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# ACRL President's letter

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## *How ACRL has met its goals in 1988.*

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Dear ACRL Colleagues:

It is customary for the President of ACRL to write an annual summary of activities for the January issue of the *C&RL News*. While reviewing various documents in preparing these lines, the dynamism of the Association was clearly emphasized to me. The many activities that have been carried out during the past year are hardly dependent on me as president, or the other officers of the Association. The overwhelming majority of the projects which were moved toward completion or completed during 1988 owe their success to individual members of ACRL and to our very competent headquarters staff. While every president tries very hard to give something to the Association, he or she receives far more from the Association than it is humanly possible to give.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the Association's activities and accomplishments for 1988 is to look at them as they relate to the four goals adopted by ACRL in 1986.

The first of these is: to contribute to the total professional development of academic and research librarians. This entire letter could be spent commenting on activities carried out in support of this goal! In addition to the outstanding continuing education courses which continue to be offered around national conferences and at sites throughout the country, and to the highly successful BIS and RBMS pre-conferences which were held before the annual conference, ACRL



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achieved two very significant firsts. The Community and Junior College Libraries Section held ACRL's first teleconference. The session was beamed by satellite to over 320 sites in 47 states and reached some 10,000 individuals! ACRL went international with the first overseas conference which was sponsored by the Western European Specialists Section. Held in Florence, Italy, it attracted some 170 participants from 20 countries.

Although it will not take place until April 1989, the Fifth National Conference sponsored by ACRL can easily be included in this report since virtually all of the planning and preparation took place in 1988. For the first time at one of these conferences, programs will be scheduled alongside papers and major speakers. The occasion of the Cincinnati conference provides ACRL with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate a variety of anniversaries: the 100th anniversary of the College Library Section of ALA; the 50th anniversary of ACRL as a division of ALA; the 50th anniversary of the launching of *College and Research Libraries*; and the 25th anniversary of the publication of *Choice*. The planning committee has kept these milestones in mind and those members who attend the conference will join in a variety of activities to note the various anniversaries.

Once again, at the annual conference, ACRL conferred the many awards which the Division and its Sections sponsor. Chief among these was the Academic or Research Librarian of the Year award made to Edward Holley. Also significant was the presentation of the first Hugh Atkinson Memorial Award, sponsored by ACRL, LAMA, LITA, and RTSD, to Richard Dougherty.

A second goal of the strategic plan is to enhance the capability of academic and research libraries to serve the needs of users. In many ways, the most significant undertaking in this area was the Board's decision to contract with Nancy Van House to

prepare a Manual of Output Measures. This document will serve every single academic library in the country, no matter what its size, by providing a methodology for evaluating the efficacy of their services.

During the year, four guidelines were disseminated after having been approved at the 1988 Midwinter Meeting. These are: "Guidelines on the Selection of General Collection Materials for Transfer to Special Collections," "Mission of a University Undergraduate Library: Model Statement," "Guidelines for Audiovisual Services in Academic Libraries," and "Guidelines Regarding Thefts in Libraries."

Work of a special nature was carried out by the Task Force on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Chaired by Beverly Lynch, the group identified a few projects which ACRL could carry out and which would assist the librarians in the HBCU's in strengthening their libraries. An NEH-funded humanities workshop will be held specifically for these institutions, a statistics project is underway, and a preconference on preparing for reaccreditation evaluation will be held at the Annual Conference in Dallas.

Throughout the year, the headquarters staff continued to provide advisory service to librarians and academic administrators. Requests for information come in by telephone and in the mail; all are promptly handled. A part of this service entails sending out copies of standards and guidelines upon request. During the year more than 3,200 copies of these documents were distributed.

The plan lists as the third goal of the Association: to promote and speak for the interests of academic and research librarianship. This advocacy role is carried out in a variety of ways. Some of the specific activities in 1988 which come under this heading were: a meeting of JoAn Segal and Cathleen Bourdon with Elaine Didier, AECT President, to discuss the progress of the Joint ACRL/AECT Standards Committee; a Board-passed resolution supporting the reauthorization of LSCA; the third of three seminars of Campus Information Systems, co-sponsored with the Association of American Colleges and OCLC, and attended by academic administrators in addition to librarians; a mailing about the privatization of NTIS which encouraged recipients to take action on this crucial question; attendance at the annual meeting of the American Association of Higher Education; a meeting with staff members from the AAUP and the Council of Graduate Schools to discuss preliminary plans for a workshop for librarians and faculty members; presence of a delegation of academic librarians at Legislative Day in Washington, D.C. The Professional Association Liaison Committee recommended that efforts in this arena involve close cooperation between our Executive Director and various members of the Association, especially

in conferring with staff and officers of other professional academic associations.

The fourth goal which guides our Association's activities is: to promote study, research, and publication relevant to academic and research librarianship. We continued to publish our major journal, our Association news magazine and the various newsletters of the sections. *Choice* continued to serve the needs of academic libraries throughout the country and in many parts of the world. The third edition of *Books for College Libraries* was completed and was published in print and computerized form. Our other journal, *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship*, became a regular publication of the Division.

Many other specialized publications made their debut in 1988. Some of these are: *Your Old Books*; *Academic Status: Statements and Resources*; *Annual Reports for College Libraries*, *Clip Note #1*; *Binding Terms*; *Thesaurus for Use in Rare and Special Collections Cataloguing*; and *Provenance Evidence: Thesaurus for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloguing*.

The listing of these many activities is ample evidence that we are a dynamic Association. Hundreds of our members work, not only at conferences but throughout the year, to further the interest of the profession. In addition, we are fortunate to have the contributions of our dedicated headquarters staff without whose energy the list of Association accomplishments would be much shorter.

As though these efforts were not enough, I have taken advantage of my position as president to appoint several new task forces. The members of those groups will address certain issues which, in my view, need attention. Some of the task forces will look at 1) issues surrounding the use of Paraprofessionals in Academic Libraries, 2) Recruitment of Underrepresented Minorities to academic librarianship, 3) the Library School Curriculum, 4) the possibility of establishing a Retired Librarians Service Corps.

I would like to conclude this retrospective look by congratulating you, the members of the Association. You are ACRL's most important resource; the accomplishments of the Association are your accomplishments. Together, with the assistance of the dedicated Association staff, we can continue to work toward the improvement of library services in academic institutions and toward the furtherance of the goals of our profession.



Joseph A. Boissé  
ACRL President



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