



May 13, 2010

Dear Chancellor Birgeneau:

I am writing to urge you to keep the Water Resources Center Archives (WRCA) open and funded at UC Berkeley. The WRCA is an essential and invaluable resource to the people of California and an asset to UC Berkeley. I have experienced this first-hand as a graduate of UC Berkeley (Ph.D., 2006) and now, as a water professional.

I could not have completed my graduate study without the WRCA resources and staff. I now work in the non-profit sector on California water policy issues and I continue to use the library regularly. As one of the few publicly accessible libraries on campus, the WRCA provides a critical resource, especially for non-profits. In addition, I regularly attend the excellent California Water colloquia series and read the "On Water" blog. The collection and programs of WRCA are widely renowned and draw students, scholars, and professionals from around the world to the UC Berkeley campus.

As you know, water is vital to California, and it will only become more important in the future as we face a growing population, decreasing water quality, and the impacts of climate change on water resources. It is absolutely imperative to have a library and archive dedicated to understanding California's water and water history. In this respect, the WRCA is a one-of-a-kind treasure, as Dr. Peter Gleick has pointed out:

"The WRCA collection consists of more than 200,000 technical reports, 1,500 specialized newsletters, 5,000 maps and videos, more than 200 manuscript collections, 25,000 black-and-white photographs that document the development of water in California and the West, and more than 45,000 coastal aerial photographs. Most of this stuff isn't available on the Internet. The best, oldest stuff is not digitized. It is just priceless information and history." (<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/gleick/category?blogid=104&cat=2620&o=10#ixzz0npXCcTlc>)

Shutting down or letting the WRCA move to another campus would be a shockingly short-sighted move, particularly considering the paltry cost of its operation and maintenance (~\$300,000). The WRCA is key to UC Berkeley's ability to continue to draw exceptional students and produce leaders in the science, policy, and management of water. Please demonstrate your leadership by protecting this jewel of the UC Berkeley campus from short-sighted decision-making.

Sincerely,

Juliet Christian-Smith, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate