

Maggie Farrell and Karen Williams

# Farrell and Williams share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring



Maggie Farrell



Karen Williams

**E**d. note: *C&RL News* offered candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, Maggie Farrell and Karen Williams, 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 forum to all members. We hope this will assist you in making an informed choice when you vote in the election this spring.

## MAGGIE FARRELL

Thank you to the Nominating Committee in asking me to stand for election to vice-president/president-elect of ACRL. I am humbled by the request and honored to stand with Karen Williams for this leadership position. ACRL has been successful in leading discussions and providing direction for academic libraries and librarians and has established a strong foundation of advocacy for libraries in the higher education environment. I hope to have the opportunity to build on this legacy and further advance our profession through ACRL initiatives.

## The environment

Higher education is undergoing technological shifts and increased competition as technology enables students to learn anywhere anytime. Traditional modes of teaching are being supplemented by or replaced with online instruction, free instruction, MOOCs, mobile courses, and concurrent enrollments. Students are customizing their education and tailoring a specific curriculum drawn from a variety of educational institutions. This shift in personalized education comes at a time of reduced federal and state funding, rising tuition, and public demands for accountability.

Colleges and universities are also being asked to respond to changing job markets, especially community colleges, which are directed to address workforce needs, typically without funding, to add new programs or have the ability to quickly shift curriculum and faculty. While universities seek to create a well-rounded student with a broad foundation of arts, humanities, and sciences, parents are asking that students quickly advance to their chosen degree and graduate within four years. Critical thinking, financial, technological, and information literacies are luxuries that a focused student (or parents) can bypass on the quick road to careers.

Librarians can play a critical role in the transformation of education by working closely with faculty on integrating technology in courses. Librarians bring their unique skills of understanding information patterns and student behavior that will enhance course

instruction whether it is online or face-to-face. For online courses, library collections and services need to be embedded within the course, as students are depending more on the course management system as their connection to the college or university. Librarians may also be embedded within online courses assisting students at their point of need and linking information skills to course objectives. Supplemental library instruction is good, but integrating information literacy as part of a course and connecting students directly to a librarian who tailors instruction for a specific course or need will be more effective in retention of literacy skills that improves academic performance.

Accountability for student success and retention is a critical need for colleges and universities. More research is required to link information literacy with student academic success. Initial work in this area is promising, but librarians need to provide statistical significance of the value of literacy instruction to higher education—both on the local and national levels. Another area requiring more assessment is the role of collections in research return on investment. Initial studies correlate library collection investments to research impact, but there is a growing need for librarians in the organization and management of supporting data. The National Institutes of Health requirement for data management plans is an opportunity for librarians to partner with faculty and to bring our information management skills to the research environment.

Colleges and universities have invested heavily in library collections, and the current academic publishing environment is not only pushing the limits of our fiscal resources but also our patience. Purchasing journal collections over and over (print, microform, current electronic, digital backfiles), annual price increases that regularly increase more than inflation, big deal packages, and consolidation of publishers have created havoc on collection budgets, while faculty and students demand access to global information. Electronic books appear to be worse

with restrictions on usage, no interlibrary loan, limited checkouts, and outrageous price models. Students and parents are demanding changes to the textbook market as rising costs of books contribute to the overall high cost of higher education. Working with higher education on the national level and with our faculty and administrators on the local level, librarians are experts in assisting their colleges and universities in addressing these problems. Knowledge of the publishing environment, copyright guidelines, and authentication methods are skills that librarians bring forward in college and university information access. The development and support of open access initiatives offer an alternative to traditional publishing models and enable new forms of publishing to take full advantage of technology in providing curriculum and research materials for faculty and students.

### **ACRL as a resource**

As the saying goes, challenges are opportunities and librarians can fill a critical void in higher education by taking advantage of the many opportunities before our colleges and universities. But librarians require strong professional development programs, resources on critical issues, and a network of peers that supports and advances the role of libraries in higher education.

ACRL is the professional development organization that can assist individuals and libraries in the transformation of higher education. ACRL has developed a strong reputation for information literacy and instruction, and the value initiative has begun to assess the impact of instruction to articulate our success to our colleges and universities. More work is required for librarians to have broader conversations with higher education in articulating our contributions and to expand the impact librarians may have with our students.

ACRL is positioned to support librarians in their professional development needs, work with ALA on advocating for publishing policies that enable libraries to purchase

and access electronic collections, and create communities that facilitate networking and advocacy for academic libraries. In addition, ACRL is the voice of academic librarians in higher education ensuring that librarians have significant contributions in solving the educational issues facing our nation. Academic librarians are responsible for and contribute to student success, retention, and career skills in addition to possessing the capabilities to solve critical national issues, such as access to research resources. ACRL is an essential partner in advancing academic librarianship.

### **My contribution**

I have been privileged to serve as the ACRL councilor to ALA Council for the past three years, and this has afforded me the opportunity to serve on the ACRL Board and to work closely with ALA providing me with broad insights into the association management. As a Board member, I contributed to the development of the ACRL Plan for Excellence and firmly support the three goal areas of value, student learning, and research and scholarly environment. Of these, the value initiative is closest to my work at the University of Wyoming in linking library collections, instruction, and services to the university plan that outlines the priority areas of curriculum and research. In addition, I have served on several ALA and ACRL committees, the OCLC Board, Federal Depository Library Council, and state library association activities. My experience in several organizations, demonstrated leadership, and a commitment to our profession has prepared me for the responsibilities of leading our association. I firmly believe that service is an opportunity to advance library issues and professional development in grateful acknowledgement of the personal support and advancement ACRL has provided to me.

I hope as ACRL vice-president to contribute to the continued goals of connecting academic librarianship to higher education and being viewed as the voice of academic libraries for critical issues such as open access, scholarly publishing, intellectual freedom, and information literacy. Thank

you for voting in the ALA/ACRL elections, and I hope you take advantage of the many opportunities for professional development and service in ACRL.

### **KAREN WILLIAMS**

We are experiencing transformational change in both higher education and the information landscape, which makes this a tremendously exciting, if challenging, time to be a librarian. New and rapidly changing technologies, an abundance of digital information in myriad formats, an increased understanding of how students learn, changing practices in how scholars communicate and disseminate their research and creative work, and increasing public demand for accountability are all part of our new landscape.

The ACRL Plan for Excellence has done a superb job of identifying key issues for our collective focused attention, and my experiences and passions align well with these areas. My initial career focus was on creating strong roles for librarians in teaching and learning, followed by key work in scholarly communication. My current focus is on new roles for librarians and library staff that will allow us to advance the goals of our institutions and demonstrate value at a time when we are witnessing reductions in public support. I would be honored to have this leadership opportunity with ACRL, working with colleagues to strengthen our impact on areas of vital interest to higher education and our profession.

### **ACRL in your words**

I have thoroughly enjoyed the Member of the Week feature in the ACRL Insider Weblog. Contributors work in a variety of academic libraries and range from the newest members to those with decades of experience, illustrating just how rich our association is. I reviewed the profiles from the past year, paying particular attention to what you said when asked to describe ACRL in three words. Words that appear repeatedly include *proactive*, *inclusive*,

*forward-thinking, community, opportunity, networking, supportive, innovative, leadership, and diverse.* I couldn't have said it better myself, and these descriptions certainly reflect my experience. ACRL is a vibrant organization, vital to our professional success.

### **Acts of leadership**

I have been greatly inspired by an educator named Linda Lambert, who describes leadership as learning together toward a shared purpose. This framework recognizes the importance of all members of a community and the fact that good ideas don't come only from those with positional leadership. If we think of leadership as individual acts of leadership—large and small—we will be better equipped to realize our organizational goals. Through hard work and acts of leadership, collective action is brought to bear on our toughest issues and challenges. I'll provide some examples through my experiences with ACRL.

While my ACRL activities have been broad and varied, I've invested deeply in several arenas. My longest participation has been with information literacy and instruction with the twin goals of supporting faculty teaching and enhancing student learning. This has been a very active arena for ACRL, and I've worked to help advance the agenda by serving on a number of committees and advisory boards and contributing to publications. I was chair of the Instruction Section and a founding faculty member of the Information Literacy Immersion Program. The Immersion Program is an excellent example of the significant impact ACRL can and does have on its members and their institutions. This program was created in 1999 to address a widely recognized gap in training and development opportunities for librarians with teaching and learning responsibilities. To date, more than 2,000 librarians have taken advantage of this immersive experience, and many of them have used what they learned to create staff development

and education opportunities at their home institutions.

The idea for Immersion came originally from Cerise Oberman, a member, who sought ACRL funding and broad involvement from other instruction librarians to turn a dream into a reality for the profession. Oberman provided a catalytic act of leadership, followed by many more acts from dozens of ACRL members who created and have sustained this program over the years. In the words of one Member of the Week, in ACRL you get to work with "the coolest librarians."

The ACRL Plan for Excellence recognizes the importance of our role in supporting and influencing the research and scholarly environment. I was a founding member of the ACRL/ARL Institute on Scholarly Communication, and I served on the ACRL Scholarly Communication Committee for four years, during which time I created the original Scholarly Communication Toolkit. The purpose of the ACRL Scholarly Communication Initiative is to work in partnership with other library and higher education organizations to reshape the current system of scholarly communication. Educating and empowering librarians to serve as advocates and change agents has been an important strategy in the success of this initiative. ACRL members who have worked on this initiative over the years, both through the association and at their home institutions, have, through many acts of leadership, produced informative and impactful documents and Web sites, workshops, and creative strategies for change. At my institution, focused work with our Senate Library Committee led to the recent implementation of an open access author's fund. This year I served on a faculty committee that drafted a proposal for a campus open access mandate, which will soon go before the senate for consideration. We can't predict the outcome of the proposal, but the very fact of it speaks to success through years of hard work by our librarians who have propelled the campus

conversation on these issues. We relied heavily on the work of ACRL and partners to educate and inspire ourselves and our faculty and students.

Changes in higher education and our surrounding environment have led to a broadening of librarian and staff roles in academic libraries. We are prompted to understand and support all processes of scholarship and teaching, which calls for a proactive engagement model—a model that seeks to enhance scholar productivity, empower learners, and integrates librarians into the research, teaching, and learning processes. Knowing how scholars in particular disciplines communicate and share information with one another can inform the design and development of repository and new model publishing services. Understanding the curriculum of a degree program and pedagogical norms of a discipline can help shape the development of scalable models that integrate 21st-century literacies into a learner's universe. Knowing that many scholars are generating untold quantities of digital data while others are producing multimedia works and all are struggling with data management and preservation plans positions us to help craft solutions to these large-scale problems.

Librarians possess a broad academic perspective and have become adept at supporting valuable traditions in areas where this is necessary and pioneering new services and new models for everything from cooperative collection management to discovery and delivery systems that are responsive to how scholars and students work.

One Member of the Week used her three words to note that “Librarians are awesome!” ACRL is an excellent venue for networking, sharing, and learning from each other as we set about reinventing our work.

I applaud the much streamlined ACRL Plan for Excellence, the ongoing initiatives, legislative and policy work, and the advocacy efforts and would look forward

to advancing the goals and extending the reach of ACRL through deep member engagement. In addition to my instruction and scholarly communication experience mentioned above, I have worked directly with reference, collection development, digital library initiatives, and undergraduate services. I have significant experience in leadership and management roles, which also includes working with government information, special collections, diversity initiatives, leadership development, and program planning—working with librarians across the disciplines.

I bring experience gained while serving as president of the College and University Libraries Division, the ACRL chapter for the Arizona State Library Association. I was a very active and committed member of the ACRL Board and had the lead on a commissioned white paper on achieving racial and ethnic diversity among academic librarians. As a recent member, and then chair, of the Leadership Recruitment and Nominations Committee, I worked to present a diverse slate of presidential and board candidates.

One of my favorite library school faculty members advised me that becoming professionally active would be rewarding, energizing, and essential to my own growth—all of which proved to be true. I chose ACRL as my professional home and the recent receipt of my ALA card noting 32 years of continuous membership reminded me again of how proud I am to be an ACRL member. I am deeply honored by this opportunity to stand as a candidate for ACRL vice-president/president-elect.

I would like to thank the recruitment committee for the invitation to run, my own institution for supporting my candidacy, and my many, many ACRL colleagues and friends with whom I've had the joy of working on committees and initiatives over the years. Your passion, wisdom, creativity, and hard work have been inspirational. Together, the members, the Board, and the ACRL staff will keep this association soaring. *✍*