

Alire and Kratz share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring

Ed. note: *C&RL News* offered ACRL candidates for vice-president/president-elect, Camila Alire and Charles Kratz, 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 national forum to all members. We hope this will assist you in making an informed choice when you receive your ballot this spring.

CAMILA ALIRE

What are two levels of expectations of a professional association? I see them as 1) meeting members' professional expectations and 2) addressing the top issues/challenges of the profession. For ACRL, providing the organizational structure through sections, committees, discussion groups, task forces, the Board, publications, Web sites, and other communication means are critical to meeting those levels of expectations.

ACRL member expectations

In conversations with academic librarians and other academic library workers holding ACRL membership, I found they expect ACRL to continue to provide solid and creative professional development activities and resources in order for them to do their jobs better, to retain them not only in the association but also in the profession, and to provide the networking opportunities that allow for collaboration above and beyond ALA Midwinter and Annual Conference meetings. I look forward to reviewing and implementing the ACRL member survey and the strategic plan led by ACRL



Camila Alire



Charles Kratz

President Tyrone Cannon and the ACRL Executive Board.

• **Professional development.** Professional development is an individual choice defined by each ACRL member. One of the president's roles is to listen to what members say they need to be successful librarians and library workers. Listening to members enables ACRL to determine program priorities for professional development whether it is through strategic planning priorities, publications, annual conference programs, or ACRL National Conference programs or institutes.

I have not only presented at ACRL programs at ALA Annual Conferences and at ACRL National Conferences, but I also served on the ACRL National Conference Executive Committee while co-chairing the Local Arrangements Committee. Currently, I am serving as the Chair of ACRL 2005 National Conference in Minneapolis. I want to put mechanisms in place to provide conference information to those who cannot attend these venues.

About the authors

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• **Publications and resources.** Providing tools to disseminate academic library research and best practices is essential for librarians to stay abreast of the innovations, ideology, and issues occurring in our profession. Because of that, ACRL editorial advisory boards are key to making sure that articles they review and publish cover a variety of subjects realizing the employment diversity of our ACRL members. Also, ACRL's Web site is an increasingly important means of disseminating key documents to members.

Having served on the *C&RL News* Editorial Advisory Board and chairing the *American Libraries* Editorial Advisory Committee, I am very committed to continuing first-class ACRL publications and Web site resources.

Significant challenges to address

There are significant issues/challenges we are facing in academic libraries that must be at the forefront of ACRL. Where ACRL members are in their careers will depend on which challenges are most pressing. Those issues (not necessarily listed in priority order) include: higher education funding; maintenance of our information technology infrastructure; turmoil in scholarly communication; recruitment, diversity, and retention of academic librarians and other academic library workers; new users' expectations and challenges; and *telling our story* (advocacy) effectively.

• **Higher Education Funding.** When reading the *Chronicle of Higher Education* or our local newspapers, we know that nationally higher education is experiencing major funding crises. These funding cuts dramatically affect academic libraries. ACRL, through venues such as programs, publications, and priorities can facilitate providing information to members on how libraries are coping, what creative measures are being implemented, what's happening to collection development and management, how roles are changing, how salaries are being addressed, and fundraising successes. ACRL should continue helping academic libraries problem-solve, and I want to work with the ACRL Executive Board, staff, and other ACRL groups to investigate more creative ways to do this.

• **Information technology infrastructure.** Academic libraries have been the driving forces in providing our users with state-of-the-art electronic services and resources, not because it is the *cool* thing to do, but because we continually look for better ways to serve our users. Our users expect their libraries to be technology rich, especially as

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our institutions are providing more extended learning opportunities and other nontraditional course delivery. Yet, many of our institutions have not addressed adding funds to our base to meet the escalating costs of our IT infrastructure. ACRL should provide more opportunities to discuss and share best practices. Building on strong, collaborative models is one way I envision accomplishing this. Academic library advocacy on campus is another way, and I will work to have more academic library advocates trained.

• **Scholarly communication turmoil.** Academic libraries need to play a strategic role in forming partnerships with others within the academy to provide the forums for discussion and education on how scholarly communication must change. This includes providing information on alternatives such as open archives and institutional repositories. However, this can only happen if and when academic institutions are willing to discuss alternatives to the traditional promotion and tenure system. ACRL can be a leader in educating other higher education professional associations and societies on the importance of this issue to them. We need to get on the agendas of these groups and present programs and papers on this challenge. I have codirected three scholarly communication symposia in Colorado and New Mexico. Most recently at University of New Mexico, our Faculty Senate Library Committee is taking more aggressive steps to lead the discussion among their peers. So, I look forward to moving ahead with this issue to change it from turmoil to triumph.

• **Recruitment, diversity, and retention.** There are three levels to this challenge 1) the recruitment and retention of ACRL members; 2) recruitment and diversity within our profession; and 3) the recruitment of other academic library workers. Concerning recruitment to ACRL, we must continue to recruit more academic librarians and increase our retention efforts to keep our

members. How we implement the 2003 member survey will be critical to accomplishing this and help our members be successful professionally (e.g., through ACRL member benefits) and personally (e.g., tackling low salaries). I am committed to working with the Board, staff, and other ACRL folks in this effort.

Concerning diversity, our higher education institutions are increasingly under fire for not recruiting a more diverse student body and more diverse faculty, administrators, and staff that reflect the demographic changes of our country. This pressure affects the academic library. ACRL needs to continue a more aggressive diversity agenda through programs, publications, membership, and organizational structure. One of the strengths I would bring to this presidency is a strong record in dealing with diversity—research, services, recruitment/retention, and challenges.

Also, we can no longer downplay the role of other academic library workers in our libraries (since they comprise two-thirds of our staff) and the role ACRL should be playing to recruit more of them. It has been my experience that as we empower our non-MLS professionals and support staff to become involved in library association work, they become better informed about issues; they develop useful networks; and they contribute beyond their daily work activities and at a different level within the academic library. All this translates to staff who are better prepared to improve services for our users.

As with academic librarians, I have been a strong proponent of other library staff getting involved in professional association work and would move to get an appropriate discussion group started.

• **New Users' Expectations.** I had the opportunity to attend a program by Richard Sweeney

entitled, "Reinventing Libraries Through the Eyes of a New Generation." This new generation Sweeney describes is not only our students but is also our future engineers, sociologists, CPAs, scientists, university faculty, etc. Their expectations are quite different than those of students 15 years ago. Our new GTAs, GRAs, and junior faculty are replacing our large population of soon-to-be retired teaching faculty and researchers. How well are academic libraries positioned to listen to their needs and to reinvent current practices? I would like to see more attention placed on new users and changing expectations.

• **Advocacy (Telling Our Story).** There has been no other time in my academic library career when telling the academic library's story has been so critical. There are two key, interrelated ways to communicate our story: through advocacy and marketing and promotion. Academic library advocacy is no longer just a library director or dean's issue, because it goes beyond legislative advocacy. Because our funding seems to be shrinking more and more, we need to be prepared systematically to share our story with all the major stakeholders, such as legislators, university boards, administration, provosts, deans, department chairs, and faculty. Marketing and promotion is one aspect of advocacy. What is critical is that we do it and do it effectively!

Who in our libraries has the most exposure to our teaching and research faculty? Our librarians do. When properly trained, who could be some of the most effective advocates on campus? Our librarians could. I intend to continue the valuable work that past-president Helen Spalding led on academic library marketing and promotion.

My statement of concern focuses on key issues and on what I want to do if elected ACRL President. I appreciate your support.

CHARLES KRATZ

On the edge of a new millennium, on the brink of a new stage of human development, we are racing blindly into the future. But where do we want to go?
—Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*

Leaving our comfort zones behind and inventing the future

I would be honored to work on your behalf as ACRL President to continue the fine traditions and successes of ACRL and to pursue new opportunities for collaboration in facing the new realities in our global society. In these volatile times,

libraries are being asked to meet the challenges of rapidly changing technology, limited human and financial resources, increased user demands and expectations, changing methods of information delivery, increasingly restrictive copyright laws, crises in scholarly communication, and the requirement of outcomes assessment in our institutions.

These new realities in which we live are affecting our work in libraries, as well as how our members participate in ACRL. In a pre-September 11 world, terrorism had not reached the North American continent; there was no Patriot Act; confidentiality of library records was not in jeop-

ardy; air travel security was not in question; budgets, while always under close scrutiny, were not being slashed; and the terms *homeland security* and *SARS* were not even in the vocabulary. Today we find that new expectations, new constraints, new legislation, new thinking, new collaboration, and new opportunities are changing relationships both on our campuses and with external individuals and organizations.

As ACRL immediate past president Helen Spalding indicated in her first president's column, many of the students we now serve, we meet only remotely. Faculty are incorporating new technology and learning styles into their curricula, and librarians have new roles in meeting their needs. Researchers relate to each other, to the library, and to other institutions differently, changing our environment, resources, services, and perspectives. Patron behavior and needs are changing our concept of library space, and organizational cultures are changing dramatically. And institutional repositories have emerged as a new strategy in the scholarly enterprise.

As ACRL President, I would make a strong commitment to preserving the traditions of the past, while exploring how the future will affect our libraries to best position us to address the organizational, financial, and political changes that may impact collections and services. Everyday it becomes more critical for academic and research libraries to move outside of their comfort zones and to invent a new future in academe. It cannot be business as usual if we are to survive. We must maximize our knowledge assets through tradition, innovation, leadership, and risk-taking. ACRL must take the lead in advancing the values, assets, and contributions of academic libraries and librarians to higher education as well the lead in growing and strengthening an environment that helps libraries become more mindful of future possibilities.

Preparation, values, and passions

As an active member of ACRL, LAMA, and ALA for the past 28 years, my experiences at the national, regional, and local levels have strengthened my knowledge and expertise in consensus building, policymaking, oversight of budgets, and fundraising. The foundation of my core values was laid many years ago with my dedication to literacy and learning. As a high school freshman, I had the opportunity to learn about people of all ages who had never learned to read. Their stories inspired me to become a reading tutor and volunteer with the Literacy Volunteers of America. My

Maximizing our knowledge assets through tradition, innovation, leadership, and risk-taking is critical to helping libraries move beyond their comfort zones to face the new realities of academe.

—Charles Kratz

experience as a writing teacher for college students and a reading teacher for young adults and senior citizens in my local community continues to be one of the most important experiences of my career.

My passions are thoroughly grounded in an understanding of the past and a commitment to the principles that underpin the services that our libraries provide and that ACRL supports and defends. I am passionate about staffed and funded libraries, passionate about how we help individuals and communities grow, passionate about how we overcome barriers of inequity in our communities, passionate about how we provide opportunities for resource-sharing and community collaboration, and passionate about how we foster literacy and lifelong learning.

Building on strengths

ACRL has many strengths to celebrate and to grow even stronger:

- ACRL National Conferences' outstanding professional development opportunities to support academic and research librarians;
- new collaborations within ALA, with other higher education groups, and across borders with Canadian and Mexican colleagues;
- development of the Academic and Research Library @ your library Campaign to communicate the value of academic and research libraries and their staffs to academe and to society;
- investment of resources in issues related to scholarly communication, legislation, and recruitment and retention;
- dedicated commitment to diversity and inclusion in the profession through support for the ALA Spectrum Initiative and for ACRL conference and program scholarships;
- strong awards and member recognition program;
- robust publications program, professional development program, e-learning opportunities, and

information literacy initiatives, such as the Institute for Information Literacy National Immersion Program;

- the development of a new strategic plan to reposition ACRL for an even stronger future; and
- partnership with our members to assure member satisfaction and retention.

Goals

I would be delighted to work on your behalf as ACRL President to continue the fine traditions of ACRL and to explore new avenues to develop academic librarians of the future.

I would bring to this position a strong belief in the importance of communication; in getting relevant and timely information to members; in the health and growth of our association, including anticipation of new constraints on and possibilities for revenues and the increasing cost of providing products and services; in the exercise of reasonable care in making decisions; in sensitivity to differing views; and in strong collaboration among members and among external partners.

The strength of ACRL is its members. Member satisfaction and retention are critical. Building lasting relationships with our members must be a priority. We need to demonstrate a strong commitment to the continuing exploration of member priorities and needs, including how to attract new professionals to ACRL. Ongoing reconnection with members to create a shared future that is more secure than either could have built alone and creation of additional incentives and benefits for members to retain their memberships are critical for the future of ACRL.

I would work closely with the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL members, committees, sections, discussion groups, task forces, and chapters to address member concerns and issues and to strengthen ACRL's programs and activities, especially those that increase the innovation and leadership of academic librarians. ACRL must be the foremost collaborative organization that inspires innovation and leadership and explores ways in which libraries can invent their future, such as an Inventing the Future Think Tank. A think tank would build on the recommendations of the current Task Force of the Association of the Future and identify important areas of future exploration for the academic enterprise; provide an in-depth exploration of future events, trends, and developments shaping the enterprise and profession; and help develop strategic implications.

I would bring to the leadership of ACRL a continuing emphasis in changing the world of

scholarly communication. ACRL needs to be a leading player in ensuring that scholarly communication embraces wide access, fair pricing, permanence, and fair use and in continuing to create new models for scholarly publishing through education, advocacy, coalition-building, and research.

In furthering diversity and inclusion in our profession and our association, I would propose an ACRL Diversity Grant Program that would help academic and research libraries foster an environment that encourages a strong commitment to diversity in the workplace and provide grant opportunities for an international exchange/collaboration between ACRL members and international librarians to support attendance at international library association meetings and at the ALA Annual Conference.

ACRL has a vital role to assist libraries with maximizing their knowledge assets. The more we can harness and maximize these assets the greater a role we can play in creating competitive advantage on our campuses. Teaching information literacy to educate future knowledge workers, learning for professional development and growth, and supporting standards and outcomes measures to assess and improve the effectiveness and future direction of academic libraries need to be ongoing priorities.

Lastly, I would work to build an even stronger sense of advocacy to fight the many challenges ahead for academic libraries. It is critical that we advocate for public policy, legislation, and institutional change that can enhance the value and contribution we make to learning, teaching, and research. It is especially essential to position academic libraries and librarians as critical educational, economic, and social forces to make a difference in lifelong learning.

The future for academic and research libraries is an exciting and challenging one. I am honored to stand for this position and would be delighted to serve as ACRL President and to work with all of you. ■

(“Building faculty...” continued from page 83)

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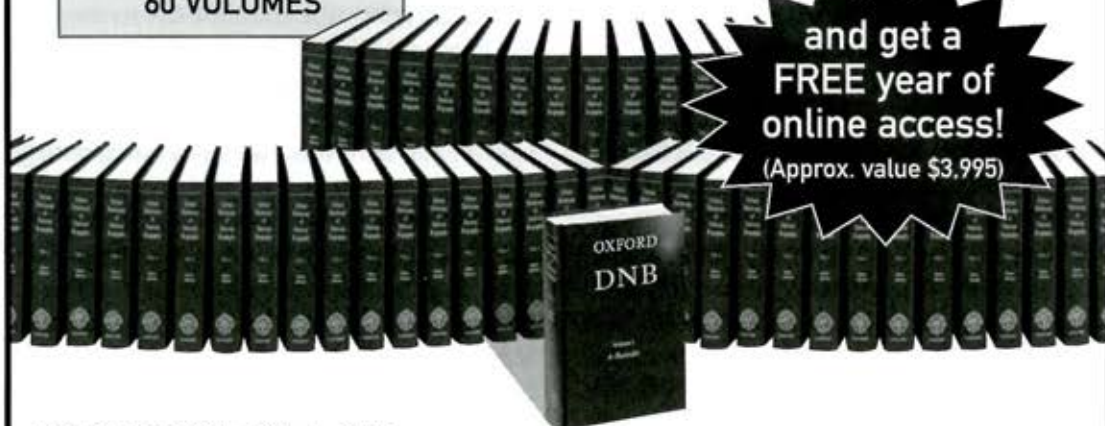
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