



Racing toward tomorrow: ACRL's 9th National Conference

By Carol Pfeiffer

Six subthemes will explore creating and channeling change

Change is the only constant and its pace is speeding up." "The future is here already; now what do we do?" "How can we move from accepting or even anticipating change to seeking and creating it?" "What about the 'dark side' of change, as it is so tellingly portrayed in *Dilbert*?"

These and other comments filled our flipcharts as the Detroit '99 ACRL National Conference planners brainstormed at Midwinter and Annual. We marveled at the extent to which we have already transformed our libraries and ourselves. We were equally awed by our sense that more extensive and more fundamental changes are ahead. We noted that the 1999 conference is scheduled for the brink of the 21st century—an appropriate time to maintain our focus on the future. And we talked about the excitement of Detroit and about the automobile.

From this mix emerged the theme for the Detroit conference: "Racing toward Tomorrow."

Conference planners agreed that we and our colleagues are on the fast track for change. To keep pace and to stay on course, we need the best ideas of our profession and of related professions on how to create and channel change. We need the best crystal balls that we can find (or invent) to understand and anticipate revolution in the financial, technological, sociological, and political environment for higher education. We need to put our chosen future into action.

One conference planner summed it up cogently: "We need to change the tires on the car while it is racing full speed ahead."

The conference committee chose six subthemes to stimulate thinking and discussion, each of which is sketched out below. The Detroit '99 program will include a "Conference within a Conference" that will provide an opportunity to invite teaching faculty and academic officers from your institution to attend the conference with you.

Shifting gears: Environment in flux

As highlighted by Barbara Ford's ALA presidential theme, globalization of the economy has significant impact on library programs and services. Another trend affecting libraries and campuses is the growing presence and voice of previously underrepresented groups. The philosophy of students and taxpayers as the "customers" of higher education is a catalyst for institutions to rethink services and finances. The fiscal outlook is constrained and the call for measurable learning outcomes is urgent. Technology is more accessible and more pervasive and the choices, more complex. How can we hone our ability to scan the environment, to interpret and anticipate changes, and to respond with new and improved services and collections? What can we learn by listening to experts outside of libraries? How can we not only respond to but also shape this changing environment?

Shifting gears: Multiple roles

While the fundamental mission of the academic library has not been altered much, the roles librarians play in carrying out the mission have changed significantly. Our role as educator is more important and more prominent than ever. Librarians collaborate with faculty, computerians, instructional designers, and others to transform the teaching and learning process. As campus leaders, we advise students, tutor athletes, teach

technology to faculty as well as students, and participate vigorously in other academic support functions. Library directors must be fundraisers as well as managers, and often direct many units in addition to the library. Support staff take on responsibilities previously handled by librarians. How can we keep and project a clear professional identity while assuming so many new roles? Which roles (if any) should we discard and which roles must we preserve? How can we move flexibly from one role to the next and allocate our time among so many demands?

Shifting gears: A new kind of learner

At the heart of these changes is the mandate to prepare students of all ages and backgrounds as the workforce of the 21st century. We must ensure that students do not simply acquire a body of facts or even assimilate knowledge but instead learn how to learn. Citizens, schools, and governments seek to create a seamless, lifelong learning process—one that starts before and continues beyond formal education. Technology is one key to success in this venture; is it sufficient? The "Conference within a Conference" will focus on the development of the new learning communities within higher education.

For the first time at the national conference, ACRL is designing a program to facilitate dialogue among librarians, faculty, academic administrators, and other campus personnel around the theme "Student Learning in an Information Age." Opening with a stellar panel of higher-education leaders after the opening reception, the "Conference within a Conference" will provide plenty of opportunity for interaction among the participants the following day. To encourage team attendance, discounts will be available for faculty and others who come with a librarian.

Shifting gears: Different players

Within and outside the academy, new partnerships form and old ones disappear. Business and industry collaborate with higher education to redesign the curriculum to prepare students for the workplace and to retrain employees. Competitors to traditional higher-education programs seek a growing portion of that training market. Colleges and universities collaborate with K-12 educators to ensure that students leave high school ready for college—perhaps with a number of college credits already earned. New multitype library consortia emerge to purchase electronic resources. How can librarians most effectively network with new players? What are

the benefits and risks of partnerships? What do we as librarians bring to the playing field?

Shifting gears: Alternate resources

As taxpayers, parents, and students question the cost of higher education and as governments seek to limit or reduce public funding for higher education, institutions must find new revenue sources. In addition to the growing emphasis on private giving, colleges and universities look to new fees and to corporate support. What revenue opportunities have entrepreneurial libraries identified? How can we stretch our buying power through consortia? How can business and industry partner with higher education to use human and technology resources in innovative ways?

Shifting gears: Expanding knowledge base

Last but perhaps most important, our own knowledge base and abilities have expanded dramatically in the past decade. We are more comfortable with and expert in the use of technology. We know a lot about how to manage change. We understand the teaching process at a deeper level and we teach in new and more effective ways. What new frontiers of knowledge are on the horizon? Despite our demonstrated success in acquiring new knowledge and skills, many of us are anxious about our ability to learn all we need to know for the new roles we are taking on. How can we alleviate these fears and build confidence? How can we create and sustain learning organizations that will carry us into the 21st century?

We know that adults learn best when the educational program meets a current, pressing need and when the learners are actively engaged with the material. The Detroit '99 planners will design a conference with maximum opportunities for participation and engagement. A centerpiece of this active learning will be the "Conference within a Conference: Student Learning in

Save these dates

April 8-11, 1999, are the dates of ACRL's 9th National Conference which will be held in Detroit, Michigan. The call for participation will be published in the January 1998 *CE&RL News* and on the ACRL homepage. The deadline for submitting panel and paper proposals is June 15, 1998.

an Information Age," which will model in its design some of the learning techniques that will be discussed at the conference. Look also for opportunities to participate before the conference even starts in postings on the ACRL Conference Web site. (<http://www.ala.org/acrl.html>) listserv discussions, and previews of papers.

Join the race

Tune up your carburetor, open the throttle, and plan ahead now to join your colleagues at the 1999 ACRL National Conference as we race together toward the 21st century. Detroit is a vibrant city and epitomizes our focus on change by the ways it has transformed itself in recent years. City officials are eager to welcome ACRL to Detroit and will go all out to assist conference planners in ensuring that you have an enjoyable as well as an educational visit to a flourishing, attractive, and culturally rich conference site.

Look for the call for participation in the January 1998 *C&RL News* and on the ACRL homepage, and send in your best ideas. Talk with colleagues to encourage them to attend. We've revved up our engines and are raring to go! ■

(Health statistics cont. from page 630)

Transplants

- **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), HHS.** This Web site links to solid organ and bone marrow transplant statistics and delineates transplants and donors by race. *Access:* <http://www.hrsa.dhhs.gov/bhrd/dot/dotmain.htm>.

- **UNOS: United Network for Organ Sharing.** UNOS administers the Organ Transplantation and Procurement Network, and members include all U.S. transplant programs, organ procurement organizations, and tissue typing laboratories. This site contains detailed statistics on U.S. transplants and donors. *Access:* <http://204.127.237.11:80/>.


Women's health issues

Women's health Web pages focus on diagnosis and management of conditions but do not concertedly present statistics on women's health topics. Therefore, the searcher should go to topical sites for women's health statistics. For example, go to the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Statistics Review page for data on breast cancer incidence (*Access:* <http://www.seer.ims.nci.nih.gov/Publications/index.html>), and to NCI's Fact Sheet for breast cancer data by ethnic group (*Access:* <http://www.feminist.org/>

PROVE YOUR POINT

Invest in your collection with **OCLC/AMIGOS Collection Analysis Systems.**

Ask for a **FREE** Collection Analysis CD demo set for results you can see!



amigos@amigos.org 800/843-8482 972/851-8000

- ◆ Compare your collection to more than 2,300 institutions
- ◆ Measure effectiveness of your collection development policy
- ◆ Justify budget requests
- ◆ Evaluate resource sharing opportunities
- ◆ Support accreditation studies

<http://www.ala.org/acrl.html>).

- **Women's Health Data Book: A Profile of Women's Health in the United States.** While not available directly online, the print publication can be ordered through this American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology site. *Access:* http://www.acog.com/catalog/professional_publications.htm.

Discussion lists and groups

- **EDSTAT-L.** This mailing list addresses educational tools for statistics and issues related to the teaching and learning of statistics. The list's archive is at gopher://jse.stat.ncsu.edu/11/edstat. The corresponding newsgroup is **sci.stat.edu**. *Subscribe:* listserv@jse.stat.ncsu.edu.

- **STAT-L.** A good forum for statistical consulting issues; questions arise on the list about methods for statistical studies in health sciences and biomedical fields. The corresponding newsgroup is **sci.stat.consult**. *Subscribe:* listserv@vm1.mcgill.ca.

- **teaching-statistics.** This UK list is concerned with the initial teaching of statistics in all phases of education and follows the objectives of the journal *Teaching Statistics*. The list's archive is at <http://www.mailbase.ac.uk/lists/teaching-statistics/1997-02/index.html>. *Subscribe:* teaching-statistics-request@mailbase.ac.uk. ■

Campaign Finance Reform
 Academic Politics
 Getting Into College
 The British Monarchy
 Preventing Juvenile Crime
 Tax Reform
 Pursuing the Paranormal
 Centennial Olympic Games
 Managed Care
 Protecting Endangered Species
 New Military Culture
 Russia's Political Future
 Marriage and Divorce
 Year-Round Schools
 Taiwan, China and the U.S.
 Rethinking NAFTA
 First Ladies
 Teaching Values
 Labor Movement's Future
 Recovered-Memory Debate
 Native Americans' Future
 Crackdown on Sexual Harassment
 Attack on Public Schools
 Fighting Over Animal Rights
 Privatizing Government Services
 Child Labor and Sweatshops
 Cleaning Up Hazardous Wastes
 Gambling Under Attack
 The States and Federalism
 Civic Journalism
 Reassessing Foreign Aid
 Political Consultants
 Insurance Fraud
 Rethinking School Integration
 Parental Rights
 Global Warming
 Clashing Over Copyright
 Consumer Debt
 Governing Washington, D.C.
 Welfare, Work and the States
 The New Volunteerism
 Implementing the Disabilities Act
 America's Pampered Pets
 Combating Scientific Misconduct

Discover the World.



Discover The CQ Researcher.

It will change the way you do research forever.



Congressional Quarterly Inc.
Trusted partner for a new age.

1414 22nd Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037 ■ (800) 432-2250 ext. 279
 (202) 887-6279 ■ Fax (202) 728-1863 ■ Home Page: www.cq.com

7LRD63