

# Vote yes to approve changes to ACRL bylaws

by the ACRL Board of Directors

**T**his spring there will be two important bylaws changes on the ACRL ballot: the first concerns creating Communities of Practice and the second addresses editorial/procedural changes designed to increase organizational efficiency.

## Finding a “home” in ACRL

Your feedback in recent surveys and focus groups has emphasized the need for more avenues for networking and discussion of issues related to your areas of interest. To meet that need, the ACRL Board is proposing the creation of interest groups. These groups will be complements to discussion groups and sections under the umbrella term Communities of Practice. Interest groups are designed to be fluid, flexible, and easily formed and easily disbanded in response to environmental needs.

The goal is to provide a more flexible and dynamic system for members to form groups focused on important emerging issues and to increase opportunities for involvement within our organization.

In the most recent membership survey, some members said that finding an ACRL group that aligns with their current needs can be challenging. Despite being able to select two sections without additional charge as part of ACRL's annual dues, nearly 12 percent of ACRL members do not belong to any section. Of those who are currently members of sections and discussion groups, 63 percent expressed interest in being more actively engaged with ACRL. Interest groups will provide leadership opportunities for more members, while

offering another entry point for ACRL members who are seeking a good match for their interests. For example, members have expressed interest in ACRL supporting groups that would focus on management of digital resources, technology issues, support staff, libraries in for-profit schools, and technical services. The creation of interest groups would provide more opportunity for academic and research librarians to find a home within ACRL and connect with colleagues around issues of mutual interest.

The new groups can be formed simply by submitting a petition with 25 ACRL member signatures to the Board for approval. The Board will review all petitions to ensure that proposed interest groups do not duplicate existing groups. Interest groups will be reviewed every three years to ensure that each group remains active and relevant. Interest groups will be governed by a steering committee consisting of a convener, incoming convener, and past convener. Each interest group will determine the mechanism for selecting its conveners.

The work of an interest group can be accomplished virtually and in face-to-face meetings at ALA Midwinter and Annual Conference, although attendance at ALA conferences will not be a requirement for participation. Electronic newsletters, discussion lists, online communities, and other electronic communications will be supported by ACRL. We want to create engagement opportunities for members who cannot travel long distances to conferences.

## A letter from ACRL President Julie Todaro

January 27, 2008

Dear ACRL members:

We want ACRL to be an inclusive and dynamic association. We are excited and eager to open more doors, put out more welcome mats, and embrace the changing needs of the profession. To this end, we have been reaching out to the membership in a number of ways that include as you may remember surveys and focus groups.

We received some excellent feedback, and the following proposals address member feedback from these recent survey and focus group assessments. From this data, we understand that you want to find a home in ACRL, that you seek ways to easily get involved, and that you desire opportunities to add new groups that better address your interests.

To achieve this, the ACRL Board of Directors is presenting a proposal to change the bylaws to allow the creation of interest groups as complements to discussion groups and sections, under the umbrella term Communities of Practice. The goal is to provide a more flexible and agile system for members to form groups built around important emerging issues and to increase opportunities for involvement within our organization.

I urge you to support the bylaws changes on the ballot this spring and let me explain these groups with a little more detail.

Interest groups are intended to be very fluid and flexible. They could form easily and disband quickly in response to environmental changes. (Details about Interest Groups may be found at [www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/election.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/election.cfm).) For these same reasons, many other ALA Divisions offer interest groups as a part of their division structure, including LITA, ALCTS, and LAMA. I urge you to embrace these changes and vote yes.

The other important issue on the ballot includes numerous procedural and editorial changes to the ACRL bylaws, which will increase organizational efficiency and agility. For example, the change for Article V eliminates the responsibility of the immediate past president to serve on all ACRL editorial boards. This level of specificity is best left to a policies and procedures document rather than being required by the bylaws. There may be other venues where the past president's time and energy are needed as determined by the ACRL Board. Removing this requirement will enable ACRL to more efficiently deploy officers where they are needed at a given time.

For more detailed information on the Bylaws changes in 2008, please visit [www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/election.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/election.cfm).

Your support of these changes will expand your opportunities to engage with your colleagues through ACRL.

Sincerely,  
Julie Todaro  
ACRL President

### Increasing organizational efficiency

The second bylaws issue on the ballot is a series of procedural and editorial changes to the ACRL bylaws to increase organizational efficiency and agility. For example, a change in Article VII eliminates the requirement that the Budget and Finance Committee Chair have prior

experience on the committee, thus opening that Board position to members who have demonstrated their leadership and competence in other areas of ACRL.

We urge you to vote yes on these changes so that ACRL can offer more opportunities for member engagement and enhanced organizational efficiency. ✍