ACRL issues for the 80s

ACRL’s two presidential candidates offer their views on the Association’s future.

Sharon A. Hogan

Janice T. Koyama

This presentation of statements from ACRL’s candidates for vice-president/president-elect is a new information service for ACRL members. Many of the issues and concerns facing ACRL are discussed informally at meetings, but we have not had a national forum available to all members. These statements provide the basis for an informed choice when you receive your ballot in the next few weeks.—Sharon J. Rogers, ACRL vice-president/president-elect.

Sharon A. Hogan:

What we face. Today there is no such thing as a single challenge. Academic and research libraries, personified by their professional staff members, struggle daily with multiple forces, vectors coming from and moving toward diverse (and often opposing) ends. Pressures of funding, collections, technology, service, space, and personnel affect virtually all of us, usually simultaneously. Some pressures build up internally; others threaten to implode from the “outer world” of information. Decisions made nationally about the format or distribution of government documents, for example, have a profound impact on how academic libraries go about their business. Decisions about data transmission and access are even more disturbing.

But we dare not stop with surveying our own challenges. The parent organizations we serve are under immense internal and external stresses of their own. As the traditional post-secondary population shrinks and national and state funding for higher education declines, demands increase to extend opportunities to non-traditional students and to bolster basic education. The library or learning center’s role to meet the teaching and research needs of its “host” means that it must not only absorb the shock of these changes but must also lead in anticipating them.

ACRL as buffer and catalyst. Given this environment of continual change where the only certainty is more uncertainty, ACRL can help us respond wisely. As a national organization representing academic and research librarians in all types of surroundings, ACRL through its elected officers can provide the focus and objectivity we all seek. By building on its strengths—the work of dynamic sections, the precedent of exciting national conferences, encouragement of active chapters, and liaison with discipline associations—ACRL’s leadership can assist librarians in their efforts to explore, influence, and educate other groups in the higher education community.

As president of ACRL, a responsibility that involves three years of hard work and choices on behalf of the association, I would strive to see, to understand, and to confront the forces besieging our profession. I would assist the membership in articulating the alternatives that various actions or inactions would have on college or research libraries and would aggressively present those alternatives to national educational and discipline associations or legislative bodies. I would expect to make difficult decisions and defend them to opponents. I
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would also be a good listener, willing to be persuaded to another point of view by strong evidence and argument. Having served three years on ACRL’s Budget and Finance Committee and having headed an extremely active chapter, BIS, I am well aware of the financial constraints of the organization and the sorts of trade-offs that are necessary in the light of the ACRL Long Range Planning Model. The alternatives are infinite, the consequences of any decision immense.

Janice T. Koyama:

My interest in serving as the ACRL Vice-President/President-Elect is based on a combination of traditional and non-traditional experiences. Familiarity with ACRL for me began with active involvement in the revival of the California Chapter and in the later years of holding various chapter offices including the presidency. Within ACRL itself I have served on a divisional standing committee, on committees in both “type of library” and “type of activity” sections, and have been a regular participant in several discussion groups. I have also been active on committees of another ALA division for me began with active interest in serving as the ACRL Vice-President/President-Elect is based on a combination of traditional and non-traditional experiences. Familiarity with ACRL for me began with active involvement in the revival of the California Chapter and in the later years of holding various chapter offices including the presidency. Within ACRL itself I have served on a divisional standing committee, on committees in both “type of library” and “type of activity” sections, and have been a regular participant in several discussion groups. I have also been active on committees of another ALA division and on the ACRL Council, continuing follow up on the Activity Model and the ad hoc task forces’ recommendations, and providing stronger liaison and cooperation with other ALA divisions in response to the J. Morris Jones ALA Divisional Leadership Enhancement Program.

ACRL and higher education. Perhaps the most far-reaching is my concern regarding the role of ACRL in higher education. As individual academic libraries and librarians strive to become more active partners in the academic enterprise, so must ACRL increase its efforts to be our collective voice with other professional and scholarly organizations and agencies which share our interests. To this end, we should seriously consider the recent recommendations from the ad hoc Task Force on Academic Libraries and Higher Education for implementation.

It is an honor to be a candidate for ACRL office and an awesome responsibility to lead such a prestigious and influential organization. I am enthusiastic and eager to work with all of you if elected and, no matter what the outcome, will continue to serve ACRL with dedication and commitment.

Editor’s note: Sharon A. Hogan is acting director of Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia. Janice T. Koyama is head of the Moffitt Undergraduate Library, University of California, Berkeley. ■■