

Goetsch and Simmons-Welburn share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring

Ed. note: *C&RL News* offered candidates for vice-president/president-elect, Lori A. Goetsch and Janice Simmons-Welburn, 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.

LORI A. GOETSCH

First let me say that I am humbled and excited to be nominated vice-president/president-elect of ACRL. This association has been my professional home since I became an academic librarian in the early 1980s. Over my 25-year career, I've encountered the same workplace challenges and opportunities that you have—the evolution of library instruction and student learning outcomes, effective use of rapidly evolving technology, staff recruitment and retention, and the changing nature of scholarly communication, just to name a very few. Joining ACRL has given me numerous opportunities to learn strategies to respond to these challenges, network with colleagues around common issues and ideas, and grow as a professional. In exchange for these many benefits, I have tried my best to give back to the association through service in various ways, from section leadership roles to my current term as member-at-large on the ACRL Board.



Lori A. Goetsch



Janice Simmons-Welburn

We all strive daily to develop new and meaningful library services so that we remain relevant and engaged on our campus, and ACRL is there to help us. My primary goal as your ACRL president will be to enhance opportunities for member involvement and interaction and help us discover together what the future holds for us as a profession. Specifically, I will pursue initiatives, drawn from *Charting Our Future: ACRL Strategic Plan 2020*, that focus on three themes: making ACRL your professional home, advocating for all academic libraries, and exploring the changing library workforce.

Making ACRL your professional home

Just as we seek creative approaches to ensure that we remain relevant and engaged on our campuses, it is critical for ACRL leaders, members, and staff to come together to create a welcoming and respon-

sive association that is relevant to our members. One heavily traveled path to member engagement is by way of the diverse ACRL structure of sections, committees, discussion groups, and chapters; however, our survey data shows us that there are members who have trouble finding a home for themselves in the association.

The one characteristic that ties us together is that we are all academic librarians, but that doesn't mean that we can be a "one size fits all" association. Our strength is our diversity. We represent a wide range of academic librarians from small liberal arts colleges and community colleges to medium-sized public and private institutions all the way to large university research libraries. We have areas of specialization from rare books and instruction to area studies and distance learning. We come from a variety of age groups, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and regions of the country and, increasingly, the world. Some of us are funded for conference travel while others must rely on personal resources for their professional education and development.

This depth and breadth in our membership base is also our challenge. Our natural tendency as ACRL members is to gravitate to the affinity group that matches the work we do at home as well as other professional interests we have. This is the way I entered the association, and I would imagine it is the same for most of you. I found my first ACRL home in the Women's Studies Discussion Group (and later Section) and continued my involvement through University Libraries Section and other activities as my career developed. To continue to be a vital, responsive organization, we need to provide a home for all ACRL members who seek one, whether they are new to the association or changing career paths.

As member-at-large of the ACRL Board of Directors, I have been involved in working on ways to streamline the association, reduce bureaucracy, and create new opportunities for involvement, such as interest

groups and expanded virtual membership and meetings. While engaging in this change process, I have seen the challenges of effectively communicating with membership about what we are trying to achieve on their behalf. As ACRL president, I would remain committed to moving forward with these efforts to open up opportunities for member engagement while being sensitive to preserving what works for currently active members who have ACRL homes that meet their professional needs.

Advocating for all academic libraries

Another area where the "one size fits all" approach does not work for our members is advocacy. While we have many issues in common across the profession, these issues don't always affect us the same way or with the same impact. I have become more sensitive to these differences living in what is popularly known as a "fly over" state. Recently, I spoke at a Kansas ACRL chapter workshop on advocacy and learned a lesson from my colleagues who work in liberal arts college libraries and community colleges in mostly small town and rural communities. After I outlined some issues identified through the efforts of the ACRL Research Committee, we began small group discussions. A member of my small group very gently reminded me that it is difficult for issues like preservation, mass digitization, and institutional repositories to surface to top priorities in a two-person liberal arts college library. It certainly isn't the case that these librarians are not interested in issues of scholarly communication, but the impact and even the importance of these issues on the homefront can be quite different. While we know that advocacy can be successful on the local level, my colleague helped me think about the advocacy work we do at the association level through another lens. How do we best represent and advocate for the needs of all our academic libraries? Do we know how needs may differ based on type of library and locale? I will com-

mit some of my time as ACRL president to exploring the issues of smaller academic libraries and their communities so that we can make a concerted effort to ensure that ACRL is the voice and advocate for all academic libraries and librarians.

Exploring the changing library workforce

Through its strong, future-focused strategic plan and exceptional professional development programs, the association is well positioned to help us develop approaches that will build expert workforces for the future. Libraries are responding to changing needs on their campuses by crafting new roles and responsibilities for librarians and reinventing our work. What are the skills and competencies required for these new job roles? What is the role of library and information science education? Where do we look for skills outside of the traditional library workforce that will help us meet our mission?

I would use my presidential year to give special focus to engaging members in activities and programs on library workforce development and the changing skill sets we need in our libraries. Our ability to recruit and retain talented staff for this “new work” is clearly an issue of growing interest in the profession. For example, results from efforts such as the IMLS National Study on the Future of Librarians in the Workforce (libraryworkforce.org), the Council on Library and Information Resources “Emerging Library” initiative, and our own ACRL research agenda are exploring workforce issues and gathering important quantitative and qualitative data. Also, the ACRL Board of Directors recently acknowledged the need for an association initiative on this topic during our annual review of the strategic plan.

One way that we can respond to the changing workforce is to take what we learn about skills and competencies and incorporate that information into continuous learning efforts. ACRL’s high-quality

and flexible education and professional development programs can deliver “rapid response” educational services to the membership—offerings that are targeted, timely, and even member-initiated by using tools such as the ACRL Wiki and online community. Another way to respond to workforce development issues is to create opportunities for dialogue with library educators and among ourselves around these issues. As president, I would propose a joint summit with ALISE (Association for Library and Information Science Education) to bring practicing academic librarians and LIS faculty together to discuss education and training that meet emerging workforce needs. Also, we must welcome professionals into our workforce from other educational backgrounds and work experiences. The prospect of this change in how we staff our libraries can be viewed by some as beneficial and by others as threatening to our credentialing, faculty status, and other professional attributes. I would encourage deliberative dialogue among ACRL members to surface and explore these advantages and tensions.

In closing, I have gained much both personally and professionally from my activities in ACRL, and I would welcome the opportunity to give back to the membership as the association’s elected leader. I appreciate your support and look forward being a part of ACRL’s continued efforts to engage you, the members, in creating our future.

JANICE SIMMONS-WELBURN

It is both a joy and an honor to serve as a candidate for vice-president/president-elect of ACRL. As my career as a librarian reaches nearly 30 years, I am pleased to say that ACRL has been an integral part of my growth in our profession. In turn, I have tried to contribute to ACRL through its breadth of membership opportunities and in cultivating new academic librarians.

As we look toward the end of the first decade of a new millennium, those of

us who assume leadership roles in ACRL will need to be prepared to reaffirm what our association has referred to as its “big audacious goal,” to be “responsible and universally recognized for positioning academic and research librarians and libraries as indispensable in advancing learning and scholarship.” As ambitious as it may seem, such a goal is both vital to academic and research libraries and librarians and highly compatible to the changing landscape for higher education, advances in research, and the integration of librarians and libraries in learning and scholarship. ACRL, its members and leaders, stand together at the intersection between the growth of our profession and the challenge to expand the roles of libraries in colleges, universities, and among those independent libraries serving the needs of scholars. I believe that we can turn our goal into practice by building on our strengths as a professional association.

My own career

Throughout my career I have had the good fortune to work in libraries in different academic environments, including a small liberal arts college, several private universities, and public research institutions. I have been grounded by my involvement in ALA, and in particular ACRL, since my first appointment as a member of the EBSS Psychology/Psychiatry Committee in the early 1980s. Some of my work has been deliberately invisible to the membership, through service on nominating and awards committees. I have also served in more visible roles, such as that of chair of the University Libraries Section (ULS). Through these experiences I have grown closer to my understanding of the shared values of the ACRL membership. I have also formed lifelong friendships and professional associations that have strengthened my own professional knowledge and enabled me to grow over the span of my career from a reference librarian to that of dean of libraries.

In addition to chairing ULS, and I am currently a member of the Budget and Finance Committee, the ACRL Leadership Recruitment and Nominations Committee, and the ACRL Task Force, Positioning the 21st Century Library in the Competitive Academy: Why We Can't Wait. I also cochaired the Personnel and Staff Development Officers' Discussion Group, and have been involved in planning four ACRL national conferences, chairing subcommittees that have reviewed submissions for poster sessions, roundtables, and panel presentations.

Building on our strengths

As an ACRL member, I learned the value of extending one's professional contributions beyond the walls of the library to influence the shape and direction of one's college or university. Over the course of my career, I have had the good fortune to serve on university-wide planning committees, search committees for senior university administrators, and I have cochaired campus fundraising campaigns. I have come to know the value of advocacy as a key tool for effective administrative leadership of libraries on today's college campuses. I owe a debt of gratitude to ACRL for the opportunity to form professional networks of colleagues to share ideas and form collegial relationships.

ACRL has accumulated an impressive portfolio of policy statements, standards, guidelines, etc., which provide us with a framework for coalescing institutional values and professional practice. We have highlighted accomplishments of libraries and celebrated the professional lives and achievements of our leaders with many awards, and we have provided space for disciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations through discussion groups and sections, as well as for a broad range of institutional types. It is incumbent upon the elected and appointed leadership of ACRL to build on the strengths of our association.

I am a strong proponent of the value of diversity in all of its manifestations, especially as it characterizes the variety of institu-

tions of higher learning in the United States, the rest of the Americas, and beyond. Yet we breathe new life into the mosaic of college and university libraries when we focus on our commonalities, or the points of intersection where we work together to advance our profession and our institutions.

As an association we will need to build on our strengths of past accomplishments and on conversations at the points of intersection. I will seek to connect or facilitate dialogue at our points of intersection, particularly between:

- differing types of academic and research institutions serving a range of learning interests and scholarly endeavors,
- generational cohorts of academic librarians, veteran and new librarians alike,
- U.S. librarians and our strategic partners in other countries, particularly among institutions in our region of the world,
- different sides of the discussions on the future of intellectual property as related to higher education, and, in particular, concerns for public access to publicly funded research,
- differing modes of delivery of instruction in support of student learning,
- viewpoints on what is required of the next generations of librarians in greeting changing populations of faculty and students and their scholarly and pedagogical requirements, and
- the diversity of librarians and other employees constituting the staff of our nation's academic and research libraries.

ACRL has defined a set of core values about which I feel very strongly and support without reservation. Yet there is one that stands out among the six core values, that ACRL “is committed to integrity and transparency.”

Above everything else, elected and appointed officials throughout ACRL—and in ALA in general—have honored this rich tradition of integrity and transparency. As I have found this to be central to my daily practice as a library dean, I cannot stress more the importance of these to concepts

to leadership —leadership not only from those of us who are entrusted with elected offices in ACRL, but among each and every member.

It is on the basis of our own integrity that we will bring new members to our profession. It is increasingly important that as we bring in new members that they do not become disillusioned. The easiest pathway to that is to promise more than we can deliver. For example, we should not promote diversity to prospective librarians, and then force conformity once we have them.

Our transparency will enable us to be successful in nurturing advocates for the causes that we believe in, and ensure trust in us. Those who are willing to advocate on our behalf—among deans, faculty, students, and administrators on our campuses, and in other professional associations and in government—need to know that we have engaged them without hidden agenda.

John F. Kennedy was once quoted as saying, “Civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof.” What is not overtly articulated by ACRL but is present across all of our core values is the value of civility. Our capacity to continue to carry out an ambitious agenda will depend on the continued support we give one another and the respect we demonstrate for one another's ideas. *~*

(“Real World/Life Rules continued from page 79)

I have learned to be open to opportunities. You never know when the next casual question from a faculty member might lead to the adventure of a lifetime.

Notes

1. Syllabi for both courses are available in PDF online. See ww2.lafayette.edu/~furlongk/.

2. The “Useful Spanish Phrases Rap” has been posted, with the permission of the authors, on Nina Gilbert's Web page at ninagilbert.googlepages.com/Useful_Spanish_Rap.mp3. *~*