

Emily Daly and Erin L. Ellis

Emily Daly and Erin L. Ellis share plans for ACRL

Cast an informed vote in the election this spring



Emily Daly



Erin L. Ellis

Ed. Note: *C&RL News* offered the candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect, Emily Daly and Erin Ellis, 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.

Emily Daly

Without a doubt, we are in uncertain, unsettled times. For most of my career, librarians and information professionals have grappled with the need to adapt, remain flexible, and demonstrate the value of the library in a rapidly evolving higher education environment. We have seen the Internet transform how we do everything, from communicating with loved ones to managing enormous amounts of data; we have experienced monumental changes in

the way researchers locate, access, and use information; and we have supported dramatic changes in users' expectations for the spaces and services academic libraries provide.

For decades, we have either been preparing for or responding to seismic shifts in the way students, scholars, and other members of our communities conceive of and use libraries. No one was prepared for the upheaval that 2020 forced upon us, but I believe librarians and information professionals are well positioned to lead change for library staff, researchers, and other campus stakeholders.

While I doubt anyone would refer to 2020 as pleasant, it did deliver something of a gift (albeit one we may not have thought we wanted or needed): a call to action to reflect deeply on our practices as librarians, as ACRL members, as citizens of the world. What are the things we have done for our entire careers, never questioning or reconsidering? What can and should we do differently in order to be more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate? What impact might these changes have on our research communities and our profession? I find these questions energizing and the process of exploring them transformative. Like many of you, I have seized the opportunity to pose these challenging questions in my own institution, and I welcome the chance to investigate answers alongside other ACRL members, member leaders, and staff.

One reason this work excites me is that I have enormous confidence and trust in ACRL as a professional association. I became involved

with ALA as a graduate student and participated in the Emerging Leaders program and then LITA at the start of my professional career. At the recommendation of a colleague, I became involved with ACRL and the Instruction Section (IS) and the University Libraries Section (ULS). I was fortunate to hold a number of positions of increasing responsibility, starting as an inaugural member and then cochair of the ULS Technology and Libraries Committee. I had the opportunity to serve as member-at-large on the ULS Executive Committee for three years, where I helped ULS develop innovative ways to reach librarians and information professionals who could not necessarily afford to travel to ALA or ACRL conferences multiple times per year. It was exciting to develop an online professional development series that allowed us to include dozens more participants than we could reach in person and also create avenues for ACRL members to present their research or lessons learned from their work without leaving home. Online learning and other professional development opportunities have exploded in the last decade, but it was exciting to be part of ULS's early efforts to revamp standard practices for meetings and committee work and to think creatively about ways to engage and support all members, regardless of the size of their library's travel budget.

While I learned a lot about ACRL volunteer work through ULS, serving on ACRL's Board of Directors forever changed the way I will think about professional associations, the information and library profession, and my own management and leadership practices. Anyone who has served on an ACRL committee knows how excellent ACRL staff are, and I developed an even greater appreciation for their expertise and dedication during my four years on the ACRL Board. I also had the privilege of learning from the experiences and perspectives of community college librarians, directors of liberal arts college libraries, student success librarians, deans of research libraries, scholarly communication librarians, and so on. While ACRL members' professional backgrounds and daily responsibilities vary dramatically, I am consistently impressed by how dedicated members are to effecting meaningful,

lasting change in their institutions, ACRL, and the profession at large. My term on the ACRL Board left an indelible impression on the way I approach my work in my own institution, and it left me feeling hopeful and optimistic that a well-organized, intentionally led professional association has the power to foster the more equitable and sustainable information ecosystem we want for future generations.

During my time on the ACRL Board, the importance of ACRL's existence as part of a larger professional association, ALA, became strikingly clear. I was fortunate to serve with talented colleagues on ALA's Steering Committee on Organization Effectiveness (SCOE), charged "to review ALA's governance, member participation, legal structures/systems, with the goal of proposing changes that will vitalize its success, strength, and agility as a 21st-century association." Through this work, I learned more about ALA and ALA Council, the roundtables, divisions, and other communities of practice. I talked with members from across the association about SCOE's plans for the future of ALA and ACRL, and I believe that my inclination to listen and communicate others' needs and concerns led to a more member-centered plan for re-envisioning ALA.

When my term on SCOE ended, I volunteered to serve on ALA's Constitution and Bylaws Committee, which has been another excellent way to collaborate with colleagues at school, public, and special libraries and see firsthand the importance of thoughtful, future-thinking governance. I am optimistic that association members will vote to usher in many of the changes recommended in SCOE's Forward Together proposal. Once that happens, I am eager to work with ACRL members and staff to determine how best to incorporate these changes into ACRL's structures and programs in a way that respects and honors current and prospective members' needs.

While my experience with ACRL has been uniformly positive, I know that is not the case for all library and information professionals. I understand that a sizeable portion of our profession does not feel welcome in ACRL and is not interested in joining an association they do not

believe is for them. I maintain, as other ACRL member leaders and staff do, that we must work doggedly to change this perception and ensure that everyone feels they belong in ACRL.

I am proud of a number of ACRL's recent accomplishments, but I am most invigorated by the association's Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. ACRL staff, members, and member leaders spent countless hours developing the Core Commitment, and I am grateful that we did not stop at wordsmithing a charge or designing a website. Instead, we worked together to infuse the crucial work of antiracism, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout ACRL's Plan for Excellence and volunteer opportunities. The ACRL Board committed itself to deep and sustained education and training for themselves and for other member leaders. We acknowledged that advancing ACRL's Core Commitment is extraordinarily challenging yet essential if we wish to remedy the harm done to colleagues of color and ensure that the ACRL of the future is a welcoming and supportive professional home for all. As a white cisgender female at a well-resourced, predominately white institution, I acknowledge the considerable privilege I have benefited from at every step of my professional journey. I was deeply aware of this inherent privilege when I accepted the nomination for ACRL president-elect, and it is my hope that the association's Core Commitment—and the significant work stemming from it—will result in a more diverse membership with increased leadership roles for librarians and information professionals from minoritized populations. This profound shift will not happen magically or overnight. It will require intense effort and a deep resolve from every ACRL member. I am committed to this critical work, and I know I am not alone.

I am excited and humbled by the possibility of serving ACRL as your vice-president/president-elect. I would like to thank the Leadership Recruitment and Nomination Committee for the opportunity to stand for election alongside Erin L. Ellis. I encourage you to vote in the ACRL elections, and regardless of the outcome, I look forward to partnering with you to build a more equitable, nimble, and compassionate

organization that will continue to strengthen higher education and advance the library and information profession.

Erin L. Ellis

It's a tremendous honor and privilege to be nominated for vice-president/president-elect of ACRL. This association has been integral to my professional growth and identity for nearly 20 years, and it's incredibly humbling to stand for election.

This nomination has prompted me to reflect on my career and ACRL's role in my development as a librarian. I was introduced to ACRL in graduate school, when a mentor invited me to co-present at ACRL's 2003 conference in Charlotte. That experience was inspiring and enlightening. I had discovered my professional home, and I've been a member of ACRL ever since. Like many of you, I got to know ACRL through programs, publications, and committee service, and I've relied on ACRL's advocacy and resources throughout my career. I found a steadfast community and developed a strong network along the way. My first ACRL committee appointment was in the Instruction Section (IS) and later, IS provided my first ACRL leadership responsibilities as cochair of the IS Membership Committee and the Awards Committee. Over the years, I've been consistently engaged in a variety of ACRL activities, many related to member engagement, recognition, and retention.

I've also reflected on the breadth and depth of ACRL as a resource and community. My division-level roles in particular have enhanced my understanding and enthusiasm for ACRL. Chairing committees like the Publications Coordinating Committee, the Information Literacy Coordinating Committee—while facilitating its transition to the Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee in 2013—and working with three ACRL vice-presidents as chair of the Appointments Committee has given me direct insight into the numerous ways ACRL connects members, advocates for and advances the work of academic libraries, and raises awareness of our contributions and value. Regardless of my role—member, chair, participant, contributor—

what continually impresses me is the ACRL community as a whole. Together, we adapt to constant change, challenge each other, design creative solutions that advance the profession, and empower ourselves and our library users.

Throughout my involvement with ACRL, I've often had one foot in fundamental, recurring committee activities that advance the Plan for Excellence goals, and another foot in the broader complexities of operating a responsive and healthy professional association. I'm deeply familiar with member issues and concerns, as well as the opportunities and challenges that ACRL faces as it responds to member needs, changes within higher education and librarianship, and complicated social and financial challenges. The impacts and disruption of a pandemic, new ALA and ACRL leadership and the Forward Together recommendations for change, and heightened awareness of social justice issues means ACRL and its members have many opportunities for significant development and renewal. I believe the following areas are of the vital importance and investment for ACRL. Advancing our commitments to these initiatives will ensure ACRL remains an unparalleled and distinctive resource for library workers.

Commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion

Across all of our communities, we continue to confront acts of racially motivated violence and systemic injustice. ACRL is responding to calls for change with actions to dismantle inequitable structures within the association and across the profession. ACRL has made important strides and investments across a number of areas such as the Diversity Alliance, an Equity Statement for ACRL's 2021 conference, the collaborative task force to develop cultural proficiencies for racial equity, and a new site selection policy for ACRL events. As the Appointments Committee chair in 2019, I worked with Past-President Karen Munro in the early stages of incorporating self-reported demographic data into the appointments process to ensure broader and more diverse committee representation.

ACRL's Core Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) challenges the

association membership to address inequities, remove barriers to services and resources, and create spaces for all lived experiences. I'm committed to the continuous strengthening of ACRL's commitment to such efforts and to developing an anti-racism agenda. Member concerns about ACRL's inaccessibility and a sense of not belonging must be addressed or our community will lose its voices and its trust. Disenfranchised members have critical experiences and expertise that are needed to shape a more just and inclusive association. ACRL can model the way by undertaking its own liberating actions, while also facilitating the development of practical strategies and resources for engagement throughout the profession. An increased focus on ACRL's fundraising efforts to broaden access to membership, research funds and scholarships, and awards can offset or remove barriers to meeting the Core Commitment. I'm eager to work with ACRL members and ALA partners to build and advance ACRL's work in these initiatives.

Open and inclusive scholarly environments

ACRL has been a stalwart leader and resource in advancing inclusivity and equity throughout the scholarly communication environment. As a platform for advocacy and education, ACRL has worked to create and leverage opportunities with partners within ALA and across higher education, and our collective strengths and energy have compelled a number of advancements. In partnership with groups like SPARC and through the efforts of committees like the Research and Scholarly Environment Committee, ACRL has provided tremendous leadership and investment in creating more open systems of scholarship. ACRL must remain focused on solutions that minimize and remove barriers to information access and participation. Issues of affordability—from Big Deals to textbooks—impact our libraries and campuses significantly. Programs like the new Open Educational Resources and Affordability Road-Show and ACRL's legislative advocacy are critical activities for improving systems of scholarship. Initiatives like these can ultimately influence major decisions and directions across academic libraries, publishing, and research communities.

The pandemic has further highlighted information inequities and barriers to participation largely encountered by the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities. ACRL's ongoing Core Commitment to EDI and its goal to "model more representative and inclusive ways of knowing" means we must continue to create and enable conditions for a wider community of voices to be heard. I'm keen to cultivate more funded research opportunities, more inclusive publication and presentation venues, and more diverse perspectives represented on editorial boards. By leveraging such opportunities, ACRL can truly act as model and leader for more open and equitable systems of scholarship.

Essential programs and services

ACRL provides a wide variety of exemplary programs, services, and publications that contribute to professional learning and development. Higher education and academic librarianship continue to transform, and ACRL consistently and proactively responds with tools and resources. Member-driven and member-created resources help develop our understanding of library work broadly, but also the higher education contexts we navigate. With ACRL, the expertise and talents of library workers is shared and broadly disseminated, and our collective strengths drive and respond to change.

The breadth of these resources and tools reveals the great variety that exists across our institutions. From the RoadShow series to the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education to publications like College & Research Libraries and the Academic Library Trends and Statistics survey, ACRL is committed to providing timely information and data, as well as tools that are essential for individual growth and the advancement of library work. Initiatives like Project Outcome for Academic Libraries and Fostering Change: An ACRL Guidebook for Teams, speak significantly to ACRL's investment in advocacy and support for academic libraries. Choice podcasts, "The Authority File" and "Patron Driven," are yet additional ACRL avenues by which academic library workers can engage and learn.

Maintaining ACRL's collection of resources and programs is essential. By cultivating meaningful partnerships with our sister ALA divisions, and by engaging with others beyond the traditional borders of academic librarianship, I'm interested in exploring opportunities to broaden ACRL's suite of resources, programs, and services. Our best opportunities for innovation and sustainability of ACRL's resources will come by way of collaboration across a wide range of higher education interests, adding even more value to the member experience.

Conclusion

There are complex matters ahead that will require a deep examination of our professional and association priorities. We are in the midst of truly unprecedented times and, inevitably, that will bring opportunities and challenges. As we put 2020 behind us, many of us are considering what the post-pandemic landscape looks like. This contemplation is occurring within ACRL, as well. There are, and will be, difficult decisions to make. But librarians are no strangers to change or difficult decisions, and I know that we'll meet the challenges thoughtfully and creatively.

By growing and strengthening EDI and social justice efforts, advocating for open and inclusive access across scholarly communication, and sustaining investment in ACRL's most essential programs and services, ACRL will remain a vital and distinctive resource that supports our efforts, provides innovative tools and resources, and advocates on our behalf as we face the future.

I welcome the opportunity to serve ACRL, to strengthen connections throughout the association, and to listen, work, and develop with this inspiring community. With 18 years in librarianship, ten years in leadership, and ACRL participation since 2003, I have acquired deep professional experience and extensive knowledge of ACRL. I'm excited to apply this experience and knowledge, along with enthusiasm and a collaborative spirit, to this role. Together, we'll shape the future and uphold ACRL's tradition of excellence. ♪