the Elsevier journal *Lingua* has generated a great deal of commentary both supporting and questioning the action. Although AAU takes no position on this disagreement, we fully support the goal of the *Lingua* editors to establish an affordable, sustainable, high-quality open access journal with the overriding purpose of enhancing research and scholarship. We observe that Elsevier, too, asserts its support for open access publishing, pointing out that it is the third largest publisher of open access journals.

This dispute highlights the complexities and conflicting interests embedded in scholarly publishing. Publishers add critical value to published scholarship, and the peer review and editorial work necessary to produce that value generate significant costs that must be met. At the same time, most university research is publicly funded to advance knowledge for public benefit. Accordingly, AAU believes that the primary purpose of scholarly publishing should be public service, and that journal pricing policies and other publishing practices should reflect that purpose. That is too often not the case today for some scholarly publishers, including both commercial and nonprofit professional and scientific society publishers.

AAU encourages all participants in the scholarly publishing system – including universities, research libraries, academic and professional societies, and commercial and non-profit scholarly publishers – to undertake a robust dialogue with the goal of seeking consensus on publishing principles, policies, and sustainable business models that strengthen scholarly communication and the public purposes it serves. AAU is eager to work with other groups to embark upon such a dialogue.

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*The [Association of American Universities \(AAU\)](#) is an association of [60 U.S. and two Canadian public and private research universities](#). It focuses on issues such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education. AAU member universities are on the leading edge of innovation, scholarship, and solutions that contribute to the nation's economy, security, and wellbeing. AAU's 60 U.S. universities award nearly one-half of all U.S. doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in STEM fields.*

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