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# ACRL's Strategic Plan

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## *The mission, goals, and objectives of the Association of College and Research Libraries.*

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**A**t the 1986 ALA Annual Conference in New York, the ACRL Strategic Planning Task Force presented the Strategic Plan to the ACRL Board of Directors, who then adopted it. The final report of the Task Force has been deposited in the ERIC system. This abbreviated version is presented here for the information of all ACRL members. All units who might have responsibility for implementing the plan have received a request from ACRL President Hannelore Rader about their work.

This version of the plan includes the goals, subgoals, objectives, strategic management directives, and the environmental analysis upon which the work of the Task Force was based.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) is to foster the profession of academic and research librarianship and to enhance the ability of academic and research libraries to serve effectively the library and information needs of current and potential library users.

### **The Plan**

The Plan consists of four goals, each of which has a varying number of subgoals and objectives. The full plan includes strategies for each objective, and indicators of responsibility, resources needed, and year of implementation. The following are the goals, subgoals, and objectives.

**Goal I. To contribute to the total professional development of academic and research librarians.**

**Subgoal A.** To sponsor and encourage opportunities for academic and research librarians to update existing competencies, learn requisite new skills, and gain awareness of the state of the art.

*Objective 1.* Lower the cost to participate in ACRL professional development activities (as compared with 1984–85 levels).

*Objective 2.* Expand the number of opportunities for academic and research librarians to participate in professional development activities, especially at regional locations.

*Objective 3.* Increase financial support for section programs and projects.

*Objective 4.* Create an ongoing process for assessing educational needs and evaluating the success of ACRL professional development activities.

*Objective 5.* Coordinate ACRL CE program with those of related organizations.

**Subgoal B.** To promote a sense of professional identity and peer reinforcement among academic and research librarians.

*Objective 1.* Review the policies for establishing and administering awards within ACRL.

*Objective 2.* Review the procedure for administering awards to ensure they are effectively providing a sense of professional identity and peer reinforcement.

**Subgoal C.** To provide career counseling and placement information regarding academic and research librarianship.

*Objective 1.* Promote timely and comprehensive information about professional positions available.

**Goal II. To enhance the capability of academic and research libraries to serve the needs of users.**

**Subgoal A.** To develop standards and guidelines.

*Objective 1.* Develop guidelines for evaluating the performance and output of academic libraries.

*Objective 2.* Increase dissemination of ACRL standards and guidelines throughout the higher education community.

*Objective 3.* Increase librarians' understanding

of the accreditation process and the role of the library in institutional accreditation.

*Objective 4.* Promote the identification, collection and dissemination of academic library statistics.

**Subgoal B.** To provide advisory services concerning academic and research libraries and librarianship.

*Objective 1.* Publicize availability of advisory services.

**Subgoal C.** To identify, explore, and act on problems and issues facing academic and research libraries.

*Objective 1.* Use ACRL programs and publications to identify and explore key issues and problems.

**Subgoal D.** To encourage and evaluate innovation in library operations and services.

*Objective 1.* Increase publicity about innovative activities.

**Subgoal E.** To strengthen libraries in institutions serving minorities.

*Objective 1.* Assess the most effective way ACRL can assist these libraries.

*Objective 2.* Implement an ongoing program based on above assessment.

**Goal III. To promote and speak for the interests of academic and research librarianship.**

**Subgoal A.** To enhance awareness of the role of academic and research libraries among non-library professionals and organizations (accrediting bodies, higher education associations, scholarly and professional societies, etc.) and to develop effective working relationships with them.

*Objective 1.* Create opportunities for academic librarians to interact with other professionals in the academic community.

*Objective 2.* Develop new alliances with other professional organizations.

*Objective 3.* Develop materials library staff can use to enhance administrators' understanding of academic libraries.

**Subgoal B.** To monitor and speak out on government and private sector activities likely to affect academic and research librarianship, including legislation and fiscal and political support at all levels.

*Objective 1.* Establish ACRL as the association with the authority to speak for the academic library profession on issues of importance to higher education and academic libraries.

*Objective 2.* Strengthen membership efforts to affect and influence government and private sector activities, including legislation, funding, and quality higher education.

*Objective 3.* Provide assistance for librarians seeking additional fiscal support for their libraries.

**Subgoal C.** To support and participate in the recruitment and retention of outstanding persons to the field of academic and research librarianship.

*Objective 1.* Develop mechanisms to attract candidates of high quality.

*Objective 2.* Support the recruitment of members of underrepresented groups to academic librarianship.

*Objective 3.* Promote the adoption of personnel policies that enhance the status, professional development, and working conditions of academic librarians.

**Subgoal D.** To help shape library education programs in accord with the needs of academic and research librarianship.

*Objective 1.* Develop an action plan describing how library schools might address the changing needs of academic and research libraries and librarians.

**Goal IV. To promote study, research and publication relevant to academic and research librarianship.**

**Subgoal A.** To identify research topics and to encourage improvement in research skills.

*Objective 1.* Develop research priorities related to academic libraries and their role in higher education.

*Objective 2.* Develop incentives or programs to encourage librarians to engage in research.

**Subgoal B.** To support research projects, report works in progress, and disseminate research results.

*Objective 1.* Seek out grant funds for the creation of research grants and for carrying out research projects.

**Subgoal C.** To advance the professional knowledge of academic librarians through an effective publishing program.

*Objective 1.* Explore electronic publishing possibilities for ACRL publications.

*Objective 2.* Review the ACRL publications program to ensure that it supports association mission, goals, and objectives.

*Objective 3.* Publish *Choice* and *Books for College Libraries* on a regular basis.

### **Strategic Management Directions**

1. Positioning ACRL as the most significant American association of academic and research libraries, librarians, and librarianship: the association which represents them, speaks for them, asserts their interests, and assists them in reaching their goals.

2. Managing the financial resources of ACRL by relying on sound budgeting and accounting principles; including maintaining a reserve fund equal to at least 50% of the average annual expenditures over the three most recently completed years.

3. Maintaining a dedicated and competent staff by depending on sound personnel practices, including careful selection, adequate training, participative management techniques, and opportunities for professional development.

4. Seeking new members through a variety of recruitment techniques, while extending efforts to retain present members, including regular assess-

ments of member needs.

5. Supporting all elected and appointed officers in fulfilling their leadership roles, through carefully prepared programs of orientation and staff personal attention.

6. Working collaboratively with other ALA units for the good of librarianship as a whole.

7. Providing a headquarters office as a communications center, information resource, and central meeting and work place.

### Environmental analysis

ACRL is a professional association whose potential for providing effective products and services depends on an understanding of its environment.

#### The external environment

##### Economics

- Information as commodity
- Declining purchase power
- Rising or declining costs
- Competition for clientele
- Increased productivity

##### Politics

- Information as political tool
- Ownership of information
- Laissez-faire attitudes
- State control centralized
- National consortia weakened
- Network development
- Bibliographical standardization

##### Society

- Equality of opportunity elusive
- Illiteracy rampant
- Intellectual freedom challenged
- Privacy threatened
- Academic research sluggish
- Demographics changing
- More non-print/micromedia
- Dollar accountability

##### Technology

- Technological proliferation
- Advances in storage technology
- New information services
- Speedier document delivery
- More technology in the home
- Decentralized information access
- Preservation more effective

##### People

- Better students
- Scholarly communication flourishes
- New mix of library staff/skills
- Competition for staff
- Training for online information
- Information professionals more costly

#### The internal environment

##### Members

###### Characteristics:

Sex: women (62.5%), men (37.5%).

Age: 20–30 (8%), 31–40 (36%), 41–50 (20%), 51–60 (25%), 61+ (10%).

Degrees: MLS plus (other graduate degrees 39%, Ph.D., 15%).

Place of employment: 2-year institutions (6%), 4-year institutions (26%), research/doctoral institutions (51%), other (17%).

Type of work: public service (29%), administration (28%), technical services (11%), combinations (16%), library education (2%), other (14%).

Years of membership: 0–5 (46%), 6–10 (23%), 11–15 (11%), 16–20 (9%), 20+ (12%).

Geographical region: North Atlantic (43%), Great Lakes (23%), Southeast (7%), West/Southwest (27%).

##### Needs and priorities:

A random sample of members was surveyed in the winter of 1984–85 to identify activities ACRL should pursue. Results of the survey were used at the President's Program at the 1985 ALA Annual Conference to elicit rankings of member priorities. The top five priorities emerging were:

- Publications
- Continuing Education
- Standards
- Liaisons
- Chapters

Members also brainstormed ideas about implementing those priorities; staff analyzed the results of that activity for use by the Strategic Planning Task Force in developing strategies.

##### Activities

###### Conferences and professional development:

National conference every 3 years  
Courses at ALA Annual Conference  
Local/regional continuing education courses  
RBMS Preconference  
Programming at ALA conferences

###### Membership:

Recruitment  
Member support  
Executive Committee and Board  
Sections  
Chapters  
Committees  
Discussion Groups  
Advisory services  
Research and statistics  
Jobline

###### Serial Publications:

*College & Research Libraries*  
*College & Research Libraries News*  
*Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship*  
*Fast Job Listing Service*  
*Choice*

###### Other Publications:

Reports of committee and section projects  
*Publications in Librarianship*  
Statistics reports  
*CLIP Notes*