

Hensley and Snelson 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, Randy Burke Hensley and Pamela Snelson, 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 receive your ballot this spring

RANDY BURKE HENSLEY

The personal informs the professional

Spending a life in a learning environment became my goal as a 19-year-old student at the University of California, Santa Barbara. When I look for where this goal came from, I relish the memory of being a child who was taken to his first day of kindergarten, and when asked at the end of that first day how it went, responded with the question,

When can I go back? Growing up in a small town, the discovery of the local public library as another learning place made me realize that I could have a career in a library; I could get paid to learn and help others to learn. The desire to have others share my thirst for learning has informed my career choices. Finding others who share that desire professionally has been the rationale for my long association with ACRL.

My work in collections, access, reference, teaching, and administration in a 31-year academic library career has been driven by this valuing of learning. How can academic libraries do what they do better to increase not only learning per se, but the desire to



Randy Burke Hensley



Pamela Snelson

learn? I believe answering this question is the essential assessment for how our libraries are succeeding.

Valuing relationships

When I reflect on my activities in ACRL, what most come to mind are the relationships I have had with the individuals with whom I have worked. Our accomplishments together have been sometimes large and sometimes small, but the enduring legacy of those activities is that our lives were enriched by the support, perspective, and contributions to our capacities as professionals in the learning enterprise that we gave each other. I am committed to ACRL sustaining this particular contribution to the profession: that it is an arena for collaboration and relationship building. We must continue our inclusiveness and enhance our focus on being an association that actively creates opportunities to participate, that sustains professional devel-

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opment, that never is subject to the criticism of being a closed, critical, exclusive, unsupportive environment for diversity of perspective. We must consciously be an association of attraction where who we are and what we do are the magnets of recruitment.

Centering on the student

I am keenly interested in imagining a term of office as ACRL president in which all that the association does is examined through the perspective of our impact on students. I view this interest as akin to models for assessment where student learning outcomes are at the center of a determination that an institution, a program, or a teacher is doing well. Our activities for collections, advocacy, research, publication, and funding will not be neglected by such a perspective. To me, one of the more instructive contributions of my colleagues in the Immersion Program of ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy is to see student learning as the benchmark for all the endeavors of higher education. I have learned to appreciate how supporting faculty research is about enriching the lives of students in any number of ways. I have seen that teaching an appreciation for inquiry transforms a student's view about the purpose of his or her education as it changes how information and knowledge is regarded. And I have seen how an emphasis on inquiry as the hallmark of an institution of higher education alters the position of and regard for libraries in an institution.

My work as a trainer, educator, and presenter has taken me to many academic libraries of all types and many professional venues around the country. I have learned a great deal about the varied, heroic efforts of individuals in libraries to bring the librarian's concern for student learning to the forefront of what libraries contribute to the institution. ACRL's many efforts to support an emphasis on teaching and learning will have my enthusiastic support. Librarians as advocates for student learning, and ACRL as an advocate for a profession that fosters student learning, positions the association to be a major player in the changes in higher education.

Student learning as a hallmark of our institutions of higher education and its libraries can serve equally well as a criteria by which we assess the efforts of ACRL.

—Randy Burke Hensley

Fostering the inquiry organization

I echo many previous ACRL presidents and candidates for the presidency when I say that it is an honor to be a member of an association so enabled through past success, present efforts, and clear vision to continue to contribute to knowledge creation, preservation, and dissemination. Our libraries are a testimony to the effectiveness of ACRL. We can continue those efforts and do more. The ACRL strategic plan and planning process is sound and provides a plan to which I am committed. It provides opportunities for us to inquire and attract. Each element needs each of us involved to seek information, to collaborate, to assess. An inquiry organization views the world dynamically, with many players and many perspectives. In essence, an inquiry organization asks: how do we involve? Additional initiatives will materialize as we continue the work we are doing, appreciating that our final assessment is, Did we make a difference to learners?

I will be an advocate who continues to address the following issues: information literacy, technology applications to access, teaching and learning, the changing nature of scholarly publication, library advocacy, and recruitment and retention to the profession.

The final perspective

The final perspective is yours. My career has been rewarding beyond my most extreme imagining of what was ahead for me 31 years ago as a new MLS graduate.

My gratitude to the many individuals who have supported, contributed, and fostered my development is equally extreme. To be further honored with the possibility of serving ACRL as vice-president/president-elect, is something for which I am also grateful.

PAMELA SNELSON

This brief essay has two purposes. The first is to give those who don't know me a sense of who I am and what I would bring to the ACRL presidency, and the second is to share with all ACRL members my priorities and vision for the association.

ACRL is a strong organization with a dedicated, ambitious membership, and I am privileged to be a candidate for office. Last November I received my 2005 ALA membership card; in the bottom left corner of the card are the words "continuous years" and, in my case, the number 30. I have been a member of ALA and ACRL during my entire career; it is very gratifying to have an opportunity to give back to ACRL for all it has given to me. ACRL has been my home since my first academic librarian position. I can still remember the excitement I felt when Sheila Laidlaw, then at the University of Toronto, called to invite me to serve on a Bibliographic Instruction Section (now Instruction Section) committee. ACRL section and chapter committee work gave me my first taste of leadership. As I took on new professional responsibilities and projects, ACRL's programs and services became a source of innovative ideas and professional development. Networking with ACRL colleagues around the country comforted me during periods of frustration and provided me with friends to celebrate accomplishments. I want to ensure that ACRL provides these same opportunities to librarians today and in the future.

Challenges

I recently heard Keith Michael Fiels, ALA executive director, talk about the value of libraries and research-based advocacy. He discussed research that found students with good high school libraries do better in college, but remarked that he didn't find research on the educational value of a good college library. If this research is indeed not available, we need to get it and then use it. One of the biggest challenges that faces academic and research librarians is our inability to translate the goodwill engendered

by our excellent service into political clout needed to secure necessary resources. People practically write sonnets about their love of libraries; we need them to write checks, too, to pay for collections and services. It is crucial that ACRL promote the role of the library in the academic enterprise.

ACRL is an effective resource for its members when it addresses our top challenges not in opposition to one another but as part of the whole fabric of academe. The challenges that we must address as librarians are rife with duality; there is no "or"; only "and." Recruitment and succession planning, cost containment and service expansion, creation of change and value of tradition, and access to digital resources and preservation of print collections are only a few of these dualities. We should build bridges between information literacy and recruitment, between scholarly communication and information technology, between marketing libraries and creating digital resources. In this way we can build on our strengths and compound our successes.

Strengths

To meet the challenges facing ACRL and academic librarianship, I bring broad association experience and strength in the areas of finance, communication, and achievement.

In addition to chairing the College Libraries Section, I have been a member of and chaired various other section, chapter, and association committees. I chaired the ACRL Publications Committee, the Appointments and Nominations Committee, and the *C&RL News* Editorial Board. This extensive experience gives me knowledge of how ACRL works and of the relationship between ALA and ACRL. Currently I am a delegate to the OCLC Members Council and recently finished a multiyear involvement with EDUCAUSE publications. From these vantage points I am able to see opportunities for collaboration between ACRL and other information technology groups.

One talent critical for any ACRL president is wise stewardship. Being a member of the

ACRL Board, ACRL's Budget & Finance Committee, and the PALINET Board gives me a strong understanding of the financial aspects of organizations. The ACRL president in 2006 will inherit a financially sound association. I would make it a personal goal to bequeath a financially secure association to my successor.

Through my work on the Publications Committee, I learned quickly how important ACRL's communications program is to its members. *C&RL News*, the journals, and section newsletters continue to rank as the highest-valued member services. Within ALA, ACRL has been a leader in promoting virtual participation and engagement of its members. Under my leadership, ACRL would expand its use of technology to extend the reach of ACRL committees, conferences, and programs.

Joy can be defined as the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something good or satisfying. It gives me great joy to achieve something tangible in my life, whether it is a library renovation, a disaster recovery, a library system implementation, or a trip to Antarctica, all of which are on my résumé. Although I have the ability to see the big picture and focus on the overarching goal, my feet are firmly grounded in accomplishment. New tasks and new challenges energize me. I am frequently the one who brings a group back to its core purpose while retaining the creative flow of ideas. As president, I would bring these skills to ACRL Board deliberations and to discussions with ALA and other associations.

I have one additional strength, hidden to most of you but very evident to me—the terrific staff at the Franklin & Marshall College Library. It is their excellent work and dedication that allows me to consider taking on the challenging role of ACRL president.

Themes

If elected president, I plan to focus on two intertwined areas from the ACRL Strategic Plan Leadership: ACRL members achieve recognition as leaders and advocates for

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—Pamela Snelson

academic and research libraries and Membership: ACRL's membership growth builds on retaining core membership while recruiting from new and diverse communities. To achieve the leadership goals, I intend to build on the grassroots advocacy that vice-president/president-elect Camila Alire chose as the focus of her presidency. In addition to the empowering of current leaders, I would attend to aspiring leaders who might have a different approach to organizations, management, and communication. I'd also like to tap into the expertise of those librarians who have moved into higher education administration, to use an insider's view to inform our advocacy efforts.

During the strategic planning process, the ACRL Board used a variety of methods to get feedback from members such as focus groups, interviews, and surveys. I found this information to be invaluable; to make ACRL as relevant to its members as possible, I would support both ongoing efforts to gather data about member needs and new processes to make it easier for members to give feedback. As ACRL uses this information to expand its appeal among current membership, it will be easier to increase the number of academic and research librarians who chose ACRL as their professional association. I want to reach out to graduating librarians when they take their first academic position so they can enjoy the benefits of ACRL membership during their entire career. Visits to library schools, a dialogue between the ACRL president and deans of graduate programs, and the encouragement of collaborative programs between ACRL chapters and library schools are part of my strategy to accomplish this goal.

Vision and principles

The goal put forth in ACRL's Strategic Plan is grand and audacious—ACRL is responsible and universally recognized for positioning academic and research librarians and libraries as indispensable in advancing learning and scholarship. I am excited by an envisioned future for ACRL members in which they are flexible, dynamic, and progressive leaders in their institutions, essential partners in learning and scholarship with faculty, and reflect the diversity of their communities. In this same future, ACRL can be essential to the professional networking, development, and success of academic librarians. I would use my presidency to move ACRL closer to this desired vision through my programs and priorities.

If elected president, I would be guided by two principles: ACRL must reflect its members and ACRL leaders must lead. ACRL programs and services are best when they meet the needs of members as they enter their profession, as they become seasoned professionals, and as they aspire to leadership. At the same time, ACRL leaders must creatively initiate progress for the association and boldly position ACRL to be a recognized voice in higher education. These two complementary principles would be at the core of my presidency and color my vision of a 21st-century ACRL. I would welcome your support to enable me to turn these principles of attention and action into practice. *~*

("Using libraries..." continued from page 125)

While in China, you should:

1. Plan extra time for library usage.

As you have learned from this article so far, using libraries in China is neither quick nor easy. You need to spend a lot more time in libraries in China than in North America. Many libraries still have closed stacks, so you need to fill out a request form first, and then have a front desk clerk page the stack clerks who will retrieve materials for you. Some people are allowed into the stacks with the proper authorization. You may also have to leave in the middle of photocopying if the library closes for noon breaks.

2. Bring enough cash and change with you to the libraries. In addition to the photocopying charges that we are used to in North America, libraries in China often charge for all kinds of other services. The common fees include temporary library card, Internet access, database searching, printing, and the like. Depending on what materials you are photocopying, some charges are quite high in local currency. For example, Shanghai Library charges 2.5 Chinese Yuan (about 30 cents) per page for copying the pre-1949 materials. There are not many places that honor Interact payment options in China, nor are there many automatic banking machines. So while

in China, whether in the libraries or not, it is a good idea to bring enough cash for the day.

Summary

As one of the ancient civilizations of the world, China has a splendid history of books and libraries. Many libraries, including most of the ones that we visited, have excellent collections and good services that make them an essential part of the research process for Chinese studies scholars and students around the world. The practical tips we give in this article are not meant to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Chinese libraries are changing everyday, and they are changing for the better. We are pleasantly surprised ourselves every time we visit.

To all people who plan to use libraries in China, remember: know before you go and enjoy the adventure!

Notes

1. This paper is based on the 2004 program of Committee for Public Services, Council on East Asian Libraries, chaired by Sharon Domier. Visit www.library.umass.edu/subject/easian/CPS/. The authors wish to thank Sharon for the program idea and proofreading. *~*