



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

IDENTIFYING STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ARL

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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/.

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