



A BIMONTHLY REPORT ON RESEARCH LIBRARY ISSUES AND ACTIONS FROM ARL, CNI, AND SPARC

## IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ARL

by Ann Wolpert, Director of Libraries, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and ARL President

The publication of the *Association of Research Libraries Strategic Plan 2005–2009* represents a milestone in the shared intention among ARL members to focus and invigorate the work of the Association. The plan identifies key priorities for ARL—those areas where the members agree ARL should play a leadership role at this point in time. The three strategic directions identified in the new plan relate to scholarly communication; information and public policies; and the role of research libraries in teaching, learning, and research.

The identification of these strategic directions is the result of a planning and review process that began under the leadership of then ARL President Sarah Thomas (Cornell). In February 2004, the ARL Board of Directors formed two Task Forces: Governance and Strategic Planning. Throughout the year, the two groups worked with the full membership to develop recommendations in both areas. By the end of the calendar year, the Board had received and accepted a report from each task force. To determine how best to expedite the subsequent process of implementing the strategic plan, the ARL Board established an Implementation Team. The Implementation Team worked quickly but carefully during the winter of 2004–05 to identify a process that the Association could use to realize the strategic plan. A timeline was proposed that balances the need for membership awareness and support with the expectation of an expeditious implementation of the plan.

The strategic planning process and the governance review both benefited substantially from the thoughtful suggestions and ideas of a

broad engagement with the ARL membership. Extensive member input included discussion sessions at the May and October 2004 Membership Meetings; an online survey of all member representatives about strategic directions; one-on-one interviews with all member representatives on governance issues; and a planning retreat that included the Board, Task Forces on Strategic Planning and Governance, and standing committee chairs.

The Board began to implement task force and Implementation Team recommendations in February 2005. Since continuing support and involvement by the membership is essential for success in these new directions, a report on implementation will be the focus of further membership discussions at the ARL Membership Meeting in May 2005.

On behalf of the Board, I want to acknowledge and thank members of both task forces and the Implementation Team. The documents that they prepared for ARL take up the many constructive threads that emerged from the planning and review process, and weave those threads into a dynamic and useful fabric that reflects the wishes of the ARL membership and provides direction to the Association for the future.

*This special issue of the ARL Bimonthly Report includes a significant portion of the strategic plan and key excerpts from the Implementation Team Report, the Governance Task Force Report, and a summary of the work of the ARL Task Force on Future Financial Strategies. The complete reports were distributed to the full membership and are also posted on the ARL Web site, [http://www.arl.org/arl/strategic\\_taskforces/](http://www.arl.org/arl/strategic_taskforces/).*

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SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ARL

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## ARL STRATEGIC PLAN 2005–2009

ARL is an important and distinctive association because of its membership and the nature of the institutions represented. ARL member libraries are part of comprehensive, research-extensive institutions in the United States and Canada that share the same research mission, aspirations, and achievements.<sup>1</sup> These institutions comprise notable communities of scholars across many disciplines who are actively engaged in research and who have high levels of need and expectations for library collections and services.

ARL member libraries are distinguished by the breadth and quality of their research-oriented collections as well as the characteristics and magnitude of the multidisciplinary communities they serve. Research builds upon and extends previous inquiry. A research library, by continuously pooling and preserving the evidence of research, and by adding value through services that enable the discovery and use of these resources within and across disciplines, is an essential component of a research institution. Research and education are substantially improved when pursued in an environment with a library that provides access to deep and broad collections.

As the norms and circumstances of a discipline or a research institution change, research libraries also change. Such change has been rapid and dramatic in the past two decades as information technology and ubiquitous networking have transformed scholars' access to knowledge and to each other. At the same time, the role of the comprehensive research library has been both sustained and expanded. Comprehensive research libraries have the capacity to build rich discipline-based collections in all formats—from manuscripts to digital objects—and to offer bridges that facilitate the synthesis of information that can advance interdisciplinary inquiry and understanding.

A research library adds value to the enterprise it serves through its expertise, services, and the resources it collects and preserves. Research libraries today are not like those of the past nor will research libraries look as they do now in the future. The more recent dramatic changes within libraries, as within the disciplines and research institutions themselves, are the result of information technology applications and ubiquitous networking. Even as research libraries change in response to the environment, their core responsibilities are sustained: research libraries continue to collect, preserve, and provide services to enable discovery and

<sup>1</sup> As established by the classification "Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive" in the *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, or by comparable affiliations or documentation.

use of research knowledge in all formats. Especially as research and higher education subdivides knowledge into disciplines and sub-disciplines, comprehensive research library collections and services offer bridges that can facilitate the synthesis of information that advances interdisciplinary understanding and inquiry.

It is within ARL that comprehensive research libraries serving research communities come together. ARL provides a forum for its member libraries and acts as an advocate on behalf of these libraries to shape and influence the changing environment of scholarly communication and public policies that affect their communities. ARL also serves as a venue in which its member libraries identify and articulate strategies for integrating library services into research, teaching, and learning. In many ways ARL is a small association and yet it represents an extraordinary North American community. The 123 member libraries of ARL are a large portion of the academic and research library marketplace, spending more than \$1 billion every year on library materials. As a result, when its members decide to speak with one voice on an issue, ARL has great influence. The strength of the collective voice and market of ARL member libraries positions ARL well to establish alliances and form partnerships to pursue issues of importance to research libraries in collaboration with extended communities.

### **ARL Strategic Planning Context**

The last comprehensive planning initiative within ARL took place in the late 1980s. ARL's mission and objectives were reviewed and updated in 1994. Since that time, the ARL Board has annually adopted priorities to guide the ARL program for the current year, and developed a statement of developmental priorities to guide the Association programs for the next three to five years. In 2001, there was a membership review of core ARL programs. In addition, over the last five years, the following targeted reviews took place within ARL, each of which redirected one or more of ARL's programs:

- New Strategies for Managing Copyright and Intellectual Property, 2002
- Collections & Access Strategies for the 21st-Century Scholar, 2001–02
- A Preservation Agenda for ARL, 2000–01
- Recruitment and Preparation for Future Library Leaders, 2000–04
- New Measures and Assessment Tools, 1999

In February 2004, the ARL Board recognized it was time for a comprehensive membership-wide review and assessment of the ARL agenda. This plan was developed by the Strategic Planning Task Force, based on member input and with guidance from the ARL Board.

### **Redefining ARL's Core Programs**

This strategic plan identifies key priorities for ARL for the next five years, areas where the members agree ARL should play a leadership role at this point in time. The three strategic directions identified in the plan relate to scholarly communication; information and public policy; and teaching, learning, and research. To advance these strategic directions in significant ways, the ARL Board is encouraged to review and assess all current ARL programs for how they may advance these strategic directions and, based on that review, to reconsider the dues that are allocated in support of them.

Guidance for navigating this challenge is provided through the recommendations of the recent ARL Task Force on Future Financial Strategies, endorsed by the Membership last May and ratified by the ARL Board in July 2004. That report describes multiple financial strategies for supporting ARL activities: dues support is used for core programs and, when appropriate, is supplemented by cost-recovery funds; grants and/or contributions or voluntary fees from participating libraries are used to support projects to test concepts and look for momentum on an issue; and parallel organizations (e.g., CNI, SPARC), created with other entities, are established to attract membership and funding from beyond ARL to advance research library goals.

Some of ARL's current programs are obvious fits to advance the plan. Other programs, while not singled out in the plan, may well serve as—or may be reshaped to serve as—enablers for advancing the strategic directions.

This does not mean that ARL will continue to do everything it has done in the past. Rather, the plan becomes a lens through which all activities of current programs are assessed for value and quality before resources are allocated. Some of the criteria to be considered are:

- Do the program activities advance the Strategic Plan?
- Do the program activities contribute something distinctive that is not available from other organizations?
- Is it possible for an individual library to undertake such activities on its own?
- Could or should the activities be pursued in whole or part by other organizations?

The challenge is to determine those aspects of the current core programs that need to be realigned and strengthened to support the plan and apply dues strategically. Subsets of members may pursue those activities not of sufficiently broad interest for the full membership to support. If the assessment reveals that a program capability delivers value to the membership, or

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles guided the Task Force in its work. (The “we” in these statements refers to the Association.)

### Distinctive Mission

- We complement and build on the strengths of other organizations.
- We rethink historic assumptions.
- Our policy positions guide our strategies.

### Community

- We are a member-driven organization.
- We are accountable to our members.
- We provide opportunity for full engagement by all member representatives.
- We respect the diversity of our membership.

### Intellectual Freedom and Scholarly Communication

- We promote and advocate barrier-free access to research and educational information resources.

### Collaboration

- We build relationships with other higher education societies and associations.
- We work closely with other library-related associations, councils, federations, etc.

### Diversity

- We encourage and support our members as they strive to reflect society’s diversity in their staffing, collections, leadership, and programs.
- We strive to employ a diverse staff.

### Operational Effectiveness

- We are focused on the needs of our member libraries.
- We allocate our resources wisely and practice sound fiscal management.
- We promote continuing staff development and growth.

to some portion of the membership who are also willing to support it, it may be continued without dues support using alternative funding strategies (e.g., as an ARL project or via a collaboration between ARL and an allied organization).

## ARL Mission Statement

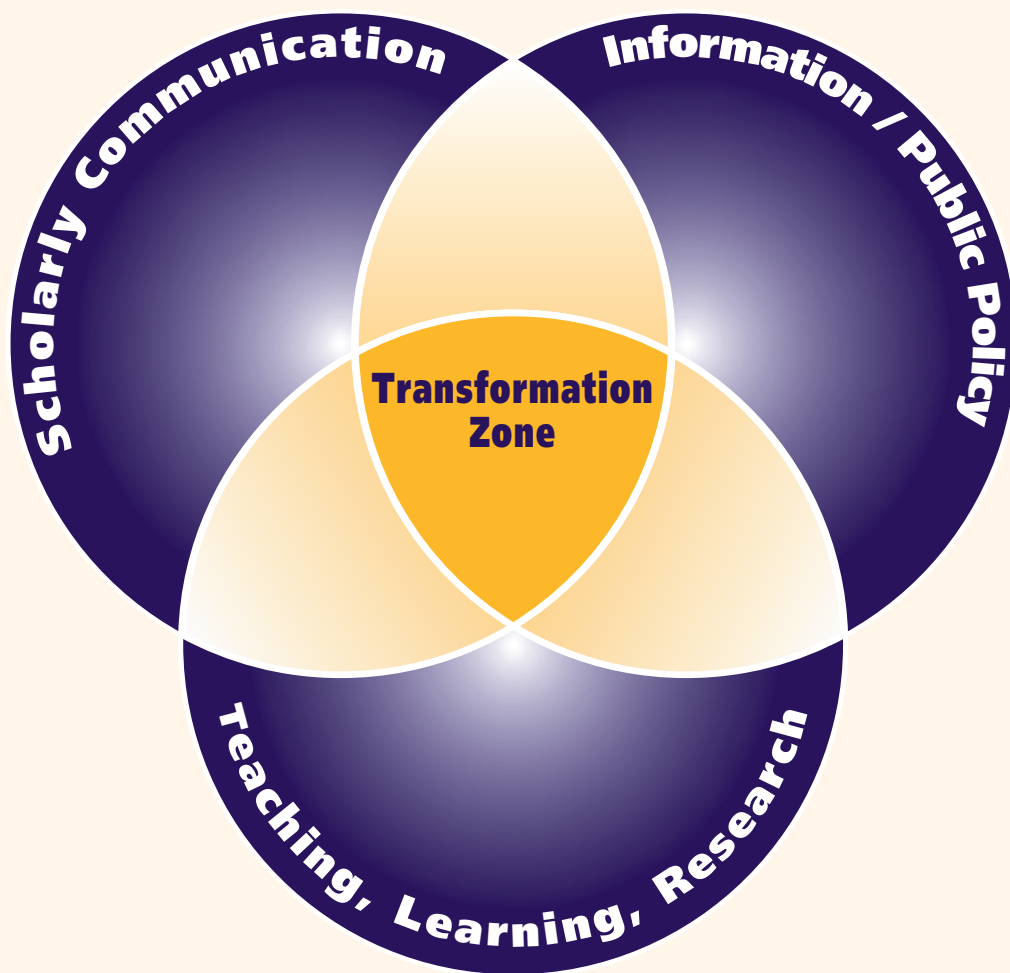
ARL influences the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations.

## Summary of Strategic Directions (2005–2009)

- Strategic Direction I: ARL will be a leader in the development of effective, extensible, sustainable, and economically viable models of scholarly communication that provide barrier-free access to quality information in support of teaching, learning, research, and service to the community.
- Strategic Direction II: ARL will influence information and other public policies, both nationally and internationally, that govern the way information is managed and made available.
- Strategic Direction III: ARL will promote and facilitate new and expanding roles for ARL libraries to engage in the transformations affecting research and undergraduate and graduate education.

The following few pages present the strategic directions, outcomes, and strategies that form the heart of this strategic plan.

- The *strategic directions* identify those major areas of emphasis for ARL in the coming five years. They are broad and also closely linked and interdependent. All have been identified as critical priorities for ARL at this point in time.
- The *outcomes* provide some indications of what might be expected as a result of moving in these directions.
- The *strategies* suggest how ARL might begin to implement these directions. Over time, as strategies are implemented, new strategies will be identified or current ones modified to meet the changing environment and evolving needs of ARL.



## ARL STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (2005–2009)

The illustration above conveys the relationships between and amongst the strategic directions and highlights the transformation zone that lies at their intersection. Each of the domains circumscribed by the three directions are dynamically and somewhat radically evolving. Research libraries will remain relevant by embracing opportunities to improve their performance as changes take place in scholarly communication, methods of teaching, learning, and research, and in information and public policy. This, in turn, speaks to the need for ARL's continuing to develop and maintain a strong capacity for measurement and assessment, for continuous environmental scanning and strategic thinking, for identifying best practices, and for providing leadership and advocacy for positive change.

Some of the ways ARL will work in the transformation zone identified above include:

- Analyze trends and identify needs
- Assess policies, new models, new tools
- Advocate for positive change
- Enable collective responses and actions
- Articulate and promote best practices
- Extend community and expertise through alliances and partnerships

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION I: SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION

ARL will be a leader in the development of effective, extensible, sustainable, and economically viable models of scholarly communication that provide barrier-free access to quality information in support of teaching, learning, research, and service to the community.

### Rationale

The area of scholarly communication is consistently identified as a top priority for ARL and research libraries. The widespread adoption of digital technologies and networking for the conduct of research, teaching, and learning enables dramatic innovations. These transformative forces have stimulated fundamental changes in:

- the nature and boundaries of research resources (stretching far beyond the published literature to include great varieties of text, datasets, preprints, images, media, software, simulations, and other special collections);
- how the functions of the systems of scholarly communication are performed (authoring, informal peer communication, editorial review and validation, acquisition and access strategies, location and delivery of information, preservation and archiving);
- the performance attributes by which such systems are judged (e.g., timeliness, authenticity, and costs); and
- the roles of the major participants in the system.

Another force in the environment—the commercialization of publishing by many publishers, both for-profit and nonprofit, especially for scientific, technical, and medical journals—has led to egregious price increases and unacceptable terms and conditions of use for some key research resources needed by the research and academic community. The dysfunctions of this marketplace and the negative impact it has had on building and using research library collections are well documented.

The life-cycle management challenges associated with intellectual assets that are becoming increasingly digital are substantial. Many of these assets will become inaccessible as they are threatened by inadequate infrastructure, inadequate financial resources, and technology evolution within access mechanisms, encoding formats, and storage systems. It is to the research library community that others will look for the preservation of these digital assets, as they have looked to us in the past for reliable, long-term access to the “traditional” resources and products of research and scholarship.

Together with others in the national and international library, academic, and scholarly communities, ARL advocates for the development and assessment of imaginative and practical strategies for new functionally complete systems of scientific and scholarly communication and the roles of research libraries in these systems. While the stakes for the success of these efforts are high, the opportunities for

advancing innovative, barrier-free, and sustainable models of research and scholarly communication are equally great. It is essential that ARL sustain and extend its capacities to lead this development.

### Outcomes

As ARL moves forward in this direction, some expected outcomes in the next five years include:

#### Outcome A:

ARL will have provided leadership for the implementation and assessment of selected new models of scholarly communication (e.g., addressing such issues as cost and use/impact of open-access articles and licensed journals; future of monographic publishing; continuing access to data and other varieties of content beyond traditional published literature).

#### Outcome B:

There will be growth in the number and quality of appropriately linked digital repositories used by ARL libraries to archive and manage scholarly output.

#### Outcome C:

ARL will have influenced the marketplace so as to improve the purchasing power of libraries and the terms and conditions under which content is made available.

#### Outcome D:

ARL will have a range of powerful and effective alliances for shaping and promoting the various new models appropriate for different disciplines and communities.

### Strategies

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

#### Strategy 1:

Encourage and facilitate alliances among groups of research institutions, other organizations serving research libraries and their institutions, the for-profit and nonprofit publishing sectors, and scholarly and scientific societies to advance development of new functionally complete systems of scholarly communication that serve their communities.

#### Strategy 2:

Actively pursue the development of a variety of appropriate responses to unacceptable business practices (e.g., broaden the cadre of economists and legal antitrust scholars undertaking research on the impact of mergers on prices, assess the legal implications of bundling, assess the feasibility of various legal actions, and monitor faculty actions).

#### Strategy 3:

Promote and conduct research that will inform assessments of models of scholarly communication.

#### Strategy 4:

Accelerate and enhance outreach efforts to inform the educational and research communities on trends, findings, opportunities and their impact on promotion and tenure, on teaching and research, and on university budgets.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION II: INFORMATION AND OTHER PUBLIC POLICIES**

ARL will influence information and other public policies, both nationally and internationally, that govern the way information is managed and made available.

### **Rationale**

Influencing policy that affects the working environment of its member libraries is one of the principal roles of ARL. While government relations and information policy development has always been a major priority for ARL, this direction calls for an increased emphasis, both in the U.S. and in Canada. This emphasis recognizes the increasing impact of globalization and of policy decisions relating to the convergence of information and technology on the transformation of systems of scholarly communication. There is a need for a more aggressive and coordinated plan for addressing such policy issues.

This includes policies in areas of intellectual property and copyright, privacy and other individual rights, telecommunications, access to government information, information security, intellectual and academic freedom, trade and immigration policies, and appropriations for government agencies key to research libraries and their users.

### **Outcomes**

As ARL moves forward in this direction, some expected outcomes in the next five years include:

#### **Outcome A:**

ARL will have influenced laws and judicial decisions governing the use of copyrighted materials so that they better meet the needs of the educational and research communities (e.g., Fair Use and Fair Dealing will thrive and the public domain will be expanding).

#### **Outcome B:**

ARL will have contributed to reducing economic, legal, and technical barriers to access and use of the research results from publicly funded research projects, enabling rapid and inexpensive worldwide dissemination of facts and ideas.

#### **Outcome C:**

Our administrative and academic counterparts in research institutions will have a better understanding of the implications of public policy choices for advancing transformed systems of scholarly communication.

### **Strategies**

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

#### **Strategy 1:**

Expand ARL's capacity for analysis and advocacy and for proposing, influencing, and responding to legislation and other policy issues.

#### **Strategy 2:**

Expand and strengthen alliances with organizations that share common goals to advance policy issues.

#### **Strategy 3:**

Provide leadership in advocacy and educational efforts within North American and international research and educational communities.

#### **Strategy 4:**

Promote and conduct research in relevant areas of public and information policy.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION III: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND RESEARCH

ARL will promote and facilitate new and expanding roles for ARL libraries to engage in the transformations affecting research and undergraduate and graduate education.

### Rationale

The transformation of research libraries mirrors to a large degree the ongoing evolution of research institutions, especially the changes underway in the very processes of teaching, learning, and research. There are several significant transformations now underway in research institutions. New methods and outputs of research are being made possible by the growth of digital content and new applications of supercomputing and networking on Internet2. Students and scholars are using and creating a growing array of content and formats as objects of research. Institutional cultures are changing, with more encouragement of learning and research on interdisciplinary and global issues and, especially, more focus on assessment and outcomes. In academic research institutions, the undergraduate curriculum is being reformed, including the infusion of research into undergraduate education. At the same time, the student population is changing, becoming more diverse in age and ethnicity, and bringing new expectations and learning styles to which universities must respond.

Also at the institution-wide level, the Web and educational technologies have spurred many changes. Innovative applications of new and multimedia technologies are significantly enhancing and expanding the ways research findings are communicated to colleagues and students. Data-sharing has improved within and across disciplines and within institutions in ways not previously possible, including the deployment of institution-wide systems in support of mission and administrative operations. Alternative and innovative publishing opportunities are available to faculty, graduate students, and research scholars, making more and sometimes "raw" content available. There are new opportunities for the creation of knowledge: Web applications for course development and the conduct of research have enabled faculty and researchers to establish interest-based online communities. These online communities facilitate the exchange of knowledge and the iterative process of scholarly communication.

The wide availability of Web-based information has greatly expanded public access to information, and concomitantly, has increased expectations about access to and community use of research resources. Universities and research institutions are responding

with a renewed focus on interaction with and service to the community, including K-12 education, local organizations and residents, and the increasingly global scope of shared interest groups.

In an environment in which the context, methods, objects, and outputs of research are changing, it is critical for research librarians to continue to enhance their role as academic partners during this evolution. They have the knowledge, experience, skills, and access to the extensive range of content that will ensure that the research library of the future achieves its full potential for support of education and scholarship. ARL is positioned to partner with a growing range of organizations beyond the library community to facilitate ARL libraries' engagement in these transformations and changing relationships.

### Outcomes

As ARL moves forward in this direction, some expected outcomes in the next five years include:

#### Outcome A:

With extant research collections as a foundation, faculty and researchers will have more and better access to material in any form that extends their capacity for research.

#### Outcome B:

ARL libraries will be engaged in a variety of innovative teaching partnerships with faculty in their institutions, leading to new models of pedagogy and teaching initiatives that include the use of electronic library resources as a key component. They will be an integral part of university centers and collaboratives for improving teaching and learning.

#### Outcome C:

ARL libraries will have advanced their support for digital scholarship to create new tools and structures both in individual libraries and through collaborative efforts. ARL libraries will have a growing body of professionals engaged in and leading partnerships with faculty and researchers to manage new forms of digital content.

#### Outcome D:

ARL will have close ties to and highly visible collaborative undertakings with organizations whose missions focus on the processes of teaching and learning, and on the related work of curriculum development, assessment, and accreditation.

### Strategies

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

#### Strategy 1:

Identify and promote new models of library/teaching

and library / research partnerships, including programmatic efforts, experiments, new approaches to facilities, etc. Encourage assessment of these models, promote and publicize successful collaborations, and encourage conversations about them throughout the research and higher education communities.

**Strategy 2:**

Expand and strengthen alliances that focus on teaching, learning, and research, including discipline-based work in both research and curriculum development, as well as assessment of learning and research outcomes. Reach out to new potential partners and develop joint projects.

**Strategy 3:**

Reinvigorate and refocus ties with allied organizations and engage actively in appropriate educational technology development as it relates to pedagogical support and the way that research findings are communicated.

**Strategy 4:**

In order to anticipate the resource and service needs of research and pedagogy, work with the scholarly community to develop discipline-specific methodologies for monitoring and analyzing trends in both areas.

**Strategy 5:**

Promote and facilitate the development of library professionals who have the expertise and knowledge to lead and participate in new partnerships with researchers and university faculty to create and manage research resources.

## **Organizational Commitment**

The success of ARL requires that the Association renew its commitment to developing the organization, governance, communication systems, and resources necessary for achieving its mission and strategic objectives. This is particularly critical now inasmuch as the current structure of the Association does not map, at least not perfectly, to the strategic directions proposed in this plan. Initially, ARL's current roles and programmatic capabilities will be assessed and, as needed, repositioned to pursue the strategic directions identified. Core programs will be reviewed and, as appropriate, funding strategies identified. Similarly, as opportunities or threats arise in the next five years, ARL will assess their potential impact on member libraries and determine appropriate responses for ARL.

This commitment has a number of components:

**Implementation of the plan will take full advantage of the several funding strategies described by the Task Force on Future Financial Strategies for ARL.** Those strategies include funding by membership dues, voluntary contributions, grants, or some combination thereof as appropriate, as well as through the establishment of parallel organizations with other entities that attract membership and funding from beyond ARL.

**Each year the ARL Board will assess progress toward the priorities identified in the plan and, for the coming year, allocate resources accordingly, taking into account the different types of funding strategies available.**

**ARL will strive to make strategic planning a core competency of the organization, continuously monitoring the environment and ensuring that the plan stays current.** The entire Strategic Plan will be reviewed and updated no later than 2009.

**ARL will periodically review all programming and the Association's ongoing effectiveness in addressing its priorities and meeting member needs.**

**ARL's organization and governance will be flexible and effective, supporting the strategic plan.** The ARL Task Force on Governance has assessed ARL's governance and has proposed adjustments to facilitate implementation of the strategic plan and improve overall functioning.

**ARL's organization and governance structure and processes will provide ample opportunities for member representative engagement.**

**ARL will emphasize effective communication with its member libraries.**

**ARL will work to rationalize its relationship with the other organizations and programs serving the research library community in order to better steward resources and maximize impact.**

## Membership Input to Strategic Planning Process

### Initial Membership Input, Tucson, May 2004

During the May 2004 ARL Membership Meeting in Tucson, the task forces on strategic planning and governance held a plenary meeting of all member representatives, followed by smaller, concurrent discussions to seek member comments and questions on the review processes getting underway. During the Business Meeting the following day, task force chair Brian Schottlaender summarized the membership input on strategic planning with the following points.

Members expressed general support for...

- Forcing the issue of making choices and recognizing that the Association cannot be “all things to all people.”
- Developing mechanisms for soliciting additional input from all member representatives, not just those on the Board.
- Seeking out perspectives about ARL from those outside of the Association.
- Exploring alternative governance and organizational roles that we look to the Task Force on Governance to address.

Members identified what they think ARL does well...

- ARL speaks with a single voice for its research library members, recognizing that there is much common interest amongst institutions as well as much heterogeneity.
- Credibility, especially in information policy.
- Expert staff.
- Data and publications widely perceived as strengths.
- Serving as a home for organizations like CNI and SPARC.
- Forum to bring colleagues together and a source of information and education for staffs of ARL libraries.

Members identified some of the challenges facing ARL...

- Not bold enough, lacks focus, tied to programs and difficult to let go.
- Tend not to do much assessment ourselves or relating of programs to the ongoing strategic plan.
- Perception of redundancy with other organizations.
- Culture of conflict avoidance.

### Membership Survey, July 2004

To build on this initial membership input, in July, the task force conducted a membership-wide Web-based survey to identify the issues of greatest importance to ARL member libraries, and the issues that members perceive as most important for the Association to position itself to address. The survey had an extraordinary response rate of 90 percent, with 111 member representatives responding.

The survey asked member representatives to review a list of issues addressed by current ARL core programs and to identify no more than three that they believed were most important for ARL to position itself to influence. Below is a list of the issues identified in the survey along with the number of times each issue was identified as among the three most important for ARL to address.

- Scholarly Communication 97
- Federal Relations/Information Policy 85
- Measurement/Assessment 51
- Collections and Access 39
- Preservation 22
- Professional Development/Training 18
- Diversity 15
- Organizational Development 5

The task force looked at the survey results to determine if there are common or divergent perspectives among the member representatives responding to the survey. Responses were sorted and compared across the following respondent categories: public institutions, private institutions, the largest libraries among our membership, Canadian, U.S., those institutions with directors participating in ARL for five years or less, and those participating for more than five years.

It became clear that there is considerable convergence of opinion as to the issues that are most important for ARL to influence. The task force found that—for the four issues most often identified as most important for ARL to address (scholarly communication, federal relations/information policy, measurement/assessment, collections and access)—there is little variation in priorities across all of the respondent categories studied.

For the four sets of issues less often identified as most important for ARL to address, there was some variability among the categories that is not visible in the overall survey responses reported above. Specifically, in two categories—private institutions and largest institutions—more respondents identified the issue of professional development/training as one of the three most important issues for ARL to address than

identified the issues of preservation, diversity, or organizational development. Among the public institutions more identified the issue of diversity as one of the three most important issues for ARL to address than identified preservation, professional development/training, or organizational development. None of the Canadian members identified either diversity or organizational development as among the three most important issues for ARL to address.

The task force survey also invited member representatives to comment on what the task force should consider as it pursued its assignment. A number of themes surfaced from this opened-ended question:

- Focus ARL resources on policy development instead of operational library services.
- Position ARL to play a distinctive role that avoids duplicating services adequately provided by other organizations.
- ARL should partner and collaborate with appropriate organizations.
- ARL should limit the number of projects and programs it pursues to provide a better focus and real influence.
- ARL should become more nimble (and thus entire budget should not be devoted to recurring expenditures).
- ARL should scan the environment for emerging issues, and develop a “community vision” for the future of research libraries.
- ARL should prepare the next generation of library directors (but should not provide training available elsewhere).
- ARL should better orient new member representatives to the organization.

The survey results were reviewed by the 28 member representatives who participated in the strategic planning retreat and served as a foundation for those discussions.

### **Strategic Planning Retreat**

On July 27–28 a strategic planning retreat was held that included Board members, committee chairs, ARL’s executive and deputy directors, and the members of the strategic planning and governance task forces. Twenty-eight member representatives were facilitated by association consultant Jane Fisher to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, envision a preferred future for ARL in 2012, identify preliminary strategic directions for ARL, draft mission statements, and consider governance issues. The planning experience was positive and constructive.

### **Preferred Future**

At the beginning of the retreat, participants discussed a preferred future for ARL. What could and *should* ARL look like in 2012? The result is the following list of desired characteristics.

1. In 2012, ARL will have a strong focus on policy matters. It will be a primary advocate for the educational and research interests in the formulation of information and other public policies that have an impact on research libraries and systems of scholarly communication. It will provide leadership in advocacy and educational efforts to inform institutional policies and individual practices that influence research, teaching, and learning. With a high profile on policy issues, ARL will be an organization to which the media turns.
2. In 2012, ARL will provide leadership in the transformation of scholarly communication. ARL will support and facilitate the emergence of economically sustainable channels where content is openly available to the scholarly and scientific communities along with associated services that maximize enduring discovery and interdisciplinary use of the content.
3. In 2012, ARL’s influence will be global in scope with powerful national, North American, and international collaborations. It will take a leadership role in framing key policy issues and seek allies with shared goals to advance a policy position.
4. In 2012, ARL will have an expanded focus on library contributions to the research process as well as to teaching and learning. By articulating directions, showcasing demonstrations, and developing assessment strategies, ARL will have enabled research libraries to expand their contributions and visibility.
5. In 2012, ARL’s leadership and governance will reflect the diversity of its member libraries’ interests, demonstrate agility by responding to the changing needs of its member libraries, and provide multiple opportunities to engage member representatives as well as library staff beyond the library director’s position.
6. In 2012, ARL’s member representatives will be active in and supportive of the organization and recognize its value to the field. Affinity groups will allow member representatives to congregate around common interests.
7. In 2012, ARL will have rationalized its relationship with the other organizations in the research library community, reducing redundancy and creating a dynamic, collaborative environment that will be able to serve the diverse needs of research libraries.

8. In 2012, ARL's mission will be sharply focused, and the initiatives it funds and undertakes will avoid "mission creep."
9. In 2012, ARL will be fiscally stable and strong, with appropriate financial and human resources—both member representatives and staff—to support its work.
10. In 2012, ARL will have strategic planning and organizational assessment as core Association competencies.

## Membership Discussion, Washington, D.C., October 2004

As part of the October 2004 ARL Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C., the Strategic Planning Task Force presented their preliminary recommendations. The discussion validated the central themes being put forward as strategic directions—e.g., "what" ARL needs to do—but also surfaced the need to be more explicit about "how" ARL would pursue the strategies. For example, there was a suggestion that the plan acknowledge the value of ARL collaborating with other organizations, especially in the area of the strategic direction on teaching, learning, and research. Member representatives also discussed the need to find the right approach for ARL to take in regard to organizational and professional development as well as diversity issues, recognizing their importance to advancing the outcomes identified in the plan while remembering that ARL is not the only organization to address these issues.

## Completing and Implementing the Plan

With benefit of the October 2004 Membership Meeting discussions, the task force revised their recommendations and presented their final report to the ARL Board on November 11, 2004. The Board accepted the plan and acted to establish the Strategic Plan Implementation Team to advise on and expedite the Board's implementation process. The Implementation Team met during the winter and presented their report to the Board in time for the Board's February 2005 meeting. In February, the Board initiated processes aimed at maintaining the momentum of the Association while implementing the new plan in a systematic and expeditious manner, using 2005 as a transition year.

## THE ARL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

*Distilled from the "Task Force on Future Financial Strategies for ARL: Report to the ARL Board," ratified by the Board, July 2004, with updated figures from recent ARL financial documents.*

### Financial Strategies

Member dues are the primary financial strategy for funding ARL's core operations. In addition, there are a number of complementary financial strategies that provide additional revenue streams to support ARL activities.

These strategies include:

- **Cost-Recovery Funds**

Funds from the sale of ARL products and services, such as publications or registration fees for workshops, webcasts, or conferences, complement dues support. Products or services provided to nonmembers aim to exceed cost recovery within the limits of ARL's 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit organization.

- **Restricted Funds**

Grants and/or contributions or voluntary fees from participating libraries are used to support specific projects or initiatives.

- **Parallel Organizations**

Separate but closely affiliated organizations created by ARL with other entities attract membership and funding from beyond the ARL membership to advance shared goals (e.g., the Coalition for Networked Information, SPARC, Library Copyright Alliance).

### The ARL Reserve and Agility Funds

In addition, ARL has a reserve fund that was established for three purposes:

- to provide long-term financial stability, including appropriate responses to unforeseen events;
- to provide strategic agility, (both principal and interest may be used for this purpose as required, including, for example, borrowing from the principal for short-term needs); and
- if the income earned on the reserve fund is not required for financial stability in any given year, this income could be directed in whole or in part to support Board-designated purposes.

Given these purposes, ARL's goal is to achieve a reserve fund equal to 30% of its operating budget, based on an average of the three previous years. For example, the recommended target for the reserve fund in 2005 is \$1,064,000. As of the end of 2004, the reserve fund was valued at \$940,000. Following recent practice, the ARL Board continues to budget annual contributions of \$20,000 to the reserve fund.

In addition, the Board has established an ongoing agility fund, to which it allocated \$150,000 of the 2005 budget to be available for advancing ARL's new strategic plan.

## GOVERNING ARL: A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The ARL Board established the Task Force on Governance in early 2004 to review current practices and consider options for restructuring Board nominations, elections, and other aspects of governance of the organization. The Board's goal was to establish a process that advances the interests of the organization and is understood and supported by member representatives. Over the last seven years, 47% of all ARL member representatives named to their positions were new to ARL. With such a large proportion of new and relatively new member representatives, it is appropriate for ARL to assess its governance and ensure that it is appropriately structured for the Association's needs today and into the future.

### The Task Force Process

The Task Force on Governance met several times, both face-to-face and by conference call, and held discussion groups with members at the May 2004 Membership Meeting. In addition, members of the Task Force conducted a confidential telephone survey of individual interviews with 114 member representatives. The results of these interviews informed the Task Force's discussions and these recommendations.

The members of the Task Force on Governance considered it a privilege to solicit input from ARL member representatives. The responses were constructive, candid, thoughtful, and diverse. Each interview revealed one or more unique aspects in the representative's thinking about the organization, reminding the Task Force members of the value that ARL representatives bring to the Association.

In terms of process, all interviews were word-processed by the Task Force member, sent to the Task Force chair, and then submitted to ARL and aggregated so that Task Force members could look at all responses. As those interviewed will recall, all responses were anonymous.

ARL member representatives indicated that they appreciated having the opportunity to express their views. In the interviews they assumed the value of ARL and suggested mechanisms for improvement. While each individual's conception of a perfect ARL differed, the committee heard a number of themes: ARL needs to become more transparent to its member representatives; ARL's processes and communication need to be opened up so that all ARL member libraries have a real stake in the organization; the roles of the Board, Executive Committee, member representatives, Executive Director, and staff require clarity; a substantive orientation, both oral and written, of new ARL member representatives should be initiated; and finally, ARL must become a more welcoming organization. The Task Force

recommendations are based upon these themes. Following member discussion at the October 2004 Membership Meeting, the Task Force revised and finalized its recommendations to the Board. A summary of those recommendations follows:

### Communications and Orientation

- Clarify and communicate ARL's electoral and governance processes.

- Revise and strengthen ARL's orientation program for new library representatives and new ARL Board members.

- Enhance communication within ARL, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities for member involvement.

### Nominating Process/Nominating Committee

- Expand the size of the Nominating Committee to five individuals, appointed by the Chair, in consultation with the Board.

- Have the Immediate Past President serve as chair of the Nominating Committee.

- Clarify the role of the Executive Director in the nominating process.

- Clarify the Nominating Committee's charge.

- Make the nominating process more transparent and systematic.

### Board Composition/Selection of Board and President

- Maintain the current Board size and increase Board interaction with committee chairs.

- Continue to use a Nominating Committee slate, ratified by the membership, to select Board members.

- Continue to have the Board elect the ARL President, and have the election ratified by the membership at the Business Meeting.

### Committees

- Reduce nearly exclusive reliance on Standing Committees for member representative involvement and offer other forums for participation, such as task forces, affinity groups, etc.

- Clarify and communicate the process for selecting committee chairs and committee members.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of committees and committee chairs.

- Continue to strengthen connections between committee chairs and the Board.

The full task force report explains the recommendations in detail and the rationale behind them. It is available on the ARL Web site [http://www.arl.org/arl/strategic\\_taskforces/](http://www.arl.org/arl/strategic_taskforces/).

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM REPORT TO THE ARL BOARD

The Implementation Team considered the findings of the Strategic Plan, the recent membership discussions, and the results of the membership survey of 2004. Based on the team's sense of this input, we conclude that:

- Three of the current programs that ranked highest in the membership survey map well to the strategic directions: scholarly communication, information policies, and collections & access.
- There are enabling capabilities that support all of the strategic directions. They include the measurement and assessment program, along with governance, membership meetings, communications, and general and administrative support.
- Further membership input is needed to define what elements, if any, of the remaining program areas—preservation, professional development and training (including distance learning), diversity, and organizational development—would make direct contributions to one or more strategic directions and how they would do so.

As a result, we recommend to the ARL Board the following:

1. ARL dues should be focused on the three strategic directions defined in the strategic plan (scholarly communication, information and other public policies, and new roles for libraries in the transformations affecting teaching and research) and on enabling capabilities.
2. A substantial portion of the approximately \$400,000 of dues allocated to the program activities that ranked lowest on the July 2004 member survey—preservation, professional development and training (including distance learning), diversity, and organizational development—should be systematically reallocated to the strategic directions and their enabling capabilities.
3. The reallocated funds might be budgeted, for example, to increase capacity for policy analysis or to enhance communication capabilities. They, or some portion of them, might be used to develop ARL's ability to respond agilely to emerging issues and circumstances.
4. The reallocation of dues should be carried out in a systematic and expeditious manner using 2005 as a transition year.
5. Current obligations from federal grants or other contracts that also require some dues support in the preservation, professional development and training, diversity, and organizational development programs

should be carried out and concluded in a timely manner.

6. The Board should establish a steering committee for each of the three strategic directions. The initial charge for each steering committee is to define the scope of the strategic direction. A report on the scope of each strategic direction should be made available to the full membership prior to the May 2005 Membership Meeting.
7. Membership should have an opportunity at the May Membership Meeting to provide input into defining the scope of the three strategic directions (proposed as a day-long series of discussions on Wednesday, May 25, 2005).
8. The current program committees should be asked to meet the afternoon of May 25 to respond to the steering committee reports on the scope of the three strategic directions and to recommend adjustments to them. The Implementation Team chair will meet via conference call with current committee chairs to work out a framework for the discussions on May 25. Working within the structured discussion, committees will consider primarily their committee's program activities not included in the scope of the strategic directions, assess ongoing member interest in them, and articulate and if—and how—they could be accomplished without ARL dues support. This assessment should include consideration of whether a given activity is one that can be most effectively dealt with by ARL or if there are aspects that are uniquely related to research libraries (as opposed to a broader universe of libraries). If not, then the activity should be considered for elimination or transfer to an affiliated organization.
9. Program committees may assume that the three financial strategies currently used by ARL—membership dues, cost recovery, and restricted funds—should continue to be used, but in different amounts and proportions. Current dues revenue will be dedicated to advancing the three strategic directions and their enabling capabilities. Cost recovery, restricted revenue, voluntary member contributions, and even targeted dues increases could be used to fund other projects, services, or deliverables considered important by membership.
10. Discussions with affiliated organizations concerning potential cooperative efforts and/or relocation of appropriate program activities should begin as and when appropriate.

## RECOMMENDATION ON ARL COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Implementation Team discussed how the proposed steering committees relate to the Board and to other membership groups. The graphic below represents how ARL could be reorganized via committees, subgroups, and task forces where members are engaged.



### Strategic Direction Steering Committees' Charge

1. Define the scope of the strategic direction being attentive that the Guiding Principles in the Strategic Plan are appropriately reflected in the scope.
2. Involve ARL members in discussions of strategic directions.
3. Review current program efforts to assess whether they are consonant with the strategic direction in the Strategic Plan.
4. Propose initiatives within the scope of the strategic direction.
5. Develop mechanisms to advance the strategic direction initiatives (e.g., task forces, subgroups).
6. Work with the ARL Executive Director to identify appropriate ARL staff liaison.
7. Provide annual updates to the Board on progress on initiatives that can serve as a key ingredient in the Board's assessment of ARL's success in implementing the plan.
8. Monitor the environment, look forward strategically, and advise on adjustments to the direction.

# ARL



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