Mark Emmons and Cheryl Middleton

Mark Emmons and Cheryl Middleton share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring

Mark Emmons   Cheryl Middleton

Ed. note: *C&RL News* offered candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, Mark Emmons and Cheryl Middleton, 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.

MARK EMMONS

ACRL is my professional home. I provided better service to students and faculty at Occidental College and now at the University of New Mexico due to both the formal education I received from ACRL programs and publications and the informal learning from my colleagues as we talked about what we had learned over food and drinks. I was very active in the Instruction Section and Chapters Council before I was fortunate to be elected ACRL director-at-large and was on the Board of Directors when we produced the ACRL Plan for Excellence in 2011.

During my time on the Board, we also structured our communities of practice to be more responsive to changes in librarianship by creating more nimble interest groups and discussion groups to complement sections. I hope that my contributions to ACRL have played a small role in improving librarianship, and I am honored to be nominated as vice-president/president-elect, where I am optimistic we can continue to make a difference for academic librarians.

Plan for Excellence

The ACRL Plan for Excellence still holds up well in 2015, and the Board has recently reaffirmed and revised the plan moving forward. I agree, and if I were elected vice-president/president-elect, I would continue to advocate for the value of academic libraries, student learning, and the research and scholarly environment. In addition, I would also add a fourth strategic dimension by engaging ACRL members to find out our needs and aspirations.

The Value of Academic Libraries

The ACRL Board saw the need to demonstrate the impact academic libraries have on higher education and on campuses. ACRL commissioned a comprehensive review of the literature to find where academic libraries make a difference, to identify gaps in research, and to distinguish best practices. ACRL successfully obtained an IMLS grant to host summits to find out what data campus administrator need from libraries and to discuss how libraries contribute to student

learning and faculty research productivity. As a result of the summits, a second IMLS grant funded Assessment in Action, a project to build assessment skills in librarians and to further demonstrate the value of academic libraries. ACRL also formed a liaison program to build relationships with higher education organizations and to promote the value of academic libraries. Ultimately, ACRL is helping librarians communicate our value at our local institutions. The changes in higher education that prompted the need for librarians to demonstrate their value continue to be of concern. It is therefore important that ACRL continue developing means that librarians can demonstrate our value to our institutions.

Student learning

ACRL has long supported student learning with professional development programs (especially the Immersion Program), mentoring, and publications and standards. Of particular import were the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, which for 15 years transformed how librarians taught information literacy. The most notable student learning accomplishment to emerge from the Plan for Excellence was the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The framework reframes the standards as six threshold concepts that will help students understand the context in which information is produced and disseminated. I support the framework and am very appreciative of the many conversations it has fostered about the character of information literacy and the nature of our role in student learning. Student learning will always be a foundation of academic librarianship and should always be an essential part of any strategic plan.

Research and scholarly environment

ACRL has long supported scholarly communication initiatives, focusing on professional development programs (especially the Scholarly Communication Road Show), open dissemination and access of research, and making recommendations for the ACRL legislative agenda. The Plan for Excellence has focused on continuing to work with ARL and SPARC and turning its lens to initiatives centered on digital scholarship, data management, and metadata services. As with student learning, research and scholarly communication will always be a cornerstone of academic librarianship and should always be an essential part of any strategic plan.

A fourth dimension

With student learning and scholarly communication as an essential part of any ACRL strategic plan and with the need to demonstrate the value of our academic libraries remaining a vital target in today's higher education climate, I believe that it would be useful to add a fourth dimension to our future plans that serves an additional area of interest to academic librarians.

Once I was nominated as a candidate for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, I began speaking to ACRL colleagues about what they would like to see as a fourth dimension. I also discovered that the ACRL Board will hold similar conversations about a fourth strategic direction around "new roles/navigating the landscape" with the Leadership Council, which fits very well with many of the areas that have emerged in my early conversations. Ideas shared with me include:

• strategies for building relationships and partnerships;

• fostering knowledge creation by student and faculty scholars;

• understanding and adapting to changing student demographics and communication preferences;

• developing user experience skills to better understand our student needs;

• learning technology skills, especially around coding; and

• building social sustainability in academic librarianship.

I have only just begun to hold these conversations and will continue to talk to colleagues throughout my campaign. If I am the successful candidate, I will structure formal conversations to continue to learn about ACRL member interests.

Plans

Once the ACRL Board has established the fourth dimension based on member ideas, I would work closely with our wonderful ACRL staff to implement them. The specific plans will depend on the dimension chosen, but typically include professional development to build knowledge and skills plus publications to advance knowledge. In addition, if I were the successful candidate, I would 1) work to strengthen relationships between the ACRL Board and the various communities of practice and 2) work on making it straightforward to become active in ACRL for members new and old with attention to joining groups and to changing patterns of committee contribution as more meetings become virtual. Finally, I am an absolute supporter of the values of intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights and would make sure that our plans are always guided by these fundamental tenets. Ultimately, I would like all academic librarians to see the same value that I do in ACRL membership.

Please vote

I am honored to be nominated as ACRL vice-president/president-elect. As librarians, we should be seen as key players in higher education and on our campuses. ACRL is helping us make that happen, and I would be excited to represent you on that journey. I hope that ACRL will remain the higher education association for academic librarians and that we achieve our big audacious goal of transforming higher education and scholarship. If my ideas have resonated with you, please take the time to vote. Thank you.

CHERYL MIDDLETON

I am honored by this nomination to stand for election for ACRL vice-president/president-elect. Throughout my career, this organization has influenced me, informed my thoughts and perspectives, and has helped shape the services and resources I developed over the years for my academic library community. The nomination process has allowed me to reflect on why ACRL has been so impactful to my professional development and allows me the privilege of sharing the ideas and perspectives I will bring to the ACRL membership if elected to lead the organization in designing our future success.

Background

Expectations of academic librarians entering the profession today are high: be responsive and adaptive in a rapidly evolving educational environment, perform significant roles in developing innovative programs and services that allow academic library users to be successful learners and researchers, and help demonstrate the value of higher education in a landscape of decreasing resources and increased expectations.

Those of us who are more senior in the profession face the challenges of learning new skills and letting go of programs and services that have been expected by our users. We grapple with adapting to an accelerated "pace of change" driven by the escalating demands of scholarship and teaching. ACRL is a bridge between our new library professionals and those of us who have been part of the profession for many years. The shared principles embodied in ACRL's timeless core beliefs empower our new members and our long-term members to address the call for exceptional, relevant academic libraries to meet the transformative changes facing higher education.

ACRL does an outstanding job keeping us informed of the myriad issues facing academic librarians and libraries. Working within our membership, we devise solutions to challenges, and we share many successful models for addressing these transformative changes. How do I believe that ACRL and the members of our profession could respond more nimbly and effectively to this shifting landscape? Resiliency.

Resiliency is the ability of an organization to face unexpected adversity or change and continue providing core services. I believe that ACRL can be even more successful in adapting to disruptive change if we identify,

adapt, embrace, and apply the principles of resilient organizations to academic libraries.

The ACRL strategic plan calls for academic libraries and librarians to demonstrate our value and impact to higher education, to transform the learning experience, and to be change agents in the research and scholarly environment. The fabric and structure of ACRL's committees, sections, and communities of practices provide evidence of the need for these strategic actions.

Our latest ACRL environmental scan forecasts and articulates five major categories of change that academic libraries are currently experiencing or that may require action in the near future. They include changes in higher education, changing formats, and declining budgets for library collections and acquisitions; providing research data services; repurposing space and re-visioning library facilities; scholarly communication challenges; and, finally, demonstrating library impact on student success. How our members' organizations respond to these calls for changes and how we respond collectively as a profession define our present and future success and relevancy to higher education.

Although many resiliency theories relate to successful disaster recovery, I believe we can use these theories to identify the characteristics of a resilient organization and help our profession manage change more effectively. One principle of resiliency that ACRL embodies is that of enduring values. A resilient organization has the ability to focus on the enduring values of the organization and to find meaning during times of challenge. The ACRL mission and vision have provided the foundation and framework for our values for over 75 years. As a profession, we use these values to find meaning in the storms of change.

ACRL emulates other aspects of a resilient organization by defining success through a process that includes all of our stakeholders or, in the case of ACRL, all of our membership. I see resilience in the emotionally engaging educational learning experiences developed and participated in by our membership with support and resources from our leadership. The results of these learning experiences have a positive impact on the higher education environment as espoused in the many publications, white papers, and other types of scholarship that impact our profession and higher education.

Additionally, I see evidence of other aspects of the resiliency of ACRL in the communities of practices formed to address changes in the profession and in the many institutes and professional development activities developed by our members to respond competently to changes required by new learning and scholarship models. In addition to these examples of characteristics of resiliency that ACRL embodies, I believe we can be even more successful as an academic library organization and as educators if we seek out other best practices of resiliency to adapt and apply to ACRL in the future.

Summary

I am passionate about continuing to work with the ACRL leadership and membership to develop and provide educational resources, roadmaps, and toolkits to create resilient organizations that advance effective responses to demands for rapid change while maintaining core library services. I am interested in furthering the efforts that the leaders and members of ACRL have made to demonstrate the value of academic and research libraries to our institutions and to higher education overall. Finally, I am interested in continuing to develop our future ACRL leaders, not only by providing the opportunities and tools to be better leaders, but also by continuing the ongoing work of increasing equity and diversity within our profession.

If elected, I propose that ACRL leaders and members examine and identify the best practices of resilient organizations and shape them to our profession to provide a roadmap for academic libraries as they journey to successful and impactful change at their own institutions. ℳ