

ACRL B&F Virtual Vote Doc 1.0

Voting period: 10/31/2022–11/6/2022

Association of College & Research Libraries
ALA/ACRL American Library Association
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Board of Directors Action Form

To: ACRL Budget & Finance Committee/ACRL Board of Directors

Subject: FY23 Student Membership Dues

Submitted by: Mary Jane Petrowski, ACRL Associate Director

Date submitted: October 14, 2022

Background

In June 2017 the ACRL Board of Directors approved reducing ACRL student membership dues by 87.8% from \$41 to \$5 effective September 1, 2017, for a three-year period (September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2020). (See Doc 3.0 for additional background.) Due to an oversight, the student dues rate was not included in the 2023 dues recommendations prepared for the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee, but the FY23 budget (to be approved by the Board) assumes student membership rate remains unchanged.

Doc 2.0 provides a brief assessment of the impact of discounting student dues since FY18. Key findings include:

- As of May 2022, ACRL student membership has increased 28.2% (+177) over August 2017 and now stands at 804 which is 10.1% of all ACRL personal members.
- Student membership is the only personal dues type to show an increase since FY17. All other personal dues categories (regular, retired, non-salaried, support staff, international) declined over the five-year period.
- Student retention was on the upswing before the COVID pandemic occurred.
- More student members who drop their ACRL membership are keeping their ALA membership which benefits the association.
- ACRL student dues are the lowest of all ALA divisions.

Stakeholders

The ACRL Budget and Finance Committee is being asked to consider maintaining the ACRL student membership dues at \$5 for FY23.

Electronic submission is preferred for all Board actions. If electronic submission of the entire document is not possible, please send the Action Form to ACRL Program Officer Allison Payne electronically at apayne@ala.org and the remainder in hard copy.

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Fiscal and Staffing Impact

There is no staffing impact, but we expect student membership to increase 1.54% over FY22 since it is a conference year.

Budget & Finance Action Recommendation

That the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee approves the recommendation to the ACRL Board of Directors for a student dues rate of \$5 for FY23.

Board Action Recommended

That the ACRL Board of Directors approves the recommendation from the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee for a student dues rate of \$5 for FY23.

Strategic Goal Area Supported

Please see the [ACRL Strategic Plan](#), and select from the drop-down the goal area that will be affected most by this action.

☐ **Value of Academic Libraries**

Goal: Academic libraries demonstrate alignment with and impact on institutional outcomes.

☐ **Student Learning**

Goal: Advance innovative practices and environments that transform student learning.

☐ **Research and Scholarly Environment**

Goal: Librarians accelerate the transition to more open and equitable systems of scholarship.

☐ **New Roles and Changing Landscapes**

Goal: Academic and research library workforce effectively navigates change in higher education environments.

☐ **Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**

Goal: TBD

☒ **Enabling Programs and Services**

ACRL programs, services, and publications that target education, advocacy, and member engagement.

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FY23 Update on ACRL Student Membership

Background

In June 2017 the ACRL Board of Directors approved reducing ACRL student membership dues by 87.8% from \$41 to \$5 effective September 1, 2017, for a three-year period (September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2020). After the three-year pilot period, the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee had planned to assess the impact of the change and decide whether to continue to offer discounted student dues as a loss leader. The ALA Membership Office has expressed interest in viewing membership as a loss leader and beginning to experiment with membership discounts in an effort to increase membership.

As the table below shows, the only ACRL personal membership category to post an increase since 2017 is student membership.

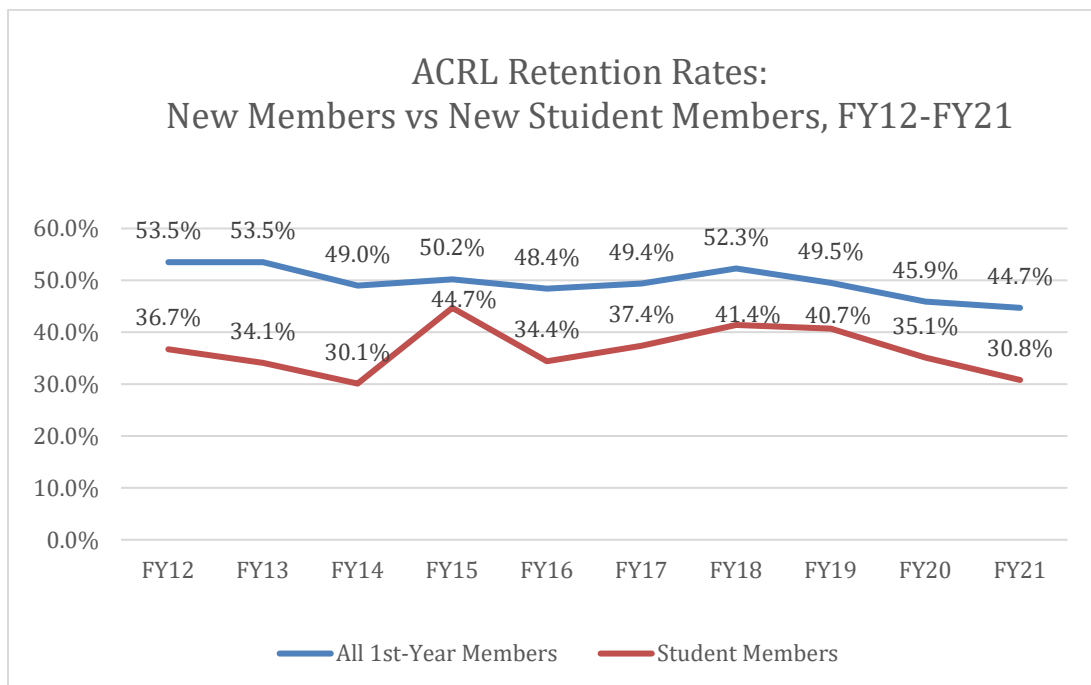
ACRL Membership Type	FY17	FY21	% Change
International	251	165	-34.3%
Non-Salaried	349	295	-15.5%
Regular	7737	6017	-22.2%
Retired	350	281	-19.7%
Support Staff	155	87	-43.9%
Students	627	956	52.5%

As of May 2022, ACRL student membership has increased 28.2% (+177) over August 2017 and now stands at 804 which is 10.1% of all ACRL personal members. Student membership was approaching FY12 levels (when library schools were providing free memberships to their students) before the COVID pandemic struck.

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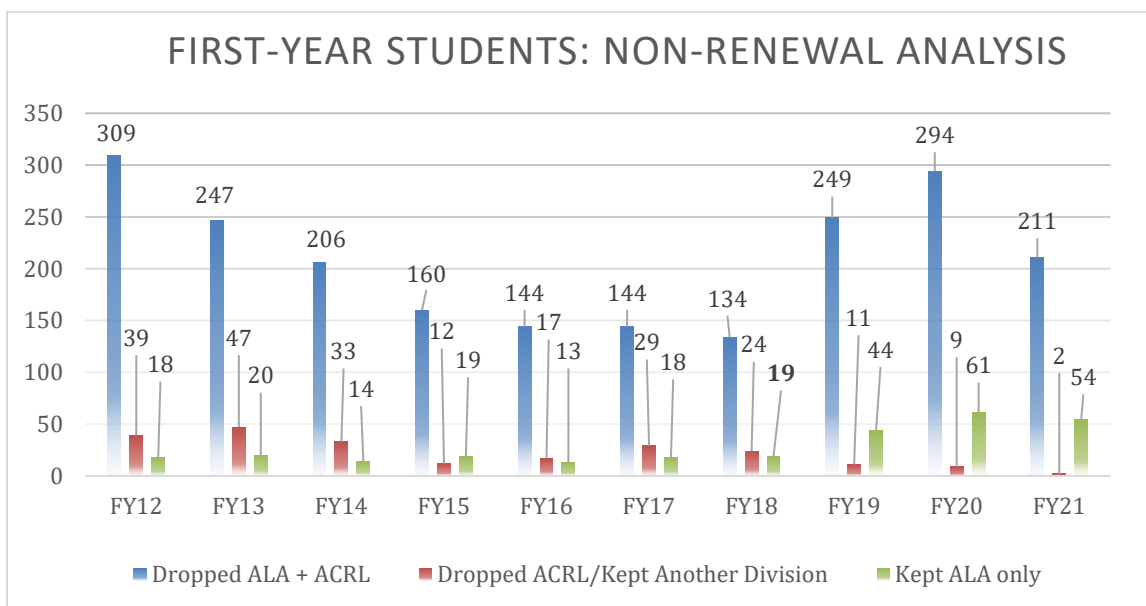
More importantly, the retention rate for student members was on the upswing prior to the COVID pandemic in 2020. We do not yet have 2022 membership data for June-August needed to check renewals, so it remains to be seen if the student renewal rate is rebounding. Although the overall retention rate for first-time ACRL members has decreased 8.8% since 2012, declining from 53.5% to 44.7%, student membership renewals have declined only 5.9% over the same period.



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Further analysis shows that since FY12 the number of first-year students who dropped both ACRL and ALA has declined by 31.7% while the number of students who maintain membership in ALA but drop their ACRL membership has more than doubled.



The chart below compares ACRL student membership and membership dues with other ALA divisions. The \$5 dues level is clearly an attractive price point.

Division	Student Members	FY23 Dues
ACRL	956	\$5
AASL	735	\$40
ALSC	388	\$20
CORE	185	\$30
PLA	514	\$36
RUSA	230	\$25
YALSA	440	\$27

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To: ACRL Board of Directors
Subject: Student membership dues
Submitted by: John Lehner, ACRL Budget & Finance Committee Chair
Date submitted: June 25, 2017

BACKGROUND:

During the past year the ACRL Budget and Finance Committee has considered the feasibility of reducing and/or eliminating student membership dues. Many other professional associations have embraced “freemium” membership models for students with openness as a key goal. By lowering the barrier to access to its community, many associations seek to realize an increase in the perspectives, ideas, and knowledge sharing. By becoming more open, associations aim to become more inclusive.

Library school students first began paying ACRL membership dues in 1981. For twenty-four years (1981-2005), ACRL student members paid the same dues as regular members. During this time, student membership was limited to two years and required at least half-time enrollment in a library science program. In 2006 ACRL student membership was reduced by 23% (\$10) and is currently 35% (\$22) lower than regular membership dues.

Note: Eight of ALA’s eleven divisions (ALCTS, ALSC, ASCLA, LLAMA, LITA, RUSA, United for Libraries, YASA) have student dues of \$15-25. The other three divisions (AASL, ACRL, and PLA) have dues of \$32-\$41) with ACRL having the highest student dues of \$41.

During the past 17 years, student membership as a percentage of ACRL personal membership has increased from a low of 4.45% (470) in 2000 to a high of 11.3% (1,330) in 2011. Students currently comprise 6.5% (658) of ACRL personal members. This drop mirrors the decrease in library school enrollments which declined 23.7% between 2009-2015.

Appendix A provides financial models and impact projections for discounted dues ranging from 50%-100% as well as the assumptions for the models.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: That the ACRL Board of Directors discuss and take action on the Budget & Finance Committee’s recommendation for student member dues rates in FY18 as detailed in the motion below.

Motion: That the Board of Directors approve a student membership dues rate of \$xx.

IF PERTINENT: Have other stakeholders been consulted? If so, please identify stakeholders and their comments about this action.

Ninety-two percent of ACRL student members who responded to surveys in 2016 reported paying their own membership dues and 71% pay their own conference registration fees. In FY16 twenty-four percent (174) of the first-year members who were students did not renew and, according to those who responded to recent surveys, the main reason was that membership dues were considered too high for they received in return.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA SUPPORTED: Please add additional sheets as needed to explain. (Select the goal area that will be affected most by this action.)

☐ **Value of Academic Libraries**

Goal: Academic libraries demonstrate alignment with and impact on institutional outcomes.

☐ **Student Learning**

Goal: Librarians transform student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations.

☐ **Research and Scholarly Environment**

Goal: Librarians accelerate the transition to a more open system of scholarship.

☒ **Enabling Programs and Services**

ACRL programs ,services, and publications that target education, advocacy, and member engagement.

FISCAL AND STAFFING IMPACT:

The financial impact and impact on membership are described in Appendix A.

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

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

Appendix A

Financial Impact Models for Free/Discounted ACRL Student Membership Dues

				Cumulative Impact 2018-2022 Assumes an additional 174 student members are retained from 2018-2022				
Regular Member Dues Discount %	Student Member Dues Discounted as a % of Regular Member Dues	Discount as a % of Current Student Dues	\$ Amount of Reduction in Current Student Dues	Revenue in Y1	Revenue in Y2	Revenue in Y3	Revenue in Y4	Revenue in Y5
50%	\$31.50	23.1%	\$9.50	\$20,727	\$41,454	\$62,181	\$82,908	\$103,635
Potential Lost Revenue				\$6,251	\$12,502	\$18,753	\$25,004	\$31,255
66%	\$21.42	47.7%	\$19.58	\$14,094	\$28,189	\$42,283	\$56,377	\$70,472
Potential Lost Revenue				\$12,884	\$25,767	\$38,651	\$51,535	\$64,420
75%	\$15.75	61.5%	\$25.25	\$10,364	\$20,727	\$31,091	\$41,454	\$51,818
Potential Lost Revenue				\$16,615	\$33,229	\$49,844	\$66,458	\$83,073
80%	\$12.60	69.2%	\$28.40	\$8,291	\$16,582	\$24,873	\$33,164	\$41,455
Potential Lost Revenue				\$18,687	\$37,374	\$56,062	\$74,749	\$93,436
100%	\$41.00	100%	\$41.00	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
Potential Lost revenue				\$26,978	\$53,956	\$80,934	\$107,912	\$134,890

The discounted student member dues rate is calculated using the FY17 ACRL regular membership dues rate of \$63 and for the purposes of this projection assumes no increase in regular member dues for the next five years. The dollar value of the discounted student membership dues is also shown relative to the current student membership dues rate using the FY17 student member dues rate of \$41 minus the dollar amount of the discount. For example, if the student dues rate is based on a 50% discount off the ACRL regular dues of \$63, the student rate would be \$31.50. However, “lost” revenue would only be \$9.50 (\$41.00 – \$31.50). Such a discount would lower the current student dues by 23.1% (a reduction of \$9.50 from what students currently pay). For the purposes of projections, a student membership of 658 is assumed (based on the May 2017 membership report).

As the charts below illustrate, the elimination of student dues has the potential to trigger a compounding effect whereby students who would normally fall away are retained year-over-year. With all other factors remaining equal, retaining 174 additional students year-over-year could restore ACRL membership to levels not seen since 2007. However, increased numbers does not mean increased revenues. If this approach is taken it would be important to put in place communication and possibly incentives to induce students to convert their free membership to a paid membership upon graduation and finding employment.

Projected Impact of Eliminating Student Dues on ACRL Membership

Fiscal Year	Average # of New Members	# of New Student Members	Projected # of New Student Members Retained with Free Membership	Projected impact on total ACRL Membership 5 Years Forward				
				% increase over FY16 in FY18	% increase over FY16 in 2019	% increase over FY16 in FY20	% increase over FY16 in FY21	% Increase over FY16 in FY22
FY18	1,000	485	174	1.6%				
FY19	1,000	485	384		3.6%			
FY20	1,000	485	522			4.9%		
FY21	1,000	485	696				6.5%	
FY22	1,000	485	870					8.2%

These projections are based on the following assumptions:

- Membership increases are based on FY16 membership of 10,592 (a non-conference year)
- Student members will continue to constitute 48.5% of all new ACRL members;
- New members continue to join ACRL at the rate of at least 1,000 a year. This number is the 22-year average of ACRL new member acquisition.
- Historically, at least 24% of student members drop their ACRL membership after their first year. It is this group of members we might reasonably expect to retain with free student memberships. These projections use the FY16 loss rate (174 new student members) to calculate the membership growth.
- That free membership will help to retain 100% of the student members who drop their ACRL membership for the full 5 years of eligibility.

- ALA will continue to limit ACRL student membership to 5 years and that students will continue to be ACRL members as long as ACRL membership is free.
- Student members will be willing to pay ALA student membership dues (currently \$36).

Fiscal Year	Average # of New Members	# of New Student Members	Projected # of Student Members Retained with Free Membership	Projected Impact on ACRL Membership Over the Next 5 Years				
				1.6% increase in FY18 over May 2017 membership of 10,766	3.6% increase over FY17 in FY19	4.9% increase over FY17 in FY20	6.5% increase over FY17 in FY21	8.2% Increase over FY17 in FY22
FY18	1,000	485	174	10,938				
FY19	1,000	485	384		11,322			
FY20	1,000	485	522			11,844		
FY21	1,000	485	696				12,540	
FY22	1,000	485	870					13,410