**Meeting the Needs and Strengthening Membership Opportunities of Community and Junior College Librarians: Recommendations from the Implementation Task Force** [DRAFT]

*Sponsored by: Community and Junior College Libraries Section of the Association for College and Research Libraries*

**Introduction and Overview**

In the spring of 2017, the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) acknowledged the membership concerns of those leading its Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS) and contracted with the consulting firm McKinley Advisors to explore membership concerns and barriers. The effort produced a study report in September of 2017, *Community College Research Study: Findings and Recommendations*. Anecdotally, it was perceived that too few librarians from community and junior colleges were able to join ACRL’s CJCLS and that, even with membership, this sector was not represented strongly enough in the ongoing membership activities of the parent organization.

The key findings of the study are represented here (#, p. 4):

* While the majority of community college librarian respondents indicated satisfaction with membership, ACRL falls below average on all three key performance indicators, including: satisfaction, value to cost and likelihood to recommend membership to a peer.
* The top reasons to join ACRL are: (1) to stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field; (2) to access ACRL publications and news; and (3) to support the profession and the community.
* Almost a quarter of member respondents would perceive greater value if ACRL focused more on community college librarians. This is higher than the more traditional responses of cost reductions and having more time to participate, which rounded out the top three responses to how ACRL could offer more value.
* Most respondents agree that they are proud to be members and that ACRL effectively communicates its value to the field. However, most community college librarians agree that ACRL is not the first place they turn for information and resources, that they do not feel valued by ACRL, and that ACRL programs, products, services, and membership are not reasonably priced. This suggests that ACRL should make a concerted effort to communicate and deliver value to this segment.
* For lapsed and nonmembers, the major barriers to membership are financial and a general lack of awareness/ perceived value of ACRL member benefits. This illustrates the need for ACRL to consistently communicate the value of membership and consider cost effective ways to involve this segment.
* Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they pay for membership entirely out-of-pocket, making it difficult for members to justify additional expenses such as meetings and education.
* Community college librarians turn to several sources for professional support. With the absence of one primary resource for this population, there is an opportunity for ACRL to position itself as THE professional home for community college librarians.
* With regards to professional development, community college librarians often depend on their network for informal learning and are primarily motivated by increasing job competencies and staying up-to-date on trends. Less than half of respondents indicated professional advancement as a motivating factor for engaging in professional development.

The recommendations of the study include (#, p 45.):

**Step 1: Deliver on the value proposition:** ACRL’s key performance indicators demonstrate an opportunity to strengthen the perceived value of membership and overall satisfaction. Further, with a Net Promoter Score of -18, ACRL is at risk of having negative word of mouth affect its membership recruitment efforts. As such, McKinley recommends ACRL begin by shoring up gaps in its value proposition statement before engaging in targeted recruitment efforts with this audience.

**Step 2: Develop a targeted membership marketing strategy:** ACRL should develop a targeted recruitment plan based off the unique needs and preferences of this population. To begin, ACRL may consider devoting increased membership marketing efforts in urban and suburban areas given their favorable perceptions and satisfaction with the association.

**Step 3: Explore segmented offerings and communications:** Survey research demonstrated that there are unique perceptions and preferences within community college librarians based on job role, institution setting and FTE. Over time, ACRL may consider getting more sophisticated in its approach using segmented messaging that resonates with unique segments within the community college librarian population.

Responding to the McKinley study in November of 2017, the Community College Engagement Task Force of cited four primary recommendations to be handled independently by CJCLS. They included (Julia e-mail):

* Regarding *College and Research Library News*: Having a quarterly article about community college work. [#5 below]
* Engage member champions.  Having people be more active in their reach out to new members, making sure they are aware of virtual opportunities. [#10 below]
* Strengthen the visibility of community colleges through more awareness of how much they do plus more visibility on committees in ACRL. [#4 below]
* Name Change.  This one is a little hard to see if it will work, but comments were made about the phrase junior college and how it's rather antiquated.  The suggestion was made the change the name. [#1 below; in part, maybe]

The full recommendations of the Community College Engagement Task Force include:

1. ACRL creates a membership marketing plan targeted to CJCLs
2. CJCLS adopts a value proposition statement and plan targeting community college librarians [update Mission]
3. ACRL revisits organizational values – [ACRL Plan for excellence improved inclusive of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion]
4. ACRL ensures CJCLs’ representation on ACRL committees
5. ACRL highlights CJCLs in news and member profiles
6. ACRL strengthens visibility of CJCLs via ACRL web sites and publications
7. ACRL offers CJCL track at ACRL biennial conferences
8. ACRL offers CJCL track at ALA Annual conferences
9. ACRL/ALA transition online engagement opportunities [improve upon listserv option]
10. ACRL engage [CJCL] member champions
11. ACRL offers support to CJCLs for Chapter and local meetups
12. ACRL reviews pricing barriers
13. ACRL improve e-learning website for discoverability by audience and date

**Current progress on recommendations**

At the 2019 Midwinter Conference of the American Library Association, CJCLS Chair charged an Implementation Task Force (ITF) to move forward with the information provided in the recommendations from McKinley study and the CJCLS Community College Engagement Task Force. The charge for the task force included:

* Determine which of the recommendations ACRL has addressed and which it has yet to address;
* Determine what recommendations the CJCLS has addressed and which it has yet to address;
* Determine which CJCLS committee should be responsible for following up on a specific recommendation;
* Suggest specific actions for CJCLS committees, based on the recommendations, including the Executive Committee, to undertake; and
* Develop a checklist for the CJCLS executive committee to track progress toward satisfying the recommendations.

In pursuing its charge, the ITF conducted an environmental scan during the Spring of 2019, reviewing the McKinley Report and CJCLS e-mail distribution list for indications of potential growth or changes relevant for the Section. Areas that need continued attention include:

* Section mission statement as compared to the value proposition statements offered in the report
* Concerns related to marketing strategies of the Section (including targets individuals, org. members, solo, virtual only members and part-time librarians)
* Concerns related to communication strategies of the section (including constant promotion of activities, publications (lists? LibGuide for CJCLs?), and participation opportunities, both upward through ALA and via own improved Section web site, C&RL News column?)
* Concerns related to expansion of programming opportunities (including highlighting sector best practices, highlighting CJCLs work with the Framework, providing a forum for sharing of practice innovations (webinars), development of regularized online discussion forum (hot topics?), development of a scholarly mentoring offering from the Section, development of a program/unit to address partnerships for strengthening CJCLs, e.g. sister libraries, joint use facilities, peer consulting for best practices, reviewing/planning)
* Concerns related to networking opportunities for CJCLs-ers (including webinars, less expensive socials at conferences instead of dinners)
* Concerns related to CJCLs participation at the ACRL and ALA exec. levels and at conferences (including seeding ACRL leadership with CJCLs representation, knowing/ regularly publicizing leadership and program and prof. dev. committee’s participation calendars and procedures

Beyond the concerns listed in this latest environmental scan, the ITF also did an analysis of CJCLS participation at the most recent ACRL Biennial and ALA Annual conferences.

For the 2019 ACRL Biennial:

1. Three community college librarians were on the conference planning committee.
2. Five out of 88 programs were either about CJCLs or authored by CJLS librarians.
3. No conference tracks were specifically directed at CJCLs’ concerns.

For the 2019 ALA Annual Conference:

1. From a report provided for "**ALA Offices, Affils., & RTs**"

One UG college that offers Assoc. degrees – New York City College of Technology – subject: *diversity in librarian recruitment*.

1. From a report provided for "**Divisions – Accepted**"

20 ACRL programs ran – 0 of those were from CCs

SUBJECTS:

Safe Spaces / Mental Health, Advocacy in librarianship, Citizen Science, Content neutrality, Librarians as researchers, Research from Global South, Distant lib. Orientations, Mental health & tenure, Fair Use, Source evaluation, Accessibility in online design, Diversity in Leadership, Diversity in dig. colls., Advocacy, Outreach, Coll. Dev. (2), Academic Librarianship / identity, Inclusion in services (2)

1. From a report provided for ***"Divisions - all submissions"***

81 ACRL-related submissions – 6 were CC submissions

20 ACRL programs ran – 0 CC programs ran

From publications in *College and Research Libraries News*, of the estimated 77 “spots” for articles, only 6 (less than 10%) were about CJCLs or authored by CJLS librarians.

Out of the past fifty posting to the ACRL “Member of the Week” listing only two community college librarians were featured. [Accessed March 2020]

Scorecard for Recommendations on Progress

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rec.# | Category / Explanation |  | 0\* | 1\* | 2\* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1 | ACRL marketing plan targeting CJCLs? |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Value proposition [mission] finalized? |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | ACRL org. Values include CJCLs? [Plan for Excellence & EDI] |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | CJCL representation in ACRL leadership? |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | Highlighting CJCLs in news and member profiles? |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | Visibility in websites and ACRL publications improved? |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | Curriculum track in ACRL conference established? |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | CJCL tracks in ALA conference established/improved? |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | Online engagement of CJCLs improved? |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | CJCLs Champions [mentors] program established? |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | ACRL Chapters inclusive of CJCLs? |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | Pricing barriers reduced? |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | ACRL web-based online learning is more discoverable? |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | CJCLs adoption of ACRL Framework on IL? |  |  |  |  |
|  | Sub-totals |  |  |  |  |
|  | Total Score |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | \* 0 = no action, 1 = in process/needs work, 2 = completed |  |  |  |  |

Checklist of CJCLS & ACRL Actions, 2020 Forward

1. ACRL should complete and deliver a concrete marketing plan regarding CJCLs by Annual 2021.
2. CJCLS should finalize new mission statement by Midwinter 2021.
3. ACRL should share report regarding new initiatives on CJCL concerns included in the *ACRL Plan for Excellence.*
4. ACRL should establish a plan CJCL representation in all committees and activities in parity with the CJCL : non-CJCL membership ratio by Annual 2021.
5. ACRL should engage editorial library field volunteer consultants to scout CJCL related participation for publication…
6. and member profiling efforts by Midwinter 2021.
7. ACRL should establish CJCL participation, tracking, and spotlighting thereof in regards to ALA…
8. and ACRL conference activities by Annual 2021.
9. CJCLS should establish improved virtual opportunities for CJCLs professional participation and networking.
10. ACRL(?)/CJCLS should establish member champion effort by Midwinter 2021.
11. ACRL(?)/CJCLS should develop a plan to extend member networking opportunities with Chapters by Annual 2021.
12. ACRL should propose an equable membership dues scale by Annual 2021.
13. ACRL(?)/CJCLS should develop and deploy online learning and networking opportunities as trends indicate. [ongoing]
14. CJCLS should establish a permanent body that addresses productive CJCLs participation in and use of the ACRL IL Framework [others?] by Midwinter 2021.

**Implementation Task Force Members**

[List here]