To: ACRL Board of Directors
From: Erika Linke, ACRL President
Subject: Report on ACRL Value of Academic Libraries Research Meeting held Chicago, July 8-9, 2009
Date: July 13, 2009

Background:
The ACRL Board has been discussing how it can best help its members demonstrate the value/ROI of academic libraries to the academy. ACRL is interested in developing research that will generate quantitative and qualitative data that will support advocacy efforts for libraries with decision-makers and funders in higher education.

On Wednesday July 8 - Thursday July 9, at the direction of the ACRL Executive Committee, ACRL convened an invitational meeting to continue the conversation started at Spring Executive about the need to develop research-based evidence on the value of academic libraries (See ACRL SE09 Doc 4.0, memo from John Lehner, re: Return on Investment in Academic Libraries Research). For this meeting, a key outcome was to come to a shared understanding of ACRL’s role in helping academic libraries demonstrate their value, including methods and resources needed to advance that role.

Attendees
Meeting attendees, invited because of their work in the area of return on investment and/or value of academic libraries, were:
- Keith Curry Lance, Consultant, retired from Colorado State Library
- Bruce Kingma, Syracuse Univ.
- Brinley Franklin, Univ. of Connecticut
- Kate Marek, Dominican University
- Karen Brown, Dominican University
- Erika Linke, ACRL President, Carnegie Mellon University
- Lori Goetsch, ACRL Vice-President, Kansas State
- John Lehner, ACRL Board, University of Houston
- Mary Jane Petrowski, ACRL Associate Director
- Mary Ellen Davis, ACRL Executive Director
- Kathryn Deiss, ACRL Content Strategist and facilitator for this meeting
- Kara Malenfant, ACRL Scholarly Communications Specialist and facilitator for this meeting.

Audiences
The meeting attendees identified multiple audiences that are stakeholders in the library, e.g., faculty, students, administrators, donors, trustees, alumni, accreditors, community, etc. However, recognizing that different audiences are interested in different types of data the meeting
participants recommend that the primary audience for this initial research should be college, community college, and university administrators, e.g., deans, provosts, etc.

**Research focus**
The group agreed that the primary question that needs to be answered is how does the library advance the mission of the institution and contribute to student success. There are dozens of questions that could address the value of the academic and research libraries. The participants felt that the most important questions to start with were:

1. How does the library factor into the decision to attend the school? Does it bring in more students (more tuition)?
2. How does the library factor into retention of students (student achievement/student success)?
3. How does the library increase the quality of students? (improve ranking in *US News*, future alumni as donors)
4. How does the library increase the amount of research funding?
5. What data can be collected to inform smart decisions about academic libraries going forward?

Determining the answers to these questions is a long term direction and multi-year effort to which ACRL would need to decide to commit significant resources. To accomplish such lines of inquiry would require research designed using a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods. It is likely that multiple projects would be needed to answer these questions. With ARL and others ACRL would frame this as a collaborative multi-pronged, multi-year effort to potential funders.

Before doing any original research an analysis of research already done along with the identification of existing relevant data sets would inform next steps. What do we know about academic libraries and how they are demonstrating their value? (For an example, see *The Power of Reading*, Stephen Krashen.

At the same time, members need tools now, a road map to help libraries show, in the language of their administrators, what they are already doing to align with the parent institution’s mission and strategic plan.

**Recommendations:**
1. ACRL should continue to devote energy and resources toward research and tools which help librarians demonstrate the value of academic libraries. This directly ties to ACRL’s strategic plan and 6 priorities for the next 5 years.
2. The Board should discuss with its Assessment and Research Coordinating Committees their potential roles in developing an RFP for an analysis/state of current research report on this topic.
3. By September 1 a group, to be determined, will develop an RFP for a review of literature/meta analysis/state of current research report.
4. The Board should authorize funding up to $50,000 so that a research team can carry out the comprehensive literature review/meta analysis/state of current research report.
5. ACRL should issue a call for project leaders (committees, sabbatical project, program officer model?) to develop a toolkit with basic content up by Midwinter 2010. The Board group and staff can provide background from the meeting on suggested content.
6. A small group of the Board – comprised of Erika Linke, Lori Goetsch, John Lehner and Lisa Hinchliffe – will continue to provide oversight for this project.
7. ACRL should remain engaged with the meeting participants, relying on them as advisors.
8. ACRL should explore collaborations on a larger research project and potential grant application with other associations.

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** That the ACRL Board of Directors review the recommendations listed above in preparation for the 2009 Fall Strategic Planning and Orientation Session, noting that funding as requested in Recommendation #4 has been included in the FY2010 draft budget.
STRATEGIC GOAL AREA SUPPORTED: Please add additional sheets as needed to explain. (Select the goal area that will be affected most by this action.)

Strategic Area: Higher Education and Research

☐ Goal Area: Learning
   ACRL and its members are recognized as collaborative leaders and partners in ensuring that students graduate with lifelong learning skills, improving techniques for assessing learning outcomes, and in creating environments for discovery.

☐ Goal Area: Scholarship
   ACRL and its members are recognized as authorities on knowledge management; and the creation, collection, preservation, access, and exchange of information.

☐ Goal Area: Advocacy
   ACRL has greater influence on the higher education and research environment.

Strategic Area: The Profession

☐ Goal Area: Continuous Learning
   ACRL provides continuous learning opportunities enabling members to strengthen their effectiveness and achieve recognition as valued contributors to their academic and research communities.

☐ Goal Area: Leadership
   ACRL members achieve recognition as leaders and advocates for academic and research libraries.

☐ Goal Area: Information Technology
   Academic and research librarians are leaders in using information and academic technologies to create and manage information resources and to deliver library and information services.

Strategic Area: The Association

☐ Goal Area: Membership
   ACRL’s membership growth builds on retaining core membership while recruiting from new and diverse communities.

☐ Goal Area: Sustainability
   ACRL will have the fiscal resources, staff expertise, and organizational structure to advance the association’s strategic plan.

FISCAL AND STAFFING IMPACT:

MOTION: ☐ Above recommendation moved ☐ No motion made ☐ Motion revised (see motion form)

ACTION TAKEN: ☐ Motion Approved ☐ Motion Defeated ☐ Other: ___________________