

# Steinhoff and Todaro share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring

**E**d. note: *C&RL News* offered candidates for vice-president/president-elect, Cynthia Steinhoff and Julie Todaro, this opportunity to share their views with the membership. Although many of the issues facing ACRL are discussed informally at meetings, we want to use this venue to provide a national forum to all members. We hope this will assist you in making an informed choice when you vote in the election this spring.

## CYNTHIA STEINHOFF

My introduction to ACRL came many years ago through the Technology Committee of the Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS). I soon became actively involved in the section, serving as secretary and then chair.

It was clear to me early in my work with CJCLS that it and ACRL could provide me with exciting networking and professional development opportunities, as well as ideas that I could implement in my own library. I have grown personally and professionally through my work with ACRL.

ACRL is well poised for the future with the strategic plan approved in 2004. The plan sets clear goals to move the association through the next three to five years. Objectives are achievable, yet encourage ACRL to stretch and innovate.

A key component of the plan is a list of 21 questions about major issues facing the association. I have selected several of these questions to address in this article as a way of introducing myself to the members of ACRL.



Cynthia Steinhoff



Julie Todaro

## Communicating the value of the profession

Three questions directly address the value of the profession and academic libraries by asking how ACRL can help members communicate the value and relevance of libraries and librarians to administrators and faculty. I argue that the concept of value also relates to other questions. These questions ask how the association can assist librarians in garnering understanding and respect for the profession, making a case for physical libraries, and effectively assisting students with research projects. If we show the value of academic libraries and librarians, we will earn respect, gather support, and see students coming to us for assistance.

What is it that we do well? We help students, faculty, and administrators alike to navigate the volumes and gigabytes of information. We assist them in evaluating this flood of words and data, and ultimately help them recognize the best and most useful. We help our patrons to gain skills in searching for and evaluating information themselves, positioning them to be lifelong independent learners and savvy consumers of information.

If we can find a way to measure this value, we can use it to further the profession and our own libraries.

Academic librarians can demonstrate their value locally by becoming active on their own campuses. While serving as a mentor at a recent Maryland Library Leadership Institute, I was asked to share a leadership experience with participants. I titled my session "Don't say no" and discussed involvement in college-wide activities, focusing on my role as chair of Anne Arundel Community College's recent reaccreditation. I emphasized that librarians need to get out of the library and become involved in the larger institutional community. As we move into these activities, academic administrators recognize what librarians can add; they see our value to the institution. We should say yes enthusiastically when asked to take on tasks outside the library and should actively solicit such opportunities. A few months ago, I said yes when asked by my faculty colleagues to chair the Academic Forum, the body charged by the College's Board of Trustees and president with oversight of all things academic. I am the first librarian in the college's 44-year history to do so. ACRL can help members become leaders on their own campuses by offering leadership training and experiences and by partnering with higher education organizations to make them aware that academic librarians are ready to serve their institutions outside of the library.

### **Supporting ACRL members**

Another key concept embedded in the questions is that of ACRL supporting its members. The association does this through advocacy efforts, professional development activities, and its publications, to name just a few. No membership organization can survive without supporting membership, and ACRL does this well. However, it cannot rest on its laurels. ACRL must constantly look for other opportunities to support members. The association has moved forward in using technology to extend professional development activities to the desktop. It should expand these efforts, while still offering members a chance to meet

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I feel very honored to have been nominated by my peers as a candidate for the ACRL presidency. This is an exciting time for ACRL, with a strategic plan in the early stages of implementation and membership at record levels. I am eager to serve the members of ACRL and meet the challenges of a vibrant organization.—**Cynthia Steinhoff**

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and learn face-to-face. I am excited to be cochairing the Invited Papers Subcommittee for the 2007 conference in Baltimore, which promises to be ACRL's best ever!

ACRL excels at communicating with its members. It supports the discussion lists that allow for online networking and association business to be accomplished efficiently. Other lists provide ACRL news. ACRL periodicals are available both electronically and in print, and ACRL recently added a blog to its list of member services. I've been told that I am a good communicator and will employ this skill in sharing information with ACRL members, and will also listen to their concerns and questions.

### **Plans for ACRL**

If I am elected ACRL president, I hope to add to the association in all goal areas of the strategic plan. However, I recognize the need to focus intensely on a small number of goals that I believe will best serve the membership. These areas will be leadership and continuous learning. By creating leaders in ACRL, we will be better able to accomplish the objectives in the other goal areas of the plan. In addition, two of the leadership objectives focus on the value of academic libraries and librarians, and once we determine how to measure this value, and communicate it, we will be better able to achieve other goals. Continuous learning is crucial to building and maintaining leadership skills; it is for this reason that I include it.

I believe that I have the leadership skills and experience necessary to move ACRL forward. Much of my association leadership experience prior to and concurrently with

my ACRL activities was at the state level. I currently chair the Maryland Community College Library Consortium (MCCLC), the group within the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) that represents our libraries. I served as president of the Maryland Library Association (MLA). Under my leadership, MLA began offering programs outside of metropolitan areas to better meet the needs of its members. MLA updated its long-range financial plan during my presidency for the first time in many years and reactivated the Finance Committee to oversee budget and financial management policies and processes. The road to the MLA presidency saw me serve as the association's second vice president/conference chair and secretary and chair of the Professional Development Panel. I chaired the MLA Nominations and Elections Committee several times (including the year when, for the only time in its history, the association held a special election for a president elect), and was secretary and president of the Technical Services Division.

In the years since serving as MLA president, I have continued to work for Maryland's library community. This year I am chairing the MLA Strategic Planning Work Team. I have been called upon by Maryland's state librarian to serve on the steering committees that developed strategic planning processes for three key statewide library organizations, the State Library Resource Center, the Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries, and Sailor (Maryland's Public Information Network), and also participated in the planning conferences for these groups.

My ACRL activities, in addition to those already mentioned, include chairing the CJCLS Nominations Committee twice and service

as a member of the selection committees for the Academic and Research Librarian of the Year and the Excellence in Academic Libraries award (which Anne Arundel Community College received in 2002).

I have received leadership awards, including the CJCLS/EBSCO Learning Resources Leadership Award, and, outside of ACRL and the library profession, the TWIN leadership award, presented by the YWCA in Anne Arundel County to women in managerial and executive positions. I am a graduate of the ACRL Leadership Institute (1999) and Leadership Anne Arundel (2005), our county's leadership development program.

In closing, I go back to ACRL's strategic plan and note that the big audacious goal is for ACRL to be responsible and universally recognized for positioning academic and research librarians and libraries as indispensable in advancing learning and scholarship. Working together, we can achieve this. I am honored and humbled that my ACRL colleagues thought well enough of me to nominate me for the association's highest office. I believe that I can lead ACRL into the future and ask for your support in doing so.

## **JULIE TODARO** **Why ACRL?**

I am honored to be a candidate for ACRL vice-president/president-elect. The core purpose of ACRL is to lead academic and research librarians and libraries in advancing learning and scholarship. ACRL offers a unique depth and a breadth of membership opportunities that provide a structure for learning as well as an environment for supporting and advancing the profession at all levels and for all issues. Although we've

### **Election information**

Polls will open on March 15, 2006, and all current ALA members as of January 31, 2006, are eligible to vote in the 2006 election.

The last date for returning the ballots, both online and paper, is April 24, 2006, at 11:59 p.m. CST.

All Web voters will receive ballots between March 15 and March 17, 2006, in a 48-hour e-mail blast. Paper ballots will be sent to members in good standing who request them prior to March 3, 2006. International ballot packages will be mailed between March 15 and March 22, 2006.

always had a busy and exciting agenda in our association, ACRL leadership and membership have much to do.

The newest Strategic Plan is a blueprint for the future with many internal activities for members and a myriad of expanded and new external activities, responsibilities and partnerships. In addition to the Strategic Plan, a new structure for ACRL committees, committee leaders, and members, as well as new ways of collaborating with ALA and non-ALA member partners, calls for a new paradigm for focusing on 21st century directions for legislative initiatives, scholarly communication, ongoing and enhanced recognition in higher education, ongoing definition of our roles in teaching and learning outcomes, intellectual property, access to information, research and publication, and standards and guidelines, to name but a few areas.

These plans and the new structure present challenges both for ACRL leadership and membership, but ACRL has been preparing for the future by putting a forward-thinking, resilient, and flexible infrastructure in place. This infrastructure offers members the necessary elements to assist them in addressing and meeting strategic plan and organizational critical issues in a wide variety of digital, virtual, or in-person methods. Members can and must participate in, contribute to, and weigh in on the business of the association and their profession to broaden and share their collective and individual expertise as the library and information profession continues to take an even greater role in higher education, the educational environment in general, and in the profit, nonprofit, and political arena.

### **Why me?**

One of the basic tenets of professionalism is membership and activity in professional associations. I joined ALA almost immediately out of library school and began to give my positions join divisions and other workgroups and attend conferences and seek out opportunities for involvement. When I became an academic librarian, I joined ACRL and, since then, have been on a wide variety

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—Julie Todaro

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of committees, task forces, and boards. I have formed extraordinary friendships, established a professional network, and found ACRL to be the best resource for learning, staying current, and involvement in the issues that shape my profession today. I think association membership and activity is a cornerstone of professional life.

I have the background and skills to meet the current and future challenges facing ACRL leaders and members. My education and experience are diverse and have prepared me for the wide variety of challenges facing those in the educational arena today. I have been a librarian for more than 35 years and a library manager for more than 20 years. I have experience as a library school educator in four institutions; I have my school library certification and have also served as a public librarian. I have been involved with a wide variety of initiatives throughout my professional career, including three White House Conference initiatives; I have been active in planning several statewide literary initiatives; I have been a member and leader of local and statewide governing and advisory boards for local, state, and federally funded organizations; I have chaired standards and guidelines processes; and I have designed and coordinated institutional, local, state, and federal grant initiatives.

My association membership and leadership work has included working as cochair of ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy (including leader for the IIL's special project for community partnership for information literacy from 1997–2001); chair of ACRL's external liaison opportunities, including member and then chair of a liaison committee in the

1990s; and now chair, Council of Liaisons. I am past president (2000-01) of the Texas Library Association (TLA), chair of TLA's Legislative Committee (2004-06), and I have chaired the TLA Publication Relations Committee. I was honored as the TLA Librarian of the Year in 1996 and received the YWCA Austin Educator of the Year Award in 1999. Most recently, I was chosen for a 2005 Profiles in Power Award by the *Austin Business Journal*.

### Vision for ACRL

Higher education environments are a unique blend of stability and rampant change and, because of that, there is no way for me to articulate now what my specific themes would be for a leadership year, but my vision for the association in general is easy to articulate:

ACRL must remain a flexible and forward-thinking organization to provide the structure needed to advance libraries and librarians in their profession and within higher education.

ACRL must continue to provide a variety of traditional and cutting-edge ways and means for leaders and members to be active and successful within the association.

ACRL must continue to expand partnerships within ALA to maximize learning opportunities for members and to provide opportunities to advance higher education initiatives.

ACRL must continue to expand partnerships external to ALA to maximize learning opportunities for members and to provide opportunities to advance library and information goals within higher education and other

association and organization environments.

ACRL must continue to position itself to be competitive in the association arena and to be the organization of choice for academic librarians and other librarians committed to teaching and learning.

ACRL must continue to expand and showcase the expertise and voice of the library and information profession and professional within higher education and the related world locally and globally of public policy and power.

In summary, our association must engage the membership by providing provocative, relevant, general, and uniquely tailored learning and growth opportunities to ensure that members are prepared to meet and lead in today's future in their organizations, locally, in their state, and at the national level with confidence and success. *~*

### Correction

Candidate institutions for the Community and Junior College Libraries Section were incorrectly listed on page 30 of last month's issue. The entry should have read:

Vice-chair/Chair-elect: *Lora Mirza*, associate director, Georgia Perimeter College at Dunwoody Campus Library; *Kenley Neufeld*, technology librarian, Santa Barbara City College (was listed correctly).

Secretary: *Shannon Bennett-Manross*, librarian, St. Petersburg College; *Elizabeth Burns*, library director, Ohio State University-Mansfield.

The editors regret the error.

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