
The ACRL committee appointment process

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How to get on an ACRL committee.

The Appointments and Nominations Committee of ACRL makes recommendations to the vice-president/president-elect for appointments to the standing committees of the organization. The number of persons recommended varies each year because of the different terms that exist for each committee, the number of persons who resign or who cannot continue for whatever reason. Each Appointments Committee designs its selection process.

A number of questions have arisen over the past several years about how one gets appointed to committees. What follows is a brief attempt to answer, and we hope, clarify some of the issues. It should be remembered that the power of the Appointments Committee is advisory only. The president-elect has the ultimate authority to name persons to the standing committees. The following answers are only concerned with the standing committees and does not necessarily reflect the procedures of ACRL sections.

1. What is the best way to be considered for appointment to a standing committee? Each year in the October issue of *COLL News* the "Volunteer Form" is published. If you are interested in participating in the work of a standing committee, fill out the form and *submit it by the stated deadline*. It is important to include all of the information requested. Many people attach lengthy resumes. While this is useful on occasion, it can be a hin-

drance due to the length of many of these documents. If you feel that you have not been able to provide enough information on the volunteer form, then please submit no more than a single page of additional information.

Some people write directly to the president-elect. While this can be expeditious in alerting the individual of your interest, usually the president-elect will simply forward the names to the Appointments Committee; you are better advised to fill out the form.

2. How are these forms used? The Appointments Committee reviews all forms received. Filling out a form does not necessarily guarantee appointment. Fortunately, for the health of the Association, there are many more people who are interested in participating than there are slots for them. You do, however, have a better chance of being appointed if you submit a form according to procedure.

The Appointments Committee is not limited in its selection to those persons who fill out the form. Does this sound contradictory? It is because most Appointments Committees will try to balance committees by type of institution, positions, or geographical areas. Indeed, such restrictions are mandated for certain committees.

People are generally appointed to the Appointments Committee because of their wide knowledge of people in the field. They may in fact know persons who have special talents who can meet the

needs of a specific committee. So, while the forms are vital in the process, people are sometimes appointed who have not completed the forms.

The president-elect does retain the right to appoint anyone of their choice.

3. What is the role of an intern on a committee, and should I say that I am willing to be one?

In April 1988 the ACRL Executive Committee revised the statement on interns. It reads as follows:

"An internship provides a one-year opportunity for an individual to become more familiar with the work and organization of ACRL and to demonstrate his/her capacities for further service to ACRL. An intern, unlike an observer, participates fully in the work and decision-making of the committee. One, two, but not more than three interns may be appointed to any one committee in a given year. An intern may not be reappointed as an intern but is eligible for appointment as member of the committee already served on or as an intern or member of another committee."

The only difference between an intern and a regular appointment is the term of service. Every effort will be made by ACRL to insure that all chairs of standing committees clearly understand that the intern(s) are to be treated as full participants in the work of the committee.

If you have served as an intern on any committee, please indicate this on the volunteer form.

4. If I am appointed as an intern, will I be subsequently appointed to the committee? Not necessarily. Being an intern does not insure a regular appointment. If you are interested in an appointment, you must fill out the form. There have been some misconceptions that being an intern will automatically lead to appointment. Do not assume this. There can be many reasons for this: 1) It would interfere with the appointment prerogatives of the president-elect. 2) Not all interns are happy with their committee. 3) Not all committees are happy with their interns. The function of the internship is to expose people to the work of ACRL. Serving as an intern can be a positive learning experience that can be applied to other work of the organization.

5. What are my chances of being reappointed once I am serving on a committee? It varies. This is a complicated question because there is a need for continuity on committees, but at the same time new people need to be appointed to bring different points of view and new energy. Sometimes it is important for people to be reappointed because of ongoing projects they may have assumed. The turnover in a committee can drastically affect the work that is accomplished. This year one committee only had two continuing members. Careful attention has to be paid to reappointments because the number of terms that individuals can serve on a given committee is limited. It is important to remember that there are a lot of qualified members

who are eager to serve the Association and who should be given the opportunity.

Sometimes we have to put our own egos aside and realize that there are others who are perfectly capable of carrying on in our absence.

Some presidents-elect opt for very few reappointments because of a desire for wider participation and greater diversity. The Association can be well served by this philosophy. Sometimes a need is perceived to stop playing musical committees, as one sees individuals go off one committee only to be immediately appointed to another.

6. When are the appointments made? The Appointments Committee does most of its work at the Midwinter Meeting. Thus, it is essential that the form be submitted by the date listed on it. Prior to Midwinter, committee members spend many hours reading the form and drawing up lists of potential candidates, interns, and volunteers for each committee. During Midwinter the Committee spends eight hours on the selection process. After Midwinter, lists of persons recommended for appointment are sent to the president-elect for action. It is the president-elect who makes the final decisions. ACRL staff will then notify those persons who have been selected. This generally happens in April.

7. So, if I have not been notified by May, I should give up? Not entirely. There are always some people who do not accept appointment. This means that we must then look to the list of alternates. This process can go on for a good part of the year because people find that their personal circumstances have changed and they cannot participate after having accepted appointment.

8. How are chairs appointed? The Appointments Committee does make recommendations for chairs as vacancies occur. Not every committee needs a chair each year. Some chairs have multiple-year appointments. The committee does not select its own chair. Again, it is part of the choice of the president-elect to select chairs who will be responsive to actions or programs that will be carried out during the tenure of their presidency.

9. Should I despair if I am not appointed the first time I submit a volunteer form? Absolutely not. Continue to fill out the forms. Remember that there are always more people willing to serve than there are places.

10. Does the Appointments Committee solicit information from other sources? Yes. The Committee asks the president-elect for recommendations. Also, before Midwinter, the chair of each committee is asked for suggestions about the number of interns that would be desirable, and to make recommendations on the reappointment of present members of the committee and appointment of interns as regular members.