

Goals of the A.C.R.L.¹

Dr. Wilson is director of libraries, University of Colorado.

TWO OF the recommendations included in the 1946 report of the College and University Postwar Planning Committee of the American Library Association and the Association of College and Reference Libraries are of particular concern to us at this moment.²

The first is: "That the Association of College and Reference Libraries periodically review its adopted principles and policies and that at all times it stand ready to revise and alter its program and activities in order to meet effectively the problems of college librarianship in whatever way the needs of the times may require." The second is: "That there be a constant endeavor by those concerned with the policies of A.C.R.L. to relate college library service and standards to the socio-economic trends of the time in such a way that the association will not merely follow the trend but take its part in determining its nature."

We are now completing our first year as an association with Headquarters office and the services of a full-time executive secretary. The A.L.A. has set for itself "Four Year Goals" to be attained in whole or in large measure within the next four years as a means of achieving the main objective set forth in this preamble: "We, the American Library Association, enter our 72nd year of service to the advancement of libraries and

librarianship with the firm belief that the critical problems of our time demand a re-direction of the services of every library." These "Four Year Goals" are:

1. Programs and types of service which will contribute to the awareness and understanding of the urgent problems.
2. Informational and educational materials in every library adequate in quantity, suitable in quality and variety, and so organized as to serve the purpose stated in the preamble.
3. Good library service for every American.
4. Forward-looking professional librarians, in adequate numbers, eager and competent to perform the public service suggested above.

The Executive Board of the A.L.A. has called upon the divisions to prepare their own specific four year goals within the general framework of the A.L.A. statement, but with such interpretation as may be necessary to meet their own needs. The Fourth Activities Committee is considering fundamental changes in A.L.A. organization. The combination of these three facts makes it particularly appropriate that we review the adopted principles and policies of the A.C.R.L. in the first month of the year 1948.

A constitution and by-laws were adopted by the A.C.R.L. on May 30, 1940, and the A.C.R.L. was accepted as a division of the A.L.A. by the Council on the following day. The program of the association, formulated by its Committee on Policy in 1941, is a comprehensive statement, directed in the broadest sense toward advancing the standards of college and reference library service, and continuing the professional and scholarly growth of all those engaged in

¹ Paper presented at the meeting of the Midwinter Conference, A.C.R.L., Chicago, Jan. 30, 1948.

² *College and University Libraries and Librarianship*. Chicago, American Library Association, 1946, p. 111-12.

the work of our libraries. It proposed ten cardinal policies:

1. Build an effective organization.
2. Make present affiliation with A.L.A. a fruitful relationship.
3. Provide for continuity of leadership.
4. Cultivate mutual understanding between librarians and their colleagues in learned societies and other professional associations.
5. Enlist all career members of college and research library staffs as members of the association.
6. Plan stimulating meetings.
7. Encourage research and study by librarians.
8. Initiate publications.
9. Sponsor a program of activities in behalf of college, university, and research libraries by:
 - a. Furthering the use of educational libraries.
 - b. Broadening the basis of cooperation among libraries.
 - c. Aiding the scholar.
 - d. Cultivating international understanding.
10. Support *College and Research Libraries*.

The years 1941-46 were marked by the efforts of the association to secure the financial support and the single integrative Headquarters agency necessary to make the program effective. These efforts were brought to a focus in 1946 by the activities of the Committee on the Relations of the A.C.R.L. to the A.L.A., which are recorded in its report based upon a questionnaire survey of the membership.³

A recommendation by the A.L.A. Budget Committee providing for an allotment to A.C.R.L. for the office of executive secretary at an annual rate of \$10,000 was approved. The allotment, with no conditions attached, was made to take effect Jan. 1, 1947. At the midwinter meeting in December 1946, the A.C.R.L. Committee on Policy submitted a program of ten points, following closely the 1941 pro-

³Brown, Charles H. "What Do the Members of A.C.R.L. Want?" *College and Research Libraries* 8: 3-10, 43, January 1947.

gram, which was re-examined in connection with current developments. On the basis of opinions expressed by the A.C.R.L. membership, no fundamental changes in the original program appeared to be necessary, and the 1946 revised program was adopted by the association.

An executive secretary was selected and appointed. He assumed his duties in April 1947, in an office located at A.L.A. Headquarters. These duties thus far have consisted mainly in collecting, coordinating, and supplying information, and assisting in getting the president's program, presented in July at the San Francisco conference, organized and under way.

With this brief historical summary in mind, will a review of our adopted principles and policies indicate that our present program and activities are meeting effectively the problems of college and reference librarianship? Are we relating our library service and standards to the socio-economic trends of the time? How does our program fit into the "Four Year Goals" announced by the A.L.A.?

In his statesmanly inaugural address, President Carlson set the course which the A.C.R.L. is following this year with the approval of the board of directors. After discussing the many problems and needs which might be singled out for our special attention—problems and needs closely related to the ten cardinal policies of the association—he declared:

Which of these and other problems should our association select for special emphasis this year? Because our history is what it is; because the events of this past year have been what they have been; because our long quest for a paid secretary at Headquarters has finally come to fruition; because we need group strengthening, integration, and purpose if we are satisfactorily to meet the sharp challenge of the times; I have chosen for the year of my presidency to emphasize and promote, in every way I know how (and

without in any sense forgetting the many problems detailed above), the instruments through which we work: first, ourselves, our personnel in the college and university field, present and prospective; and second, the strengthening, sharpening, and improvement of our association, the agency in which we merge and combine our intelligence and our efforts.⁴

Committees Appointed

To implement this program, the board of directors approved the appointment by the president of four special A.C.R.L. committees, as follows:

1. A committee on membership in the Association of College and Reference Libraries.
2. A committee on recruiting the type of librarian needed in the college, university, and reference fields.
3. A committee to consider the educational preparation and qualifications needed by college, university, and reference librarians; to promote development of these qualifications through in-service training; and to work closely with the library schools to assist them in transmitting to their students the needed qualifications.
4. A committee to consider the financial needs of our association and to suggest a program for their realization.

These committees have been appointed and are now functioning. This top priority which has been placed on membership, recruiting, professional education for librarianship, and financial needs, certainly is justified when we consider that what we do about these things will determine to a considerable extent how strong our association will be, and how well we can meet our responsibilities and carry out our accepted program.

However, the priority assigned for this year to these four aspects of the association's program means that the majority of the cardinal policies of the association and of the professional activities which members

felt were most needed remain to be tackled in the future. Actually, only one of the ten A.C.R.L. policies—that of enlisting career members of college, university, and research library staffs—and only the fourth of A.L.A.'s "Four Year Goals" are covered adequately by our current program.

The first policy of the A.C.R.L. is to build an effective organization. In a sense, all other policies may be considered means to this end.

The whole program of developing A.C.R.L. as a professional organization is based upon this first objective. Members have indicated that they want a combination of leadership in the president, the board of directors, and the executive secretary, with emphasis on work to be done by committees. The executive secretary is to stimulate and coordinate such work. The office of the executive secretary should be the clearing house for college and reference libraries.

A detailed study of the method of operation of such professional associations or learned societies as the American Historical Association, Modern Language Association, Academy of Political and Social Sciences, American Philosophical Society, or the American Political Science Association, might be suggestive and valuable. It appears that the membership does not wish to carry over from the A.L.A. a traditional organization which is to be perpetuated on a smaller and limited scale, but that a new start toward a professional organization is desired.

We should keep clearly in mind the six criteria of professions offered by Abraham Flexner⁵:

First, professions involve essentially intellectual operations accompanied by large individual responsibility. They require the application of the intelligence of a trained and

⁴ Carlson, William H. "Preparation for Progress." *College and Research Libraries* 8: 199, July 1947.

⁵ Flexner, Abraham. "Is Social Work a Profession?" *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections*, p. 576-90, 1915.

informed mind to the mastery of problems and the performance of intricate and socially important services.

Second, professions are learned in nature, and their members constantly turn to the laboratory and seminar for a fresh supply of facts and the discovery of new truths. It requires a steady stream of ideas and new guiding principles emanating from research and experimentation, to keep professions from degenerating into mere routine and from losing their intellectual and responsible character.

Third, they derive their raw materials from science and learning, but use it for practical purposes.

Fourth, the professions possess a technique capable of communication through a highly specialized educational discipline. Through experience and research a body of funded knowledge is acquired upon which the activity rests, including specific kinds of skill that the practitioner of a profession must master through formal education and training.

Fifth, professional groups tend toward self-organization. Common interests and problems develop a group consciousness which expresses itself in an organization of the professional group for its mutual improvement and the improvements of standards and service to the public.

Sixth, professions are becoming increasingly concerned with the achievement of social ends. Their fundamental purpose is not personal profit, but public service. At their best they must become increasingly altruistic.

Certainly the program of the A.C.R.L. and the "Four Year Goals" of the A.L.A. meet these professional criteria. We must not, however, let the tendency toward self-organization become the dominant criterion.

Priority of Future Policies

What policies should be given priority in the year immediately ahead if we are to build an effective organization? We have received from the membership of A.C.R.L. an expression of their opinion on this question.

The encouragement of publications

directly and chiefly concerning the college and university libraries, and the stimulation of research studies on the functions of college and university libraries, were voted by the membership as being of first and second importance in the ten fields of professional activity. Experimentation, research, and publication cannot be carried on to any considerable extent by the executive secretary until the office becomes well-established and the staff considerably expanded. However, he should be familiar with the movements now taking place in the social sciences, sciences, and humanities. He should also be familiar with the particular problems and needs in the field of librarianship, and should be in a position to suggest, encourage, coordinate, and direct substantial studies and projects. The possibility of securing grants for fellowships that would permit librarians to take the time necessary for study, research, and writing should be pursued.

There is strong and apparently justified feeling that at the outset of our program first consideration should be given to the needs of the small college, teachers college, junior college, agricultural libraries, engineering libraries, and the reference departments of the smaller public libraries. The interests of the larger university and reference libraries are being looked after, to a far greater extent, by special organizations concerned particularly with research functions and activities. These smaller libraries, generally with small staffs, limited resources, and greater need for outside help, constitute the bulk of potential membership in the A.C.R.L. They are concerned primarily with general education and the needs of undergraduate students—the large university libraries also are faced with the problem of providing better service for their thousands of undergraduate students—and assistance with this problem, which

involves staff, books, support, teaching methods, and practically every phase of librarianship, probably should be a primary objective of the A.C.R.L. program. This is the area in which we could make our significant contribution to the first, second, and third of the "Four Year Goals."

Development of relations with educational associations in the field of higher education, and development of contacts with college presidents, library committees, and professors attained a strong third place in the ten activities of A.C.R.L. as rated by the membership. The executive secretary should maintain close contact with the many associations at work on college and university problems to assure awareness of the place of the library in educational programs. Some of these groups which are particularly important to the various sections are the Association of American Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges, New England Association of Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges, American Association of Junior Colleges, Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities, American Association of Universities, American Council on Education, American Council of Learned Societies, American Association of Teachers Colleges, American Society for Engineering Education, and the various national library associations.

Must Support Official Organ

As the official organ of A.C.R.L., *College and Research Libraries* is preferred, by an overwhelming majority, instead of the *A. L. A. Bulletin* as a part of the membership fee. The journal has continued to be a medium for expression and communication of the best thought in the library world, and its success has been due primarily to the energy and enthusiasm of a group of volunteer workers. It should receive more general support in its development

as a scholarly and professional journal. Eventually the executive secretary and the Headquarters office may be in a position to edit the journal if the present arrangement becomes too much of a burden for the volunteer editors.

The ultimate values of significant state, regional, and national conferences in increasing membership and encouraging individual professional growth have not been attained. Numerous comments have been recorded that too often state and regional associations are maintained for and by the public library group, and the minority groups of college and special libraries are not considered a functioning part of the state association. While the desirability of arranging for the executive secretary to attend as many state and regional meetings as possible was rated tenth on the list of activities, it does appear that this activity may well be one of the key factors in building a strong organization, maintaining enthusiasm and interest, and increasing the membership.

Use of Sectional Directors

The divisional organization with sections within the division has now resulted in an A.C.R.L., with seven sections, which cannot run of its own accord. The governing body is the board of directors, composed of a president, a vice president (president-elect), retiring president, treasurer, three directors-at-large, seven directors from the respective sections, and the executive secretary and the chairman of each section as ex-officio members. All elective members serve three years on the board, and terms of directors overlap to insure a certain continuity of policy. The size of the board and the infrequency of meetings slow down the pace of its work. The elective members cannot give the time needed to carry on the essential routine ad-

ministrative activities, and at the same time supply the imagination and initiative called for in planning the work of the association.

An executive secretary to manage, under direction of the president and board of directors, the continuing program of activities of the association, should enable the board to concentrate on planning. The continuity of leadership by the executive secretary should stimulate, guide, and integrate, but not substitute for the voluntary services of individuals, committees, and sections. The 1941 recommendation that more use be made of the sectional directors remains valid.

The principle of autonomy in the management of the affairs of the A.C.R.L. has been established and recognized. However, the importance of maximum and effective coordination with the work of the A.L.A. as a whole has not been diminished. There are special interests in college and reference libraries, but there are also many common problems of librarianship which we should face shoulder to shoulder with all other librarians. The Public Library Service Demonstration Bill, for example, should have our whole-hearted support. In the recent statement of preferences by the A.C.R.L. membership, significant numbers indicated that both the A.C.R.L. and the A.L.A.

should function in each of the ten described areas.

Our program for the current year cannot be separated from the work of the A.L.A. Membership in the A.C.R.L. requires membership in A.L.A. Education and training for librarianship and recruiting are major projects in the A.L.A. program. These are problems which have received, are receiving, and must continue to receive emphasis and attention. The problem of financial needs we always have with us. Our association and our membership will continue to make distinctive contributions to the basic and fundamental problems of librarianship which are shared by all types and kinds of libraries.

For the years ahead our special problems and needs as recognized and stated in the cardinal policies of the association must be vigorously attacked. These special interests and problems developed the group consciousness which expressed itself in the organization of the A.C.R.L. for mutual improvement and the improvements of standards and service to the public. If our organization is to justify its existence it must meet these needs. If it meets them, the problems of membership, recruiting, and finances would become of minor importance.

Fellowships at Western Reserve

Western Reserve University School of Library Science will offer for the academic year 1948-49 eight half-tuition fellowships. Graduates of approved colleges who have a better than usual academic record are encouraged to apply. These working programs should appeal to persons who desire to work closely with individual instructors in specific subject fields. For example, several students will be

assigned to the fields of cataloging and classification, to reference work, and to school and children's library service. Service of the individual student will not exceed ten hours of work a week for one semester in return for a half-tuition credit throughout the year. Inquiries should be addressed to Thirza E. Grant, dean, School of Library Science, Western Reserve University, Cleveland 6, Ohio.