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April 5, 2011

Dr. Francis Collins  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
1 Center Drive, MSC 0148 (Room 126)  
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Dear Dr. Collins,

We write today to congratulate you as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) marks the third anniversary of the highly successful Public Access Policy. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association representing more than 12,600 academic and research librarians and interested individuals, has long supported the NIH Public Access policy. We were pleased that legislation was passed to make this policy mandatory. To help our members and their institutions with implementing this policy, ACRL has provided education, networking, and tools around the NIH Public Access Policy itself and the related issue of author rights.

The NIH and you, Director Collins, have shown tremendous leadership in implementing the first U.S. policy to ensure that all members of the public – including patients and their families, health care professionals, researchers, students, teachers, entrepreneurs and business owners – are guaranteed free online access to articles reporting on the results of research that their tax dollars support. As a result of the NIH's commitment to public access, the more than two million full-text articles in PubMed Central (PMC) provide a wealth of information on the very latest biomedical research without barriers.

Because ACRL represents libraries in all kinds of higher education institutions, our members support both teaching and research. The knowledge now accessible as a result of the NIH Public Access policy is particularly valuable to teachers and learners. It greatly benefits our "future faculty" (i.e., graduate students) and undergraduates who are interested in pursuing careers in science, technology, public health, or who want to be informed citizens about health care options.

We ask that you consider shortening the embargo period for accessing articles reporting on NIH-funded research to six months or less as we believe it will further enhance the value of the public's annual \$30 billion investment in scientific research at the NIH. In particular, a six-month embargo is more reflective of the fast pace of biomedical research, would align the NIH policy with that of the majority of other biomedical research funders (public and private) around

the world that have such policies, and is widely used by highly respected, well-established publishers of biomedical research articles.

We, together with other leaders from ACRL, travel to Washington, DC. If you think it helpful, we would be happy to meet with you (or appropriate staff members) in person to discuss further why we believe a shorter embargo period would benefit librarians who are members of ACRL and the faculty and students they serve.

Sincerely,



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