

For immediate release:

February 12, 2009

For more information, contact:

Karla Hahn

Association of Research Libraries

202-296-2296

karla@arl.org

Universities Need to Promote Broader Dissemination of Research and Scholarship

ARL, AAU, CNI, and NASULGC Call for Action

Washington DC—Four leading associations serving research universities, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), have issued a joint statement, “The University’s Role in the Dissemination of Research and Scholarship.” The statement is a call to action for universities to ensure the broadest possible access to the products of their work.

“Our organizations recognize that the production of new knowledge lies at the heart of the university’s mission—it is a core responsibility,” observed Charles Lowry, Executive Director of ARL. “Yet, unless knowledge is disseminated effectively, the efforts of researchers and scholars are diminished.”

Digital technologies have opened the door to a host of new possibilities for sharing knowledge and generated entirely new forms of content that must be made broadly available. “This shift demands that universities take on a much more active role in ensuring dissemination of the knowledge produced by their institutions—both now and in the future,” noted Clifford Lynch, Executive Director of CNI.

The statement is an outgrowth of a roundtable discussion hosted by the four organizations that engaged provosts, chief research officers, chief information officers, senior faculty, and library and university press directors. Those leaders identified a set of actions that should be taken to expand the dissemination of the full range of products of the university community’s research and scholarship. “Copyright assignment practices and the academic reward system emerged as key factors that can inhibit broader sharing of the products of research and scholarship,” according to John Vaughn, Executive Vice President of AAU, who continued, “These are components of university dissemination where continuing evolution is needed.”

The call to action offers a broader vision for the university’s role and provides a series of recommended actions, both for campus leaders and for collective action by the university community.

“The call to action provides guidance to each organization and its members,” said David Shulenburg, Vice President for Academic Affairs at NASULGC, whose Council of Academic Affairs executive committee endorsed the joint statement for campus discussion. “Campuses need to act now to engage administration and faculty in looking at how they can ensure broad dissemination of the research and scholarly work produced by their faculty.”

The complete document, “The University’s Role in the Dissemination of Research and Scholarship—A Call to Action,” is available online

<http://www.arl.org/bm~doc/disseminating-research-feb09.pdf>.

About ARL

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is a nonprofit organization of 123 research libraries in North America. Its mission is to influence the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations. ARL is on the Web at <http://www.arl.org/>.

About AAU

The Association of American Universities (AAU) is an association of 62 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada organized to develop and implement effective national and institutional policies supporting research and scholarship, graduate, professional, and undergraduate education, and public service in research universities. The 60 US AAU universities award over one-half of all US doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in the sciences and engineering. AAU is on the Web at <http://www.aau.edu/>.

About CNI

The Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) is a coalition of some 200 institutions dedicated to supporting the transformative promise of networked information technology for the advancement of scholarly communication and the enrichment of intellectual productivity. The Coalition, which is sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and EDUCAUSE, is headquartered in Washington DC. CNI is on the Web at <http://www.cni.org/>.

About NASULGC

Founded in 1887, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC, A Public University Association), is an association of public research universities, land-grant institutions, and many state public university systems. Its 218 members enroll more than 4.7 million students and award nearly one million degrees annually. With nearly \$30 billion in research, NASULGC-member universities comprise 10 of the top 20 universities in total federal spending on research and development in science and engineering. As the nation's oldest higher education

association, NASULGC is dedicated to excellence in learning, discovery, and engagement. For more information visit <http://www.nasulgc.org/>.

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