Mary Jane Petrowski

**Now more than ever . . .**

**ACRL benefits you**

Charting Our Future: ACRL Strategic Plan 2020, challenges ACRL to position academic and research libraries and librarians as indispensable to advancing learning and scholarship. The 2009 ACRL membership survey shows that ACRL members have a strong desire to learn and succeed and that ACRL plays an important developmental role in helping members become flexible, dynamic, and entrepreneurial leaders in their institutions and scholarly communities.

We also continue to interview ACRL members each week to discover why they join (and what they value). Visit the ACRL Insider blog (www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/category/member-of-the-week/) to read more personal statements about the value of academic and research librarianship and ACRL membership.

**Feels like home: ACRL brings us together**

ACRL is a home and family for almost 12,000 academic and research librarians. One new member calls it her “professional posse.” ACRL brings talented and highly motivated members together by providing critical connections to people, opportunities, and resources. According to the 2009 ACRL membership survey, the most valued personal benefit is learning. As engaged professionals, ACRL members most value professional development, opportunities to network with other colleagues, and access to current knowledge and research.

**Professional development: 80-proof career accelerant**

Advancement involves research, publication, presentation, and service. Members value the growth and leadership opportunities provided by ACRL. Our publications—including *C&RL News*, *C&RL*, *Choice*, books, standards, and blogs—allow members to keep up with (and advance) the field. Our governance structure provides opportunities to lead, create, and shape the profession. Through professional development programs, conferences, publications, e-learning, discussion lists, and committee service, ACRL provides a supportive infrastructure for each member to achieve a high level of continuous learning and achievement.

In the words of one member, “ACRL is my most valued tool for professional development.”

*But wait—there’s more!* ACRL is dedicated to developing members who are recognized as leaders in their institutions and in scholarly communities. The higher education community benefits from the ongoing growth and development of academic/research librarians. Institutional enhancement represents the ultimate return on your membership investment: “ACRL membership is not just for you but for your library.”

**Professional common ground: perfect for networking**

Members can meet and learn from other librarians who share their interests, virtually or face-to-face. ACRL brings all members into the wider community of academic librarianship.
through communities of practice, discussion lists, national conferences, and publications. Academic librarians who may be isolated gain an “essential connection” that is especially valuable. The sharing of experience and expertise among members creates an inclusive, vital, and supportive channel that facilitates networking and collaboration.

“I developed several close friendships with other librarians who have continued to help me learn and explore as new technologies were introduced. We learn so much by sharing our experiences with each other and helping each other stay abreast of new developments in our rapidly changing environment.”

**In the loop: resources, research, results**
ACRL members also value “keeping up” and look to ACRL to keep them informed of issues, trends, and best practices. ACRL guidelines, standards, research, statistics, toolkits all help to keep academic and research librarians in the know. Members continuously share information, provide support, and solve problems via ACRL discussion lists, blogs, wikis, podcasts, online communities, and publications.

As one member noted, “ACRL offered those of us who were new to librarianship a wide variety of resources on which to lean as we made our way in this demanding profession.”

**Come home to ACRL: knowledge, resources, connections**
ACRL membership demonstrates solidarity and support for the profession, as well as the work of ACRL in developing standards and guidelines for the profession. As a member, you support the voice of academic and research librarians in higher education, as well as in the library community. Increase your effectiveness, value, and connection to the profession through ACRL. We will help you connect, contribute, and keep current.

Membership application forms are available online at www.acrl.org. Join today and together we can support and improve academic and research libraries.