

Lian Ruan

Aiming high

ACRL in the '60s

The rapid increase in student enrollment brought about revolutionary changes to higher education during the 1960s.¹ Student enrollment increased 114% in ten years, from 4 million in 1960 to nearly 8.6 million by 1970.^{2,3} The number of academic librarians also increased by 97% from approximately 9,000 in 1960 to 17,695 by 1970.⁴ Junior college (community college) enrollments also grew as did the number of junior colleges.⁵ In 1960, there were 515 two-year institutions⁶ and by 1969, there were 577, an increase of 12%.⁷

Although many junior colleges were established in an effort to meet the demand for expanded facilities, their libraries were almost nonexistent or greatly in need of federal government aid.⁸ College and university libraries saw dramatic increases in their budgets and collections.⁹ In 1960, college and university libraries collectively held 177 million volumes and by 1969 their holdings had increased 86% to 328.6 million volumes.

In 1960, college and university libraries had total operating expenditures of \$137.2

million and by 1969 that number had increased to \$584.8 million,¹⁰ a 326% increase. Libraries were also experiencing an upward spiral of inflation¹¹ as the consumer price index jumped from 1.5% in 1960 to 5.5% in 1969.¹²

By 1960, ACRL had redefined its relationship to ALA and was ready to focus on meeting the needs of its members and the profession. In the early 1960s, the ACRL Board of Directors approved changes to the ACRL Constitution and Bylaws to better align with the

Constitution and Bylaws of ALA.¹³ In 1962 President Ralph E. Ellsworth appointed a Special Committee on the ACRL Program to examine existing ACRL activities with a view to developing plans that would advance the objectives of ACRL.

One of the recommendations was to establish a standing Planning and Action Committee to evaluate all ACRL activities



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and programs and recommend strategies for effective action.¹⁴ President Neal Harlow believed ACRL “must continually question its objectives and procedures, build in machinery for review and revision.”¹⁵ A significant organizational change took place from 1966 to 1967, when the role of the Planning and Action Committee shifted to long-range planning and organizational assessment.¹⁶

ACRL representatives took an active role in shaping federal legislation affecting academic libraries, especially the proposed Higher Education Act of 1965.¹⁷ As President Edmon Low, “the indefatigable leader in federal legislative battles,”¹⁸ observed in 1961:

A major activity of ACRL during 1960 has been the promotion of Federal legislation for grants in aid to college and university libraries for the acquisition of books and periodicals. This activity has effectively demonstrated the Division’s ability to work to good purpose through the reorganized ALA . . . in this effort we found the highest regard among both House and Senate members for the ALA as a whole and the purpose for which it stands”.¹⁹

In 1967, the ACRL Committee on Legislation was asked by the Board of Directors to “take a direct and active role in formulating objectives and in planning legislative action at the national level.”²⁰

As the number of academic libraries grew, so did ACRL membership. In 1960 ACRL had 7,370 members,²¹ and 13,654 by the end of the decade.²² The Junior College Libraries Section was particularly active during the 1960s,²³ working with the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) to implement of the ALA “Standards for Junior College Libraries.”²⁴ The section worked closely with ALA and AAJC on a number of revisions to the 1960 standards, which led to the “AAJC-ACRL Guidelines for Two-Year College Library Learning Resource Centers”

in 1971.²⁵ The section’s proposal for a junior college information center was funded with a grant of \$15,000 from the ALA Goals Award in 1967,²⁶ and the center opened at ALA in March 1968.²⁷ Another proposal by the section for a demonstration junior college library project was supported by a grant of \$5,000 from the ACRL Committee on Grants.²⁸

During the 1960s, ACRL awarded close to \$700,000 to more than 500 academic libraries to support collection development, research, equipment purchases, and improvements to library service.²⁹ Funds were donated largely by the United States Steel Foundation as well as IBM, Remington Rand, and the National Biscuit Company Foundation. ACRL also expanded its publishing program to include *College & Research Libraries News* (a monthly magazine first published in March 1966), and *CHOICE* (first published in Middletown, Connecticut, on March 1, 1964), which became known as “one of the country’s leading book review media for libraries.”³⁰

Notes

1. Felix E. Hirsch, “How Can We Implement the ALA Standards for College Libraries?” *C&RL* 22, no.2 (1961): 125.
2. Robert B. Downs, “Crisis in Our University Libraries,” *C&RL* 22, no.1 (1961): 7.
3. Digest of Education Statistics, Table 224. Total fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by attendance status, sex, and age: selected years, 1970 through 2021, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_224.asp.
4. Bronson Price and Doris C. Holladay, “Library Statistics of Colleges and Universities: Fall 1969 Analytic Report” (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1971), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015036789520;view=1up;seq=5>.
5. Norman E. Tanis, “Implementing the Junior College Library Standards,” *C&RL* 22, no.2 (1961): 130.
6. U.S. Office of Education (1960), *Library Statistics of College and University, 1959-60*,

Part 2, Analytic Report (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035420895;view=1up;seq=15>.

7. U.S. Office of Education (1969), Library Statistics of College and University, Fall 1969, Part 2, Analytic Report (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015036789520;view=1up;seq=66>.

8. Edmon Low, "ACRL Legislation in 1961," *C&RL* 23, no.2 (1962): 112.

9. ACRL, "President's Report, 1966/67," *C&RL News* 28, no.4 (1967): 163.

10. Bronson Price and Doris C. Holladay, Library Statistics of Colleges and Universities: Fall 1969 Analytic Report (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1970), <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015036789520;view=1up;seq=5>.

11. Robert B. Downs, "Crisis in Our University Libraries," *C&RL* 22, no.1 (1961): 7.

12. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has specific information on the CPI and inflation for all years in the 1960s, http://www.minneapolisfed.org/community_education/teacher/calc/hist1913.cfm.

13. ACRL, "ACRL Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report to the Board of Directors, June 1960," *C&RL* 22, no.3 (1961): 224.

14. ACRL, "ACRL President's Report July 1963," *C&RL* 24, no.5 (1963): 427.

15. ACRL, "Time Produces the Organization. Annual Report of the ACRL President, 1963/64," *C&RL* 25, no. 4 (1964): 327.

16. ACRL, 163.

17. Edmon Low, 112-114.

18. Edward G. Holley, "Building a Firm Foundation: ACRL Leadership, 1939-1989," *C&RL News* (1989): 465.

19. ACRL, "ACRL Report to Council, July 1961."

20. ACRL, 163.

21. Charles Edward Hale, "The Origin and Development of the Association of College and Research Libraries, 1889-1960" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1976), 187.

22. ACRL, "ACRL Board of Directors, Midwinter Conference Washington, D.C. 1969, Brief Minutes, January 30, 1969-10:00 a.m.,"

C&RL News 30, no.2 (1969): 99.

23. ACRL, "From the ACRL Executive Secretary," *C&RL News* 29, no.5 (1968): 247.

24. ACRL, "ACRL Board of Directors Midwinter Meeting 1963, Brief of Minutes, January 30," *C&RL* 24, no. 2 (1963): 149.

25. James O. Wallace, "Two-Year College Library Standards," *Library Trends* 21, no. 2 (1972): 227.

26. ACRL, "ACRL Highlights, Annual Conference, June 25-July 1, 1967."

27. ACRL, 1967.

28. ACRL, "Association of College and Research Libraries Highlights Midwinter Meeting, January 9-13, 1967."

29. ACRL, "ACRL Board of Directors Meeting, Atlantic City, Brief of Minutes, June 26, 1969-8:00 a.m.," *C&RL News* 30, no.5 (1969): 317.

30. CHOICE, "Second Annual Report, 1964-1965." ❧

(Modeling ACRL's Standards . . . cont. from page 615)

The process has been slow, but we know that our grassroots approach will facilitate the incremental shift in our thinking that is necessary to work within a culture of assessment for continued improvement and alignment with Appalachian State University and the UNC System.

Notes

1. "Standards for Libraries in Higher Education," American Library Association, October 2011, accessed November 10, 2013, www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries.

2. "Our Time Our Future: The UNC Compact with North Carolina. Strategic Direction 2013-2018," University of North Carolina, accessed November 10, 2013, www.northcarolina.edu/strategic_direction/STRATEGIC_DIRECTIONS_2013-2018.pdf.

3. "Appalachian State University Library Bridge Plan, 2013-2015," Belk Library & Information Commons 2013, accessed November 10, 2013, www.library.appstate.edu/sites/library.appstate.edu/files/documents/university_library_bridge_plan_2013-2015.pdf. ❧