ARL Academy

Design Team Final Report
November 16, 2015

Description of Initiative

The ARL Academy will foster the development of an agile, diverse and highly-motivated workforce as well as the inspiring leadership necessary to meet present and future challenges. Requisite expertise and skills will come from new as well as traditional domains - stimulating opportunity, inspiring new models for shaping research library work and enhancing overall job satisfaction. Coordinated action within ARL will continue to focus on critically important diversity initiatives and leadership programs as reflections of the association’s core values. Both of these values will be present in the recruitment for and the pedagogy of all of our offerings.

The approach will be inclusive and nimble. The Academy will offer learning opportunities to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce, including new kinds of professionals. Both content and approach will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the Academy is both meeting learner needs and reflecting best pedagogical practice.

The Academy will place high value on collaborative approaches to program development and implementation. ARL will seek out partners both from within member libraries and from external organizations as a strategy to encourage greater creativity and agility. ARL could further explore partnerships to develop agile research nodes or centers of excellence that would encourage both members of the library workforce and faculty colleagues across the academy to take on research and develop projects and/or provide learning and development opportunities.

The Academy will actively encourage a strong research agenda as part of its deliverables. Academy leaders will employ an evidence-based approach to selecting and designing new programs and approaches. Leaders and participants will be encouraged to share results broadly in a variety of forums (scholarly articles, funded research, etc.)

Framework and Context for the ARL Academy

1. **Describe the breadth, focus, and type of projects or structures that could fall within the ARL Academy:**

   The ARL Academy will:

   - Support the entire workforce, including staff with credentials other than the MLIS
   - Support the full life cycle of the ARL workforce (from early to late career)
   - Reflect diversity and inclusion in its decision-making processes
   - Incorporate strong global perspectives
   - Leverage exemplary programs already in the ecosystem:
     - What programs does/should ARL implement;
     - Which programs should ARL endorse that exist elsewhere; and
     - Where is ARL best positioned to do something itself or to support other endeavors managed by another organization or entity?
   - Focus on higher level competencies and mindsets—not task-based "skills" (e.g., the use of a specific piece of software)
• Offer a tapestry of strategic learning opportunities (with priorities set and reviewed on a regular basis). The programs should change over time as the organization’s needs change.
• Model best practices in learning outcomes and pedagogical methods in all programs offered by ARL or those offered through partnerships.
• Create mechanisms for the review and evaluation of programs in consultation with the Assessment Committee and/or outside experts.
• Be mindful of cost, efficiency and overall fiscal responsibility to our members and the Association.

The ARL Academy will exclude:

• Narrowly-defined training programs for specific skill development (e.g., workshops in the use of a specific software tool). There might be some benefit in considering whether ARL should outsource some of this training or recommend specific open source online alternatives.
• Broad undifferentiated programs that only tangentially affect the lives of those who work in research libraries. Such programs (e.g., working with difficult people) are readily available locally.

2. Current projects and activities of the Association that fit within the ARL Academy.

A. ARL Leadership Fellows

The Leadership Fellows program, formerly known as the Research Library Leadership Fellows (RLLF), is an executive leadership program designed and sponsored by ARL member libraries as a means of developing future senior-level leaders in large research libraries and archives. The program is widely recognized as highly successful. The satisfaction levels among previous graduates are extremely high. As well, a recent study shows that 29% of graduates of this program have moved into ARL dean/director positions.

In early 2015, the ARL Leadership Fellows Program Review Working Group conducted a review of the program and recommended enhancements to the goals and activities. The Design Team supports these changes and makes no recommendations for additional revisions to this program.

Alignment with the ARL Academy Vision: The Leadership Fellows Program is well aligned with the Academy given its focus on high-level leadership competencies. In keeping with the ARL Academy philosophy, the Fellows program is not restricted to participants with MLIS degrees. In fact, many successful graduates of the program hold alternative credentials.

B. Diversity Programs

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1 The Design Team recommends that all programs are strategic in nature. On those occasions when the Association needs to provide a tool-based workshop, it should endeavor to keep to the standards put forth by the Academy.
ARL currently administers four programs that support MLIS studies in one fashion or another. Three of these programs are funded by IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Service) with the funds to be expended in the next year or so:

- ARL/MLA Diversity & Inclusion Initiative
- ARL/SAA Mosaic Program
- Career Enhancement Program
- Leadership and Career Development Program

The Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce (IRDW) is member-funded and the funds collected in 2012 will be expended in the next year.

Mark A. Puente, Director of Diversity and Leadership Programs, and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee are currently reviewing the diversity programs to determine if the programs should continue and if so, identify goal and program enhancements. Discussion between the ARL Academy Design Team and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee should take place to determine if an emphasis on MLIS training should be continued. A review of program data and the impact of the programs should be completed.

Another important issue for discussion with the Board and membership is the ongoing financial model for diversity programs, particularly the IRDW program. A 2016-2018 cohort will be included in the 2016 ARL proposed budget.

Alignment with the ARL Academy Vision: The diversity programs meet an ongoing identified need among ARL libraries. The ARL Academy is positioned to partner with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee in creating new programs or enhancing existing programs. Such a partnership would help build a stronger and deeper focus on diversity across all Academy offerings.

3. **New Projects** (Priority programs that could be created within the ARL Academy or programs that the ARL Academy should partner with external organizations to offer.)

NOTE: The programs are listed in priority order based on feedback provided by the ARL Directors at the Fall 2015 meeting.

**PRIORIT Y #1: Communities of Practice**

ARL recognizes the critical importance of continuing professional development of library staff throughout all career stages. Enhancing strategic skills and competencies across the workforce will help libraries deliver on their mission while, at the same time, enhance staff satisfaction and morale.

The ARL Academy Design Team endorses the Communities of Practice model as described in a recent proposal submitted to IMLS. The communities are envisioned as a set of open educational forums dedicated to fostering learning communities in emerging strategic areas within higher education.²

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² ARL submitted a grant to IMLS to develop ARL’s Academy Communities of Practice in 2014. The grant received stellar reviews but was not funded because it was considered to be too ARL-centric.
The Communities will reflect a learner-centered approach with both content and delivery mechanisms shaped by the needs of the participants. Learning opportunities will include a variety of informal and formal approaches.  

The communities will also create natural networks for collaborative implementations and skills development. Partnerships could be explored with individual ARL institutions or with other external organizations (like EDUCAUSE or CLIR/DLF), which may be experimenting with innovative new approaches for skill development.

By way of example, the Design Team anticipates Digital Humanities will be identified as an obvious Community of Practice: libraries are becoming increasingly involved with DH/DS work on campus and many libraries are introducing DH/DS centers or thinking about doing so. Library staff do not necessarily have the competencies and skills required to support DH/DS work. In this case, the University of Rochester recently launched a pilot Digital Humanities Institute (DHI) for Mid-career Librarians to teach library staff the essentials of how to engage in this field in a productive way. The Institute is a Mellon-funded pilot that used CLIR Fellows. Demand for this opportunity was very high.

The Design Team also anticipates two further areas that are ripe for developing communities of practice: 1) research data management and software preservation and 2) outcomes-based assessment that incorporates the emerging interest in and development of new measures and analytics. In both of these cases, the Academy would be interested in nurturing communities that focus on higher level competencies, not how-to practicality training.

Proposals:
Approach other foundations to see if they are interested in funding the creation of either one specific Community of Practice or the broader collection of Communities.

Partner with Rochester to repeat the DHI under the auspices of the ARL Academy. The Institute could either be run in Rochester or at other locations across the ARL membership.

Alignment with ARL Academy Vision: The Communities of Practice and the DH Institute support high-level skill development in emerging areas. These offerings would appeal to a broad cluster of library workers at all career stages and with a wide variety of educational backgrounds. As well, the DH offering reflects the fluid nature of the Academy: The need for these particular skill sets may diminish or change dramatically over time as the Library’s role in emerging technologies and other areas becomes more clear.

PRIORITY #2: Library Management Skills Institutes (LMSI) I and II

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3 The Communities of Practice report suggests that each Community of Practice would be structured around a series of four two-hour workshops per semester for five semesters (for a total of 20 workshops). These workshops would help create the community, but not necessarily be the primary tool for delivering content.

4 The Design Team recognizes that some Communities of Practice may require significant funding while others may require very little.
These two multi-day institutes were originally designed and offered by ARL staff, and are now offered by external consultants. The LMSI-I focuses on the individual manager’s role in providing leadership within a complex and changing library organization. Participants learn high-level skills including facilitative leadership, performance coaching, problem solving and influencing skills. LMSI-II focuses on the organization. Participants focus on the performance of the library as a system and how they can work through the organization to achieve success.

**Proposal:** Partner externally to deliver the LMSI I and II as ARL offerings under the Academy umbrella. ARL Academy would promote the programs to its members.

**Alignment with ARL Academy Vision:** The two institutes are well aligned with the goals of the Academy. The Institutes focus on high-level leadership competencies. Both workshops are beneficial to library staff in middle or upper management positions.

**PRIORITY #3: Incumbent Directors’ Professional Development Program**

ARL directors frequently express an interest in a professional development opportunity appropriate to their current station. These individuals often invest heavily in their own staff members’ development, but see few opportunities appropriate for themselves.

LIBER (the Association of European Research Libraries) offered a 3-day program in May 2015 called *Journées for Library Directors.* The theme of the event was “reshaping the Library and the role of the Director in leading library services and provision in rapidly changing digital, educational and research environments and within a developing trend towards shared - and even outsourced - services.”

**Proposal:**
Create a proposal for ARL on the most useful competencies for sitting directors by conducting focus groups and/or through a survey of the membership. Based on this feedback, possibly incorporate development offerings in the bi-annual meetings of the Association.

Develop an opportunity similar to that recently offered by LIBER this past spring in Paris or partner with LIBER to offer this program at an ARL library in the US or Canada. The Institute could be open to research library directors from around the world.

**Alignment with ARL Academy Vision:** This offering would be well aligned with the Academy. The focus would be on high-level leadership competencies for those in the later stages of their careers. The offering would also be global in perspective with both instructors and participants coming from around the world.

**PRIORITY #4: New Directors Development Program**

Elliott Shore and Sue Baughman currently conduct a two-day New Directors’ Orientation program. The opportunity has been very well received by participants as a way of understanding ARL and developing a strong network of colleagues during the crucial first year of a new leadership position.
Paula Kaufman recently produced a report for ARL on the development of a new directors institute based on her conversations with 25 new ARL directors over the course of two ARL membership meetings. Her report notes that most new directors recognize clear gaps in their knowledge base, especially around adapting to new cultures and leading key constituencies. The report identifies several key curriculum areas including change management, fundraising, and human resource management.

The Member Engagement and Outreach Committee has been charged to consider ways it can support the engagement of new directors. In review of the current practice for the orientation of new directors, this Committee recommends that additional activities be developed that engage new directors during the first year of their leadership positions in a lightly structured program addressing key issues of concern to the cohort. Given the rolling nature of appointments and the current rate of turnover, the initial part of this program is already scheduled to begin every six months. The Member Engagement and Outreach Committee supports this idea.

**Proposal:**
Partner with the Member Engagement and Outreach Committee to reshape the orientation program into a lightly structured 12-month new director development program.

**Alignment with ARL Academy Vision:** The Institute supports high-level leadership competencies. The model is also fluid with some of the specific content being shaped by the cohort themselves.

**Other Issues**

**Funding the Programs**

Overall recommendations for the funding of programs should be developed. Initial ideas under review include:

- For existing continuing programs, a cost recovery plus model that takes into account all of the overhead of running a program (e.g. staff time) and allows enough funding to continually refine and develop it.

- For new programs/pilot programs, either grant support or investment by interested partners including member libraries, ARL and other associations.

- For the Diversity and Inclusion programs, a mixed funding model that allows member libraries to invest their funds in diversity as part of their stated university goals could be developed.

**Administration or Oversight of Overall Academy**

5 The Design Team recognizes that new directors have limited amounts of available time. As such, the Team anticipates that the New Directors program might leverage existing face-to-face meetings (e.g., ARL Membership meetings) supplemented by teleconference calls.
The administration of the overall ARL Academy and the administration of individual programs should be addressed with the next few months. Some possible ideas include:

- Creation of an advisory group for ARL Academy overall that provides guidance on the types and numbers of programs as well as feedback on the goals on a regular basis.

- Each program will be administered by an ARL staff liaison or visiting program officer with support of an appointed advisory group.

**ARL Academy Design Team**

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