To: Deans, Directors and Chairs

From: Michael M. Hastings, Director of Research & Sponsored Programs

Date: July 22, 2015

Subject: Public Access to the Results of Federally Funded Research – Please share this important message with researchers in your department/unit

In February 2013, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued a memorandum directing Executive Departments and Agencies with over $100 million in annual conduct of research and development expenditures, to develop plans to support increased public access (also called ‘open access’), to the unclassified results of federally funded research published in peer-reviewed scholarly publications, along with metadata, and digital scientific data.1  This directive follows on the President’s agenda to increase government transparency, as well as efforts by national and international groups to make information, “ . . . *publicly free on the Internet, allowing users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full text of articles without legal, financial or technical barriers*.”[2](http://umaine.edu/orsp/compliance/public-access/#EndNote1)  Non-federal sponsors including the Bill and Melinda Gates, and MacArthur Foundations, and Howard Hughes Medical Institute also are part of the movement.

Federal public access policies are a legal requirement, as well as a term and condition of award. University of Maine authors supported by federal research dollars are required to make resulting peer-reviewed publications, metadata, and data available to the public in the manner prescribed by the sponsoring agency. Principal Investigators (PIs) have the added responsibility of ensuring that other authors (i.e., co-investigators, collaborators, graduate students), funded on the PIs’ awards likewise comply with sponsor public access requirements. To enforce the mandate, agencies like the National Institutes of Health, and National Science Foundation will withhold future awards until the subject PI is fully compliant.

When preparing manuscripts, it is critical for University of Maine authors to retain legal publication rights that allow them to comply with public access requirements. This means that, prior to signing any agreement that transfers the author’s copyrights or other rights to publish, s/he ensures that the agreement allows the final peer-reviewed manuscript to be submitted to an open access repository in accordance with the sponsor’s public access policy. If the author fails to do this, s/he risks non-compliance and loss of funding, or may incur fees to buy back publishing rights, or both.

For more information regarding public access, please visit: http://umaine.edu/orsp/compliance/public-access/. If you have questions, please contact Wendy Eckert in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 581-2657, or eckert@maine.edu.