

# Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)



## Community College Research Study Findings and Recommendations

Prepared by  
McKinley Advisors

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## Introduction and Methodology

The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) is considering ways to expand the reach and impact of membership and is investigating whether it can better serve and recruit librarians at community colleges. The Association retained McKinley Advisors (McKinley) to conduct research to help the Association better understand community college librarians, what barriers may exist that prevent this group from becoming members, and how the Association can better meet the needs of this audience in the future. The data and insights gathered through this research effort will be utilized to set an appropriate path forward as it relates to community college librarians.

As a first step in its research process, McKinley deployed an electronic survey from April 13, 2017 through May 4, 2017 to 2,557 contacts provided by ACRL. The email campaign yielded 408 responses and a response rate of 16%. McKinley also utilized a referral link which garnered an additional 383 responses, bringing the count to 791 total responses for the survey. The survey was targeted specifically at community college librarians. Those respondents who did not identify as a community college librarian were excluded from the analysis. The appendix on page 41 provides further information on respondent demographics.

As a next step, McKinley conducted 20 telephone interviews with community college librarians to gather critical insights and perspectives as they relate to this audience. The interview participants included both members and nonmembers and represented a diverse cross-section of community college librarians.

Analysis of the survey results focused on aggregate data, as well as cross-tabulated findings based on the following filters:

- FTE
- Institution setting
- Membership status
- Position
- Residential status
- Years in the profession

The following report summarizes key findings from the survey and telephone interviews and presents implications and recommendations based on the research. Select questions have been compared to the results from the 2015 ACRL membership survey. The 2015 survey was distributed to all members, not just community college librarians. While comparing the 2015 results with the results of this research effort can be helpful in comparing community college librarians to all ACRL segments, caution must be used in evaluating the comparisons as differences between the groups may be influenced by the different time periods in which the research efforts were conducted.

## Key Findings

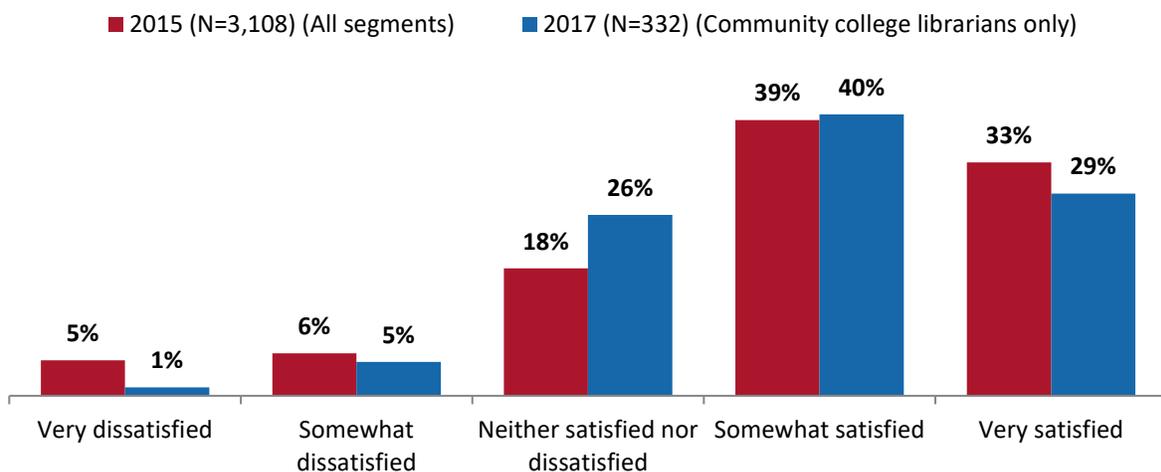
- While the majority of community college librarian respondents indicated satisfaction with membership, ACRL falls below average on all three key performance indicators, including: satisfaction, value to cost and likelihood to recommend membership to a peer.
- The top reasons to join ACRL are: (1) to 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.

## Member Satisfaction

### SATISFACTION

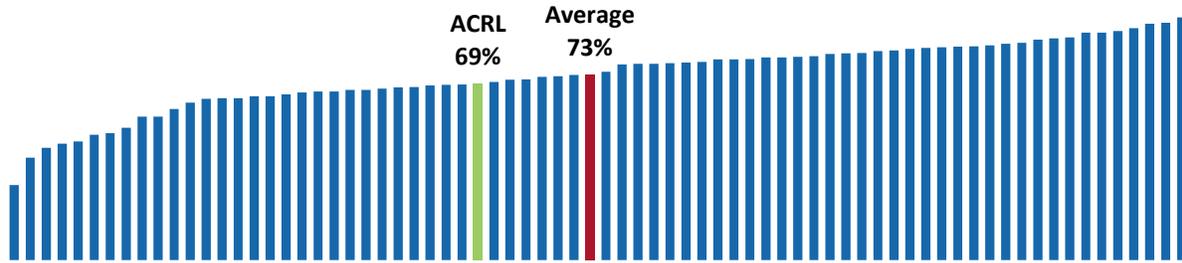
Overall, community college librarians are relatively satisfied with their ACRL membership. Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated they are either “Somewhat” (40%) or “Very” (29%) satisfied with their membership in ACRL. Twenty-six percent said they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied while only 6% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with membership. The satisfaction of the community college librarians segment is similar to the satisfaction of all member segments when the results of this research effort are compared to the research effort commissioned by ACRL in 2015.

#### Overall, how satisfied are you with your ACRL membership?



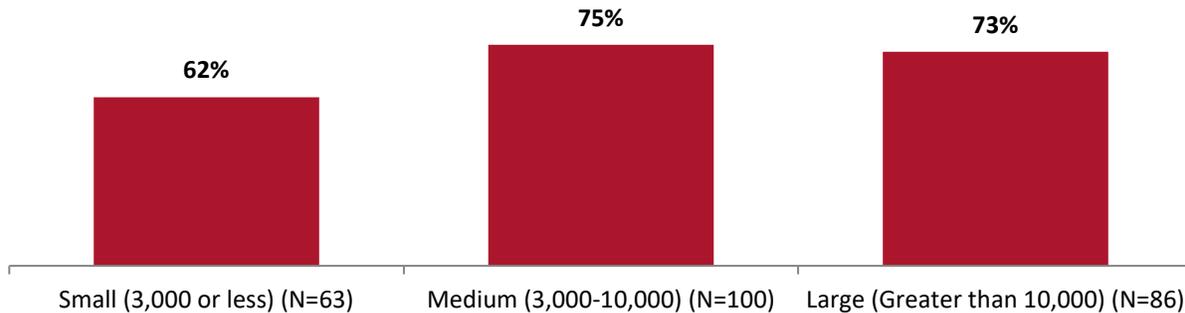
When compared to 72 professional associations for which McKinley has conducted similar research, ACRL’s community college members fall below the average in terms of overall satisfaction. On average 73% of association members rate their level of satisfaction with their association membership as “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied on a 5-point scale. Since only 69% of ACRL community college members indicate the same level of satisfaction, this segment falls below average. When compared to six other professional associations focused on education/humanities for which McKinley has conducted similar research, the ACRL community college segment falls slightly below average of 74%.

**Benchmarking Satisfaction - Professional Associations**  
*% selecting "Somewhat" or "Very" Satisfied*



When segmented by FTE, those at smaller institutions are less satisfied with membership. Only 62% of respondents from small institutions (3,000 or less FTE) rated their satisfaction as “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied. Meanwhile 75% of respondents from medium sized institutions (3,000-10,000 FTE) and 73% of respondents from large institutions (greater than 10,000 FTE) rated their satisfaction as “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied.

**Overall, how satisfied are you with your ACRL membership?**  
*% selecting "Somewhat" or "Very" Satisfied*  
**By FTE**



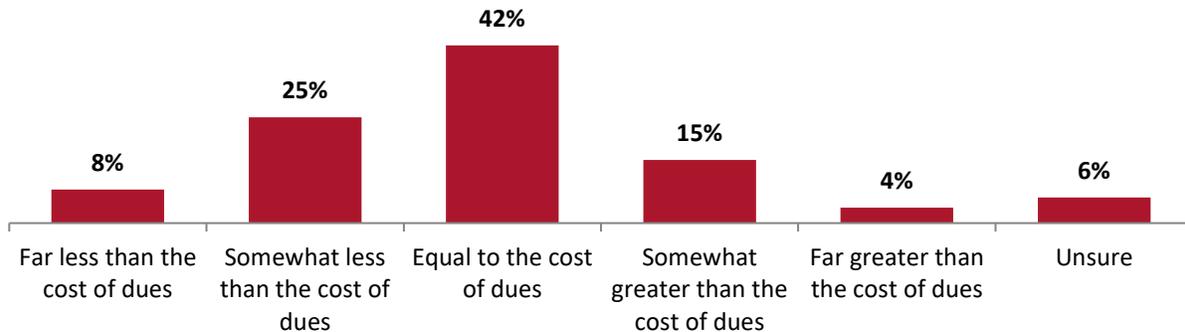
Additionally, segmentation by position revealed differences between segments. Only 66% of those who serve as a dean, chief officer or director rated their satisfaction as “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied.” Also of note, 76% of librarians not in a supervisory role rated their satisfaction as “Somewhat” or “Very” satisfied.

Overall, how satisfied are you with your ACRL membership? <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N=102)	Manager/ Supervisors of support staff (N=16)	Department Head/Branch Manager/ Coordinator/ Senior Manager (N=24)	Dean/Chief Officer/ Director or Assistant Director (N=83)	Other (N=24)
<b>% selecting "Somewhat" or "Very" satisfied</b>	76%	69%	79%	66%	58%

## VALUE TO COST

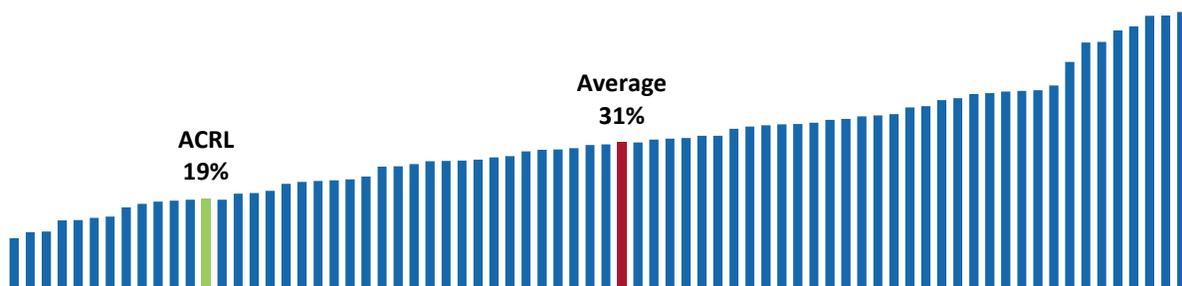
ACRL members were subsequently asked to evaluate the value of membership relative to its cost. Nineteen percent of respondents rated the value of membership as “Somewhat” (15%) or “Far” (4%) greater than the cost of dues. Forty-two percent said the value is equal to the cost and 33% said the value is “Somewhat” (25%) or “Far” (8%) less than the cost of dues.

**Based on the amount you pay in dues, would you say the value you receive from ACRL membership is:**  
**N = 327**



The value-to-cost question is another key performance indicator used to gauge the health of an association and the member experience. When compared to 74 professional associations for which McKinley has conducted similar research, ACRL’s community college members fall well below the average in terms of the percentage that view the value of membership as greater than the cost. On average, 31% of association members rate the value of their membership as greater than the cost. Only 19% of ACRL community college members agree likewise so this segment falls below average. When compared to six other professional associations focused on education/humanities for which McKinley has conducted similar research, the ACRL community college segment falls slightly below the average (20%).

**Benchmarking Value to Cost - Professional Associations**  
*% selecting "Somewhat" or "Far" greater than the cost of dues*

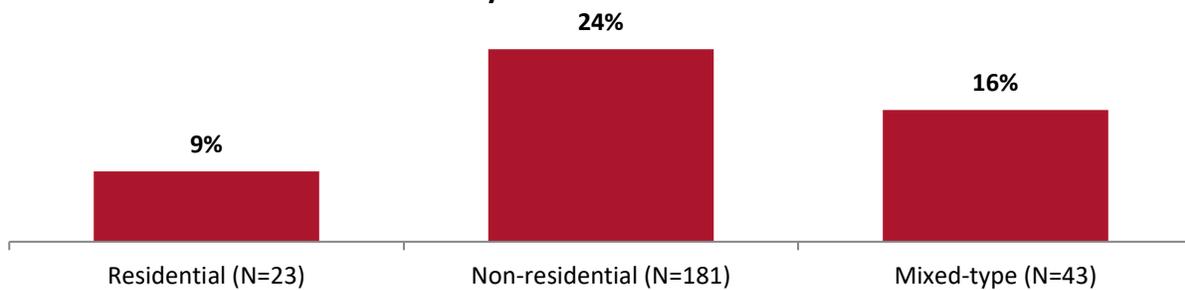


When segmented by residential status, those at primarily residential institutions were far less likely to indicate that they view the value of membership as greater than the cost. Only 9% of respondents



at residential institutions rated the value as greater than the cost. Meanwhile, 24% of respondents at non-residential institutions rated the value as greater than the cost. Respondents from mixed-type fell in between as 16% rated the value as greater than the cost.

**Based on the amount you pay in dues, would you say the value you receive from ACRL membership is:  
% selecting "Somewhat" or "Far" greater than the cost of dues  
By residential status**



Additional segmentation by position reveals that just as librarians not in a supervisory role are more likely to be satisfied, they are also more likely to view the value of membership as greater than the cost. Twenty-three percent of librarians not in a supervisory role rated the value of membership as greater than the cost. *Interestingly, those who identified as a dean, chief officer, or director were most likely to rate the value of membership as greater than the cost (24%) even though this same group was less likely to indicate that they are satisfied with membership.*

Based on the amount you pay in dues, would you say the value you receive from ACRL membership is: <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N=102)	Manager/Supervisors of support staff (N=16)	Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager (N=24)	Dean/Chief Officer/Director or Assistant Director (N=83)	Other (N=24)
Greater than the cost of dues	23%	6%	17%	24%	13%
Equal to the cost of dues	46%	44%	39%	41%	33%
Less than the cost of dues	25%	38%	43%	30%	46%
Unsure	6%	13%	0%	4%	8%

## NET PROMOTER SCORE

Members were then asked how likely they would be to recommend that a nonmember join or support ACRL. In this case, less than one-fourth (23%) rated their willingness to recommend ACRL as a 9 or a 10 on a scale from 0-10, with 10 being “extremely likely” to recommend. According to the Net Promoter<sup>1</sup> concept, these members would be classified as promoters of ACRL because they are more likely to spread positive perceptions of the Association through word of mouth. Meanwhile, 36% of

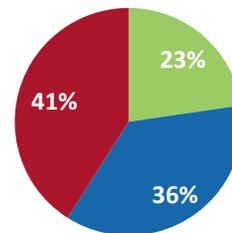
respondents rated their willingness to recommend ACRL as a 7 or 8. These respondents are categorized as passives because they are unlikely to spread the word about ACRL, either positively or negatively. The remaining 41% of respondents rated their willingness to recommend ACRL as a 6 or lower. The last group is known as detractors because they may counteract the good word of the promoters by spreading their dissatisfaction to potential members or stakeholders. To calculate ACRL’s Net Promoter Score among the community college segment, the percentage of detractors is subtracted from the percentage of promoters. On a scale from -100 to 100, the resulting Net Promoter Score is -18. In general, a negative Net Promoter Score is seen as an indicator of negative word of mouth and signals potential challenges for future growth. This may indicate that there are barriers ACRL may need to overcome in order to recruit and retain community college members.

Similar to the satisfaction and value versus cost questions, McKinley has collected Net Promoter data from other professional associations. The chart below shows the Net Promoter Scores for 83 other professional associations. The average score among the benchmarking group is 20. With a score of -18, ACRL’s community college members fall well below average. When compared to seven professional associations focused on education/humanities for which McKinley has conducted similar research, the ACRL community college segment falls below the average (15).

### How likely would you be to recommend that a nonmember join or support ACRL?

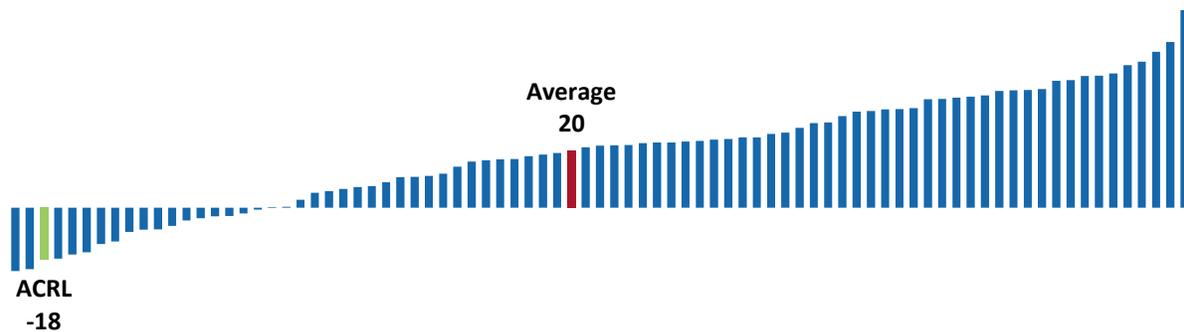
N = 308

■ Promoters ■ Passives ■ Detractors



<sup>1</sup> Concept based on an article published by Fred Reichheld in the *Harvard Business Review* (HBR in Brief, 1/5/09)

## Benchmarking Net Promoter Score - Professional Associations



McKinley segmented the results of the Net Promoter question and the results are displayed in the table below. Of note, those respondents serving as a manager or supervisor of support staff had the lowest Net Promoter Score (-47) of all positions included. In addition, respondents from rural institutions had a Net Promoter Score of -28, much lower than the Net Promoter Score of -5 seen from respondents at institutions in urban settings.

Net Promoter Score Segmentation	
Position	
Librarian who does not supervise (N=101)	-9
Manager/Supervisors of support staff (N=15)	-47
Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager (N=22)	0
Dean/Chief Officer/Director or Assistant Director (N=81)	12
Other (N=22)	36
Residential Status	
Residential (N=22)	-23
Non-residential (N=177)	-11
Mixed-type (N=42)	-21
Institution Setting	
Urban (N=77)	-5
Suburban (N=111)	-14
Rural (N=54)	-28
FTE	
Small (3,000 or less) (N=62)	-26
Medium (3,000-10,000) (N=99)	-17
Large (greater than 10,000) (N=80)	0



## REASONS TO JOIN

Respondents were asked to select the primary reasons they joined ACRL and the top responses were “to stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field” (62%), “to access ACRL publications and news” (39%) and “to support the profession and the community” (35%). Respondents were then presented with a follow-up question in which they were asked to rate how well ACRL has met their expectations related to why they joined the Association. ACRL is performing well in the top reasons to join. Ninety-two percent of respondents said ACRL meets or exceeds their expectations when it comes to staying informed about the latest trends and developments. In addition, 94% of respondents said ACRL meets or exceeds expectations when it comes to ACRL publications and news. One potential area for improvement is in the exchange of knowledge and information with others in the field which was the fourth most selected reason to join.

	% selecting as a reason to join	% "Meets" or "Exceeds" expectations
To stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field	62%	92%
To access ACRL publications and news	39%	94%
To support the profession and the community	35%	86%
To exchange knowledge and information with others in the field	26%	82%
To attend meetings and events	25%	86%
To network and build professional relationships	24%	89%
To learn/develop new skills	23%	83%
To access ACRL’s online learning opportunities	18%	89%
To advance my career	14%	70%
To gain leadership and other skills through volunteering	8%	80%
My employer pays for it	8%	75%

Segmentation by position reveals that those serving as a department head, branch manager, coordinator or senior manager are most likely to select “to stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field” (70%) as a reason to join ACRL. In addition, 44% of those serving as a manager/supervisor of support staff selected “to attend meetings and events,” while no more than 28% of any other segment also chose this response.

What are the top reasons you joined ACRL? Select up to three reasons. <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N=103)	Manager/ Supervisors of support staff (N=16)	Department Head/Branch Manager/ Coordinator/ Senior Manager (N=23)	Dean/Chief Officer/ Director or Assistant Director (N=82)	Other (N=24)
To stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field	64%	50%	70%	55%	58%
To access ACRL publications and news	37%	44%	35%	48%	25%
To exchange knowledge and information with others in the field	30%	31%	30%	23%	33%
To support the profession and the community	30%	44%	35%	41%	38%
To attend meetings and events	28%	44%	17%	18%	25%
To learn/develop new skills	25%	25%	26%	16%	29%
To network and build professional relationships	21%	6%	26%	29%	33%
To advance my career	17%	13%	4%	12%	17%
To access ACRL's online learning opportunities	15%	25%	22%	12%	33%
My employer pays for it	9%	0%	4%	13%	4%
To gain leadership and other skills through volunteering	8%	6%	9%	15%	0%
Other, please specify	1%	0%	4%	2%	0%

Additionally, segmentation by institution setting reveals that 69% of those in a rural setting selected “To stay informed about the latest trends and developments in the field” while only 54% of those in an urban setting also selected this response. Twenty-seven percent of respondents in urban settings selected “To attend meetings and events” while only 15% of those in rural settings also selected this response.

### VALUE OF ACRL

To provide context around the value of ACRL to those at community colleges, respondents were asked to describe what they value most about ACRL through an open-ended style question. In considering the statement, “What I value most about ACRL is,” 18% of respondents mentioned the network and connections made. Another 13% of respondents remarked on the value of collaboration and the exchange of knowledge. A sample of responses includes:

- “The way you help us stay connected with each other and to the latest trends”
- “The opportunity to connect with other community college librarians”
- “The various ways that are provided (classes, webinars, seminars, conferences) to keep up with new skills and trends”

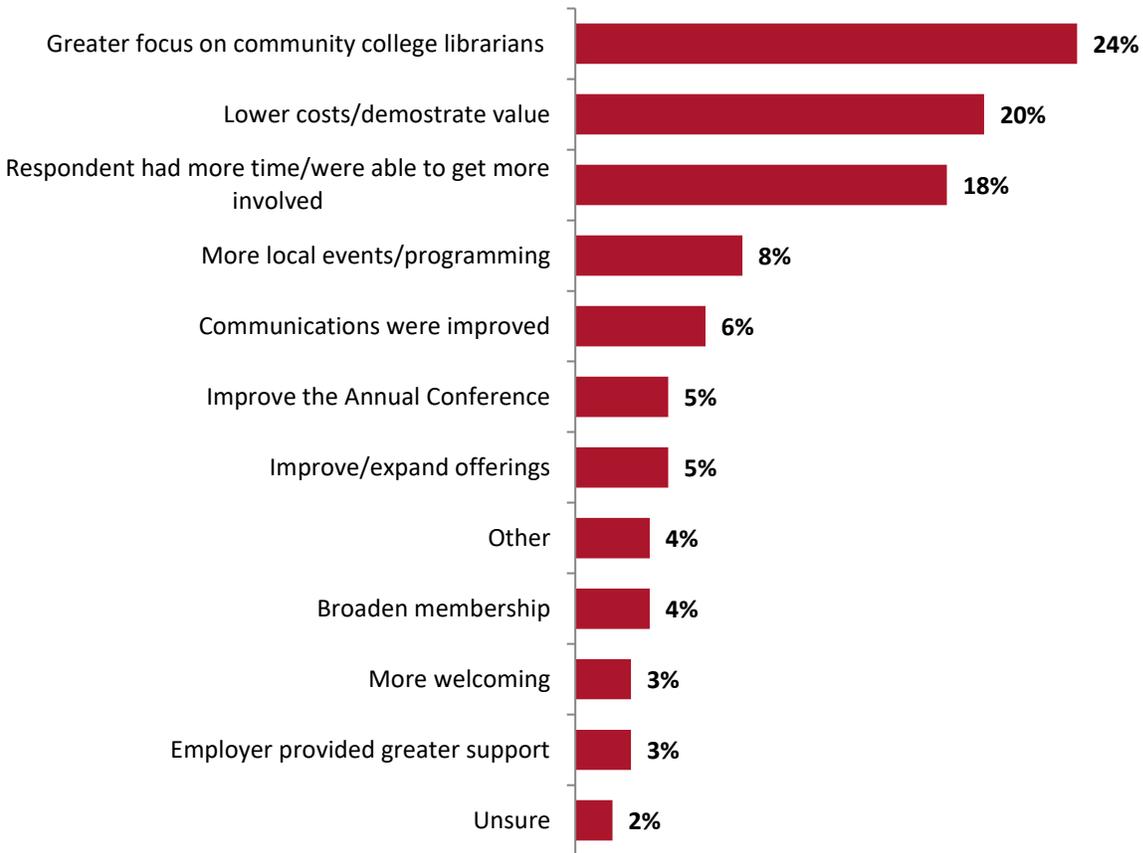
**In a few words, please complete the following sentences:  
What I value most about ACRL is:  
(Open-ended, N=244, Coded sample of 100)**



Respondents were then asked to complete the sentence, “I would gain greater value from ACRL if,” and 24% of respondents indicated that a greater focus on community college librarians would lead to greater value. Another 20% of respondents said they would gain greater value if the costs were lower or if ACRL could better demonstrate the value of membership. Eighteen percent of respondents said they would gain greater value if they simply had more time to get involved or if it were easier for them to get involved. A sample of responses includes:

- *“Community college vision and experience was expressed in publications, training, and conference events”*
- *“It would nurture a bigger role for community college librarians in its membership”*
- *“I knew where the funds I am paying for membership are going and what they are supporting”*

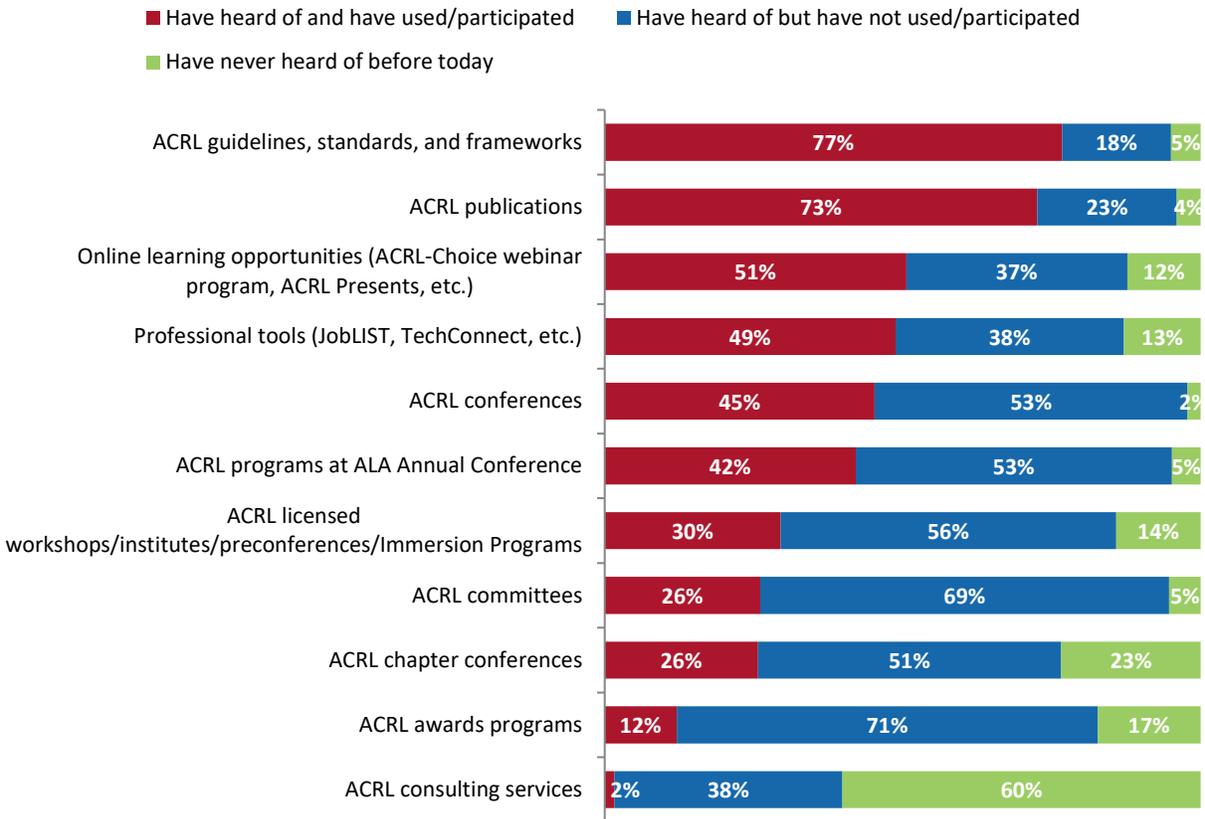
**In a few words, please complete the following sentences:  
I would gain greater value from ACRL if:  
(Open-ended, N=230, Coded sample of 100)**



## Participation and Perceptions

McKinley presented respondents with a list of programs, services and benefits offered by ACRL and asked respondents to indicate whether they have heard of the various offerings and if they have used/participated in the various offerings. As seen in the graph below, 77% of respondents indicated they have heard of and have used ACRL guidelines, standards, and frameworks. Another 73% of respondents indicated they have heard of and have used ACRL publications. On the other hand, only 2% of respondents have heard of and have used ACRL consulting services with 60% of respondents indicating they have never heard of this offering before taking the survey.

**Below is a list of ACRL programs, services, and member benefits. How familiar are you with each program, service, and benefit offered by ACRL?  
N = 649**



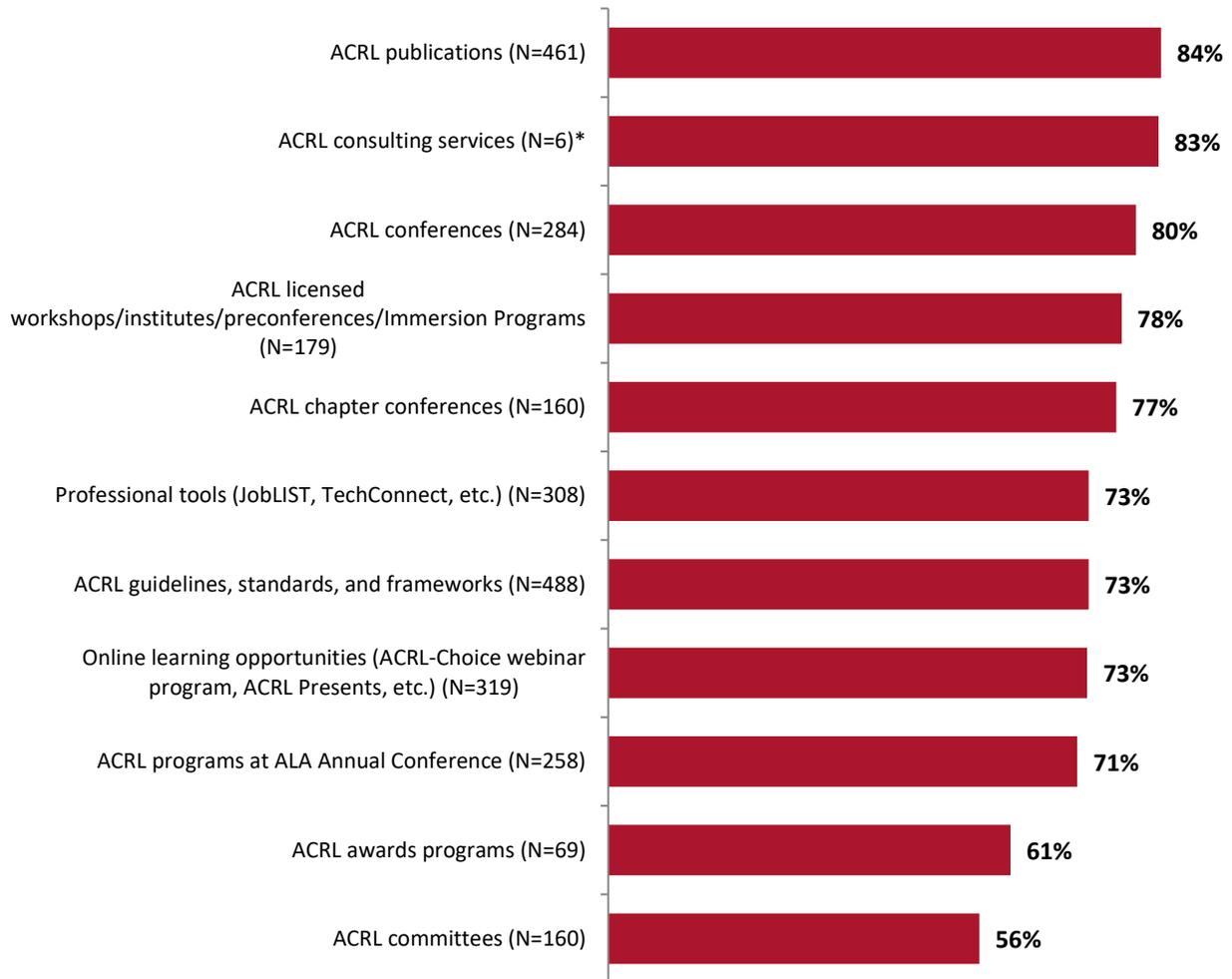
Segmentation by position reveals that those respondents that are managers or supervise other support staff are generally less likely to be familiar with and use/participate with ACRL offerings when compared to other positions. Of note, only 33% of managers/supervisors indicated that they have heard of and have participated in ACRL conferences while 55% of respondents that identified as a dean, chief officer or director indicated that they have heard of and have participated in ACRL conferences.

Below is a list of ACRL programs, services, and member benefits. How familiar are you with each program, service, and benefit offered by ACRL? % selecting "Have heard of and have used/participated" <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N=201)	Manager/ Supervisors of support staff (N=53)	Department Head/Branch Manager/ Coordinator/ Senior Manager (N=50)	Dean/Chief Officer/ Director or Assistant Director (N=137)	Other (N=47)
ACRL guidelines, standards, and frameworks	77%	67%	74%	87%	79%
ACRL publications	74%	69%	84%	77%	76%
Online learning opportunities (ACRL-Choice webinar program, ACRL Presents, etc )	55%	56%	54%	54%	50%
Professional tools (JobLIST, TechConnect, etc )	50%	45%	54%	55%	51%
ACRL conferences	47%	33%	40%	55%	44%
ACRL programs at ALA Annual Conference	45%	33%	44%	49%	39%
ACRL licensed workshops/institutes/ preconferences/Immersion Programs	28%	31%	36%	36%	26%
ACRL committees	26%	15%	30%	36%	25%
ACRL chapter conferences	24%	26%	30%	30%	28%
ACRL awards programs	11%	9%	20%	15%	10%
ACRL consulting services	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%

For those offerings that respondents indicated they have heard of and have used/participated in, respondents were then asked to rate their satisfaction with the same offering. ACRL publications received the highest satisfaction rating as 84% of respondents rated their satisfaction with the publications as a “4” or “5, extremely satisfied” on a five-point scale. Also of note, only 56% rated their satisfaction with ACRL committees as a “4” or “5, extremely satisfied.”



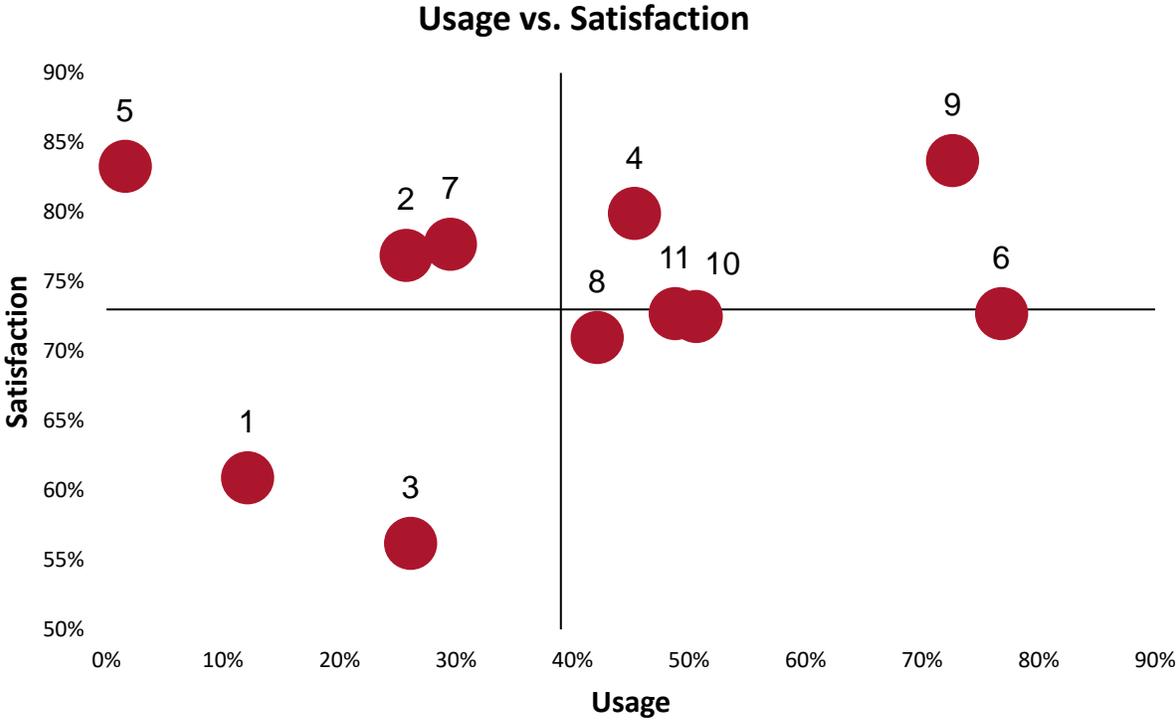
**How would you rate your satisfaction with the ACRL activities, programs, or services that you have used or participated in?  
% rating satisfaction a "4" or "5, extremely satisfied"**



*An asterisk (\*) indicates a small sample size*

The chart on the following page plots each offering according to respondents' usage and satisfaction. The X axis plots usage scores for each offering and the Y axis plots satisfaction scores. Offerings in the upper right-hand quadrant are resources that a high percentage of respondents indicated they use and are satisfied with. Offerings in the lower left-hand quadrant are those that respondents do not use as much and that they are less satisfied with. The offerings have been grouped based on their respective locations on the X and Y axes, as displayed in the table below.

Low Profile <i>Low usage, high satisfaction</i>	Watch List <i>Low usage, low satisfaction</i>	Opportunity <i>High usage, low satisfaction</i>	All-Stars <i>High usage, high satisfaction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACRL consulting services</li> <li>ACRL chapter conferences</li> <li>ACRL licensed workshops/institutes/preconferences/Immersion Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACRL awards programs</li> <li>ACRL committees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACRL programs at ALA Annual Conference</li> <li>Online learning opportunities (ACRL-Choice webinar program, ACRL Presents, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ACRL conferences</li> <li>ACRL publications</li> <li>Professional tools (JobLIST, TechConnect, etc.)</li> <li>ACRL guidelines, standards, and frameworks</li> </ul>

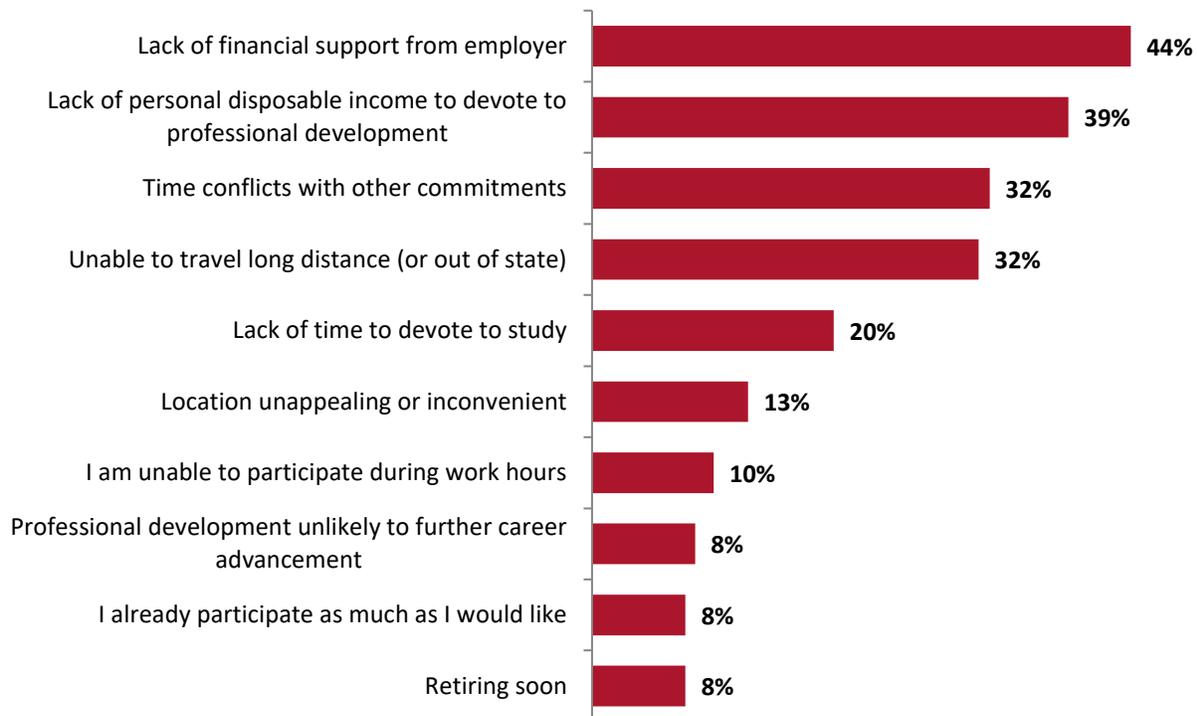


1	ACRL awards programs	7	ACRL licensed workshops/institutes/preconferences/Immersion Programs
2	ACRL chapter conferences	8	ACRL programs at ALA Annual Conference
3	ACRL committees	9	ACRL publications
4	ACRL conferences	10	Online learning opportunities (ACRL-Choice webinar program, ACRL Presents, etc.)
5	ACRL consulting services	11	Professional tools (JobLIST, TechConnect, etc.)
6	ACRL guidelines, standards, and frameworks		

Respondents were next asked to select barriers that have prevented them from participating in ACRL professional development opportunities and money/financing emerged as the top barrier. The top barriers selected were “Lack of financial support from employer” (44%) and “Lack of personal disposable income to devote to professional development” (39%).

**Which of following barriers prevent you from participating in ACRL profession development opportunities? Select up to three.**

**Top 10  
N = 629**



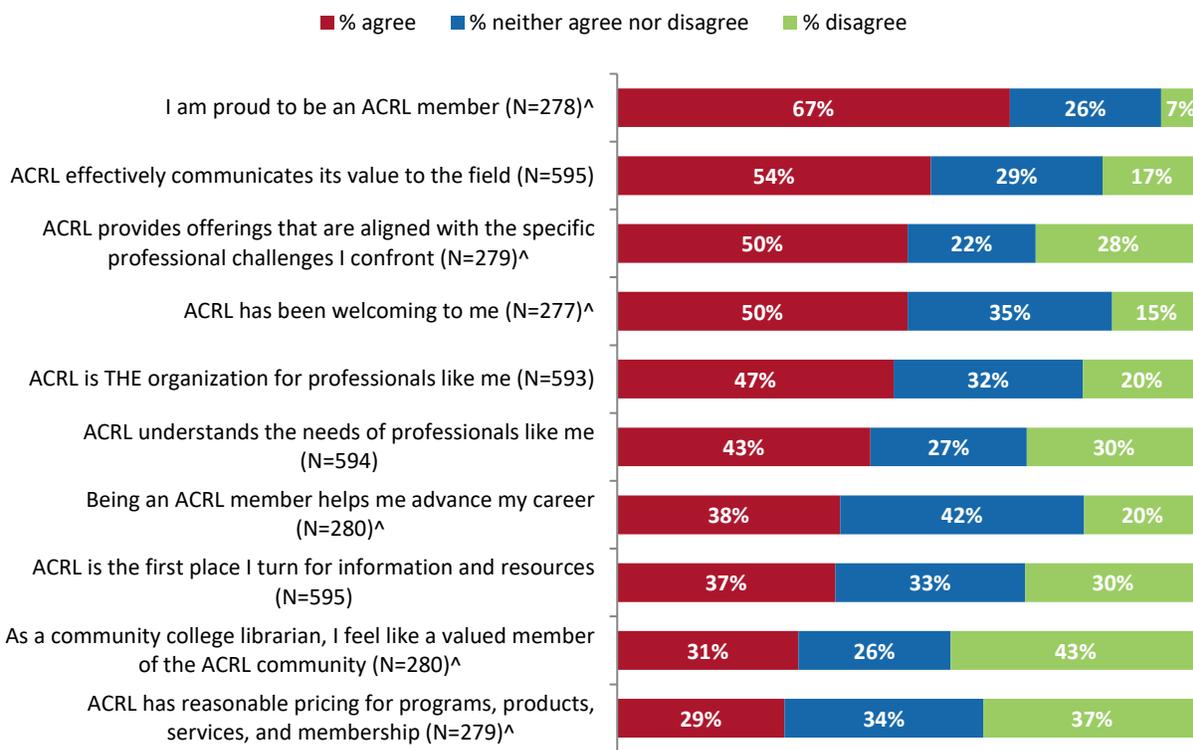
Segmentation by institutional setting revealed that those respondents at rural institutions are more likely to face difficulties with travel. Forty-three percent of respondents at rural institutions selected “Unable to travel long distance (or out of state)” compared to only 30% of those at institutions in urban settings. In addition, segmenting by tenure in the profession revealed that 54% of respondents with 5 years or less of tenure in the profession selected “Lack of personal disposable income to devote to professional development” compared to only 31% of those with 21 years or more of experience.

To gain further insight on the perceptions of ACRL, respondents were presented a list of words and were asked to select up to five words that best describe ACRL. The following word cloud illustrates the results of this question. The larger the word, the more often it was selected by respondents. The top 10 most commonly selected words were: professional (58%), respected (33%), advocate (29%), important (26%), collaborative (25%), expensive (24%), thought-provoking (14%), bureaucratic (12%), elitist (12%), and focused (11%).



McKinley then asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with a variety of statements pertaining to ACRL. Members showed pride in being a member of the Association as 67% of members agreed with the statement “I am proud to be an ACRL member.” However, only 29% of respondents agreed with the statement “ACRL has reasonable pricing for programs, products, services, and membership.” This mirrors the earlier finding that respondents would gain greater value from ACRL if the costs were lower or if ACRL were better able to demonstrate the value. In addition, only 31% of members agreed with the statement “As a community college librarian, I feel like a valued member of the ACRL community.” This result mirrors the finding that respondents would gain greater value from ACRL if the Association had a greater focus on community college librarians.

**Please describe your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.**



Statements marked with the symbol ^ indicate that the statement was shown only to members of ACRL. All other statements were shown to both members and nonmembers.

When segmented by institutional setting, those respondents from rural institutions were less likely to indicate that they feel like ACRL has been welcoming to them (36% agreed, compared to 53% for respondents from both urban and suburban institutions). The full crosstab analysis is displayed in the table below.

<b>Please describe your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements: % agree</b>	<b>Urban (N range = 77-163)</b>	<b>Suburban (N range = 111-213)</b>	<b>Rural (N range = 54-118)</b>
<b>By institutional setting</b>			
<b>I am proud to be an ACRL member<sup>^</sup></b>	65%	70%	67%
<b>ACRL effectively communicates its value to the field</b>	56%	51%	57%
<b>ACRL has been welcoming to me<sup>^</sup></b>	53%	53%	36%
<b>ACRL provides offerings that are aligned with the specific professional challenges I confront<sup>^</sup></b>	48%	55%	36%
<b>ACRL understands the needs of professionals like me</b>	44%	44%	41%
<b>ACRL is THE organization for professionals like me</b>	42%	49%	49%
<b>Being an ACRL member helps me advance my career<sup>^</sup></b>	41%	45%	29%
<b>ACRL is the first place I turn for information and resources</b>	35%	36%	46%
<b>As a community college librarian, I feel like a valued member of the ACRL community<sup>^</sup></b>	32%	34%	22%
<b>ACRL has reasonable pricing for programs, products, services, and membership<sup>^</sup></b>	28%	33%	25%

*Statements marked with the symbol <sup>^</sup> indicate that the statement was shown only to members of ACRL. All other statements were shown to both members and nonmembers.*

Additional segmentation by position is displayed in the below table. Of note, those respondents who are managers or supervisors of support staff do not feel that ACRL has been welcoming. Only 31% of respondents in this group agreed with the statement “ACRL has been welcoming to me” while 60% of librarians not in a supervisory position agreed with the same statement.

Please describe your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements: % agree <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N range = 99-200)	Manager/ Supervisors of support staff (N range = 16-55)	Department Head/Branch Manager/ Coordinator/Senior Manager (N range = 22-50)	Dean/Chief Officer/ Director or Assistant Director (N range = 81-138)	Other (N range = 24-50)
I am proud to be an ACRL member <sup>^</sup>	67%	75%	74%	70%	50%
ACRL has been welcoming to me <sup>^</sup>	60%	31%	52%	42%	38%
ACRL effectively communicates its value to the field	53%	50%	66%	55%	50%
ACRL provides offerings that are aligned with the specific professional challenges I confront <sup>^</sup>	50%	53%	57%	44%	46%
ACRL is THE organization for professionals like me	48%	42%	51%	51%	36%
ACRL understands the needs of professionals like me	45%	44%	46%	43%	34%
Being an ACRL member helps me advance my career <sup>^</sup>	45%	38%	43%	38%	25%
ACRL is the first place I turn for information and resources	42%	24%	34%	41%	32%
As a community college librarian, I feel like a valued member of the ACRL community <sup>^</sup>	33%	19%	45%	28%	17%
ACRL has reasonable pricing for programs, products, services, and membership <sup>^</sup>	32%	25%	35%	30%	17%

Statements marked with the symbol <sup>^</sup> indicate that the statement was shown only to members of ACRL. All other statements were shown to both members and nonmembers.

segmented by membership status, 60% of members agreed with the statement “ACRL effectively communicates its value to the field” compared to only 48% of nonmembers. Similarly, 57% of members agreed with the statement “ACRL is THE organization for professionals like me” compared to only 39% of nonmembers. Also of note, 45% of members agreed with the statement “ACRL is the first place I turn for information and resources” while only 30% of nonmembers agreed with the same statement.



## Membership Barriers

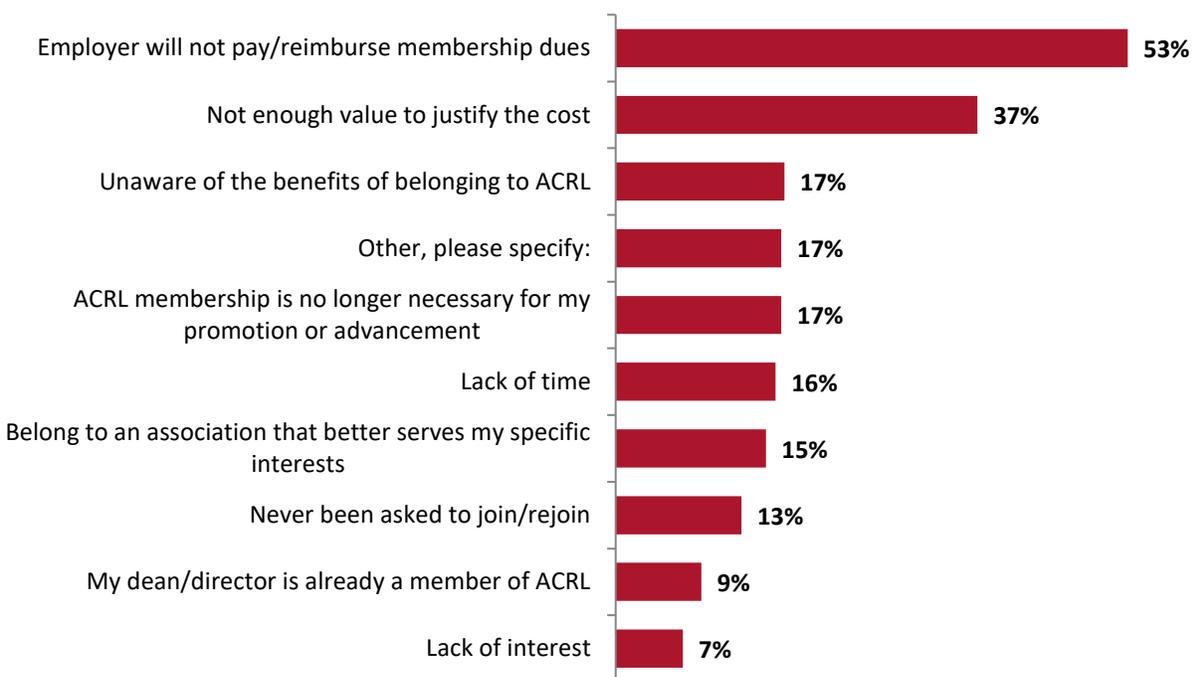
McKinley next explored barriers that may exist that prevent community college librarians from joining ACRL. “Employer will not pay/reimburse membership dues” (53%) was the top response. This matches with the earlier finding that the top barrier to participation in professional development is a lack of financial support from their employer. Another 37% of respondents selected “Not enough value to justify the cost” as a top barrier to membership. Segmentation reveals that awareness may be an issue for those newer to the profession. 30% of respondents with 5 years or less of tenure in the profession selected “Unaware of the benefits of belonging to ACRL” while only 13% of respondents with 21 years or more of experience also selected this option.

### What are the primary reasons you are not a member of ACRL?

Select up to three reasons.

#### Top 10 Responses

N = 318

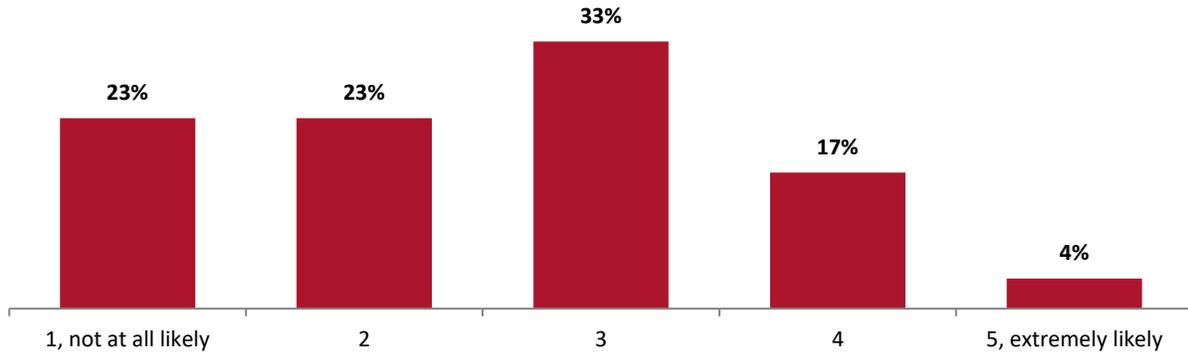


The top responses for “Other, please specify” included cost (36%), sufficient resources from other sources or association (15%) and not relevant to interests/area of focus (15%).

Overall, nonmembers do not seem likely to join/rejoin ACRL in the future. When nonmembers were asked to rate their likelihood to join/rejoin, only 21% rated their likelihood as “4” (17%) or “5, extremely likely” (4%) on a five-point scale. Forty-six percent rated their likelihood as “1, not at all likely” (23%) or “2” (23%).

## How likely are you to join/rejoin ACRL in the future?

N = 299



To provide some context around groups that may be likely (or unlikely) to join/rejoin, McKinley segmented respondents based on their responses to previous question. Key findings based on this analysis are displayed in the following graphic. It should be noted that 40% of those who are not likely to join indicated that they expect their next career move to be retirement which likely had an impact on the results of the crosstab analysis.

**Not Likely to Join**  
(46%)

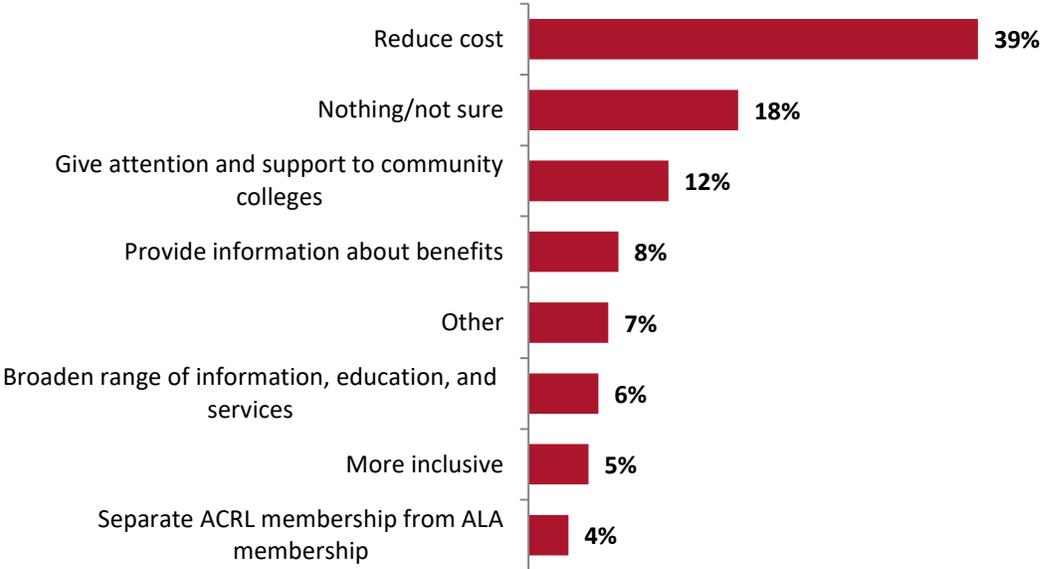
**Likely to Join**  
(21%)

- More likely to have more experience in the profession (53% have 21 or more years of experience compared to 22% of those likely to join)
- More likely to select “Have never heard of before today” for every benefit listed for the question on awareness and participation, when compared to those likely to join
- More likely to select “Unknown” to describe ACRL (18% compared to 2% of those likely to join)
- More likely to select “Not enough value to justify the cost” as a barrier to membership (42% compared to 26% of those likely to join)
- More likely to work at a residential campus (20%, compared to 8% of those not likely to join)
- More likely to consider ACRL to be their primary association for professional development resources (45% compared to 10% of those not likely to join)
- More likely to work at a rural institution (37% compared to 23% of those not likely to join)
- More likely to select “Collaborative” to describe ACRL (38% compared to 19% of those not likely to join)
- More likely to rate “Provides resources that help me to advance my career” as a major factor in deciding to join an association (61% compared to 37% of those not likely to join)
- More likely view “professional advancement” as a motivating factor for participating in professional development (67% compared to 32% of those not likely to join)



Nonmembers were asked in an open-ended question what ACRL could do to increase the likelihood that they would join in the future. Similar to previous findings, 39% said that ACRL could reduce costs. In addition, 12% said that ACRL could give more attention and support to community colleges, suggesting that ACRL is not adequately serving this group.

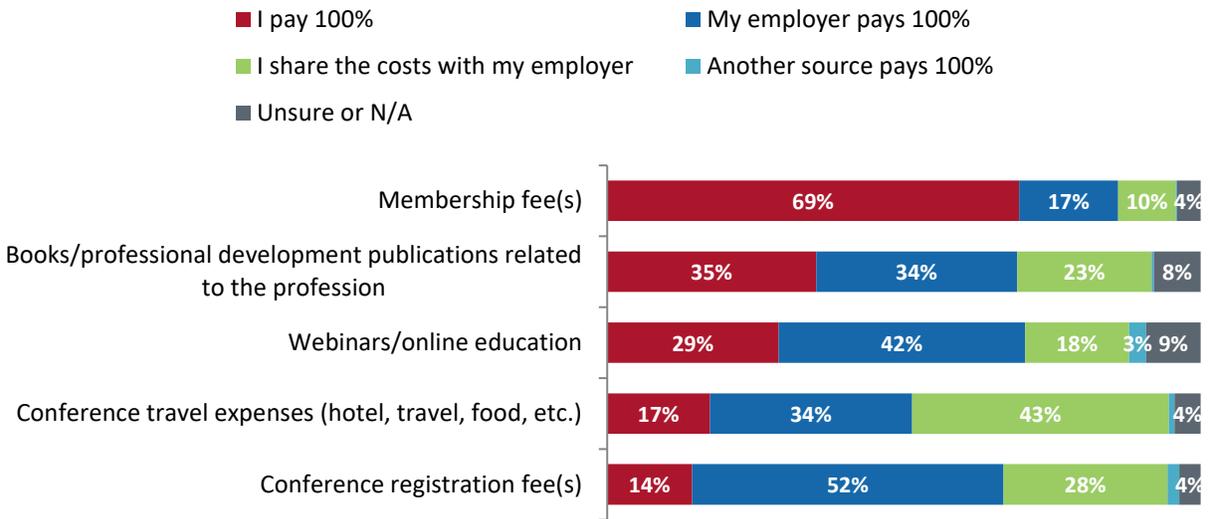
**What could ACRL do to increase the likelihood that you will join ACRL as a member in the future?  
(Open-ended, N=147, Coded sample of 100)**



**EMPLOYER SUPPORT**

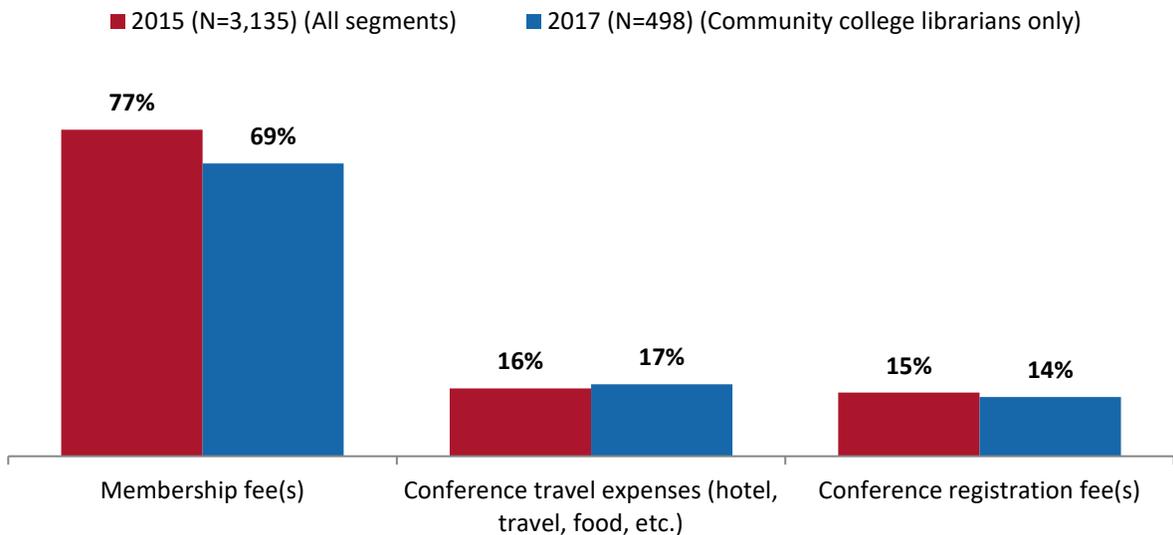
Costs and a lack of financial support have appeared in multiple places as an issue for respondents. To help shed some light on this issue, McKinley asked all respondents to indicate how various expenses are paid and where funding comes from. Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they pay 100% of membership fees with another 10% indicating that they have to pay at least a portion of membership fees. The full breakdown of how various expenses are paid is displayed in the below graph.

**In general, how are each of the following expenses typically paid?  
N = 498**



For those expenses that were also explored in ACRL’s 2015 research effort, the results are similar when comparing this year’s report with 2015. As a reminder, the 2015 report studied all segments, not just community college librarians. From this comparison, it does not appear that community college librarians are more likely to have to pay 100% of expenses when compared to all ACRL member segments.

**In general, how are each of the following expenses typically paid?  
% selecting "I pay 100%"**



## Professional Challenges

When asked to select the top issues they face as community college librarians, “Student learning and information literacy” (55%) was the most commonly selected response. This was followed by “Demonstrating the relevance and value of academic libraries” (50%) and “Declining financial support and increasing costs for academic/research libraries” (42%). Of note, only 7% of respondents selected “Professional development.”

### Select the top three issues you face as a community college librarian.

#### Top 10 Responses

N = 584



When segmented by residential status, respondents at residential institutions are more likely to be concerned about space and facilities. Thirty-one percent of respondents at residential institutions selected “Space and facilities” as a top issue while only 18% of those at non-residential institutions selected it as a top issue.

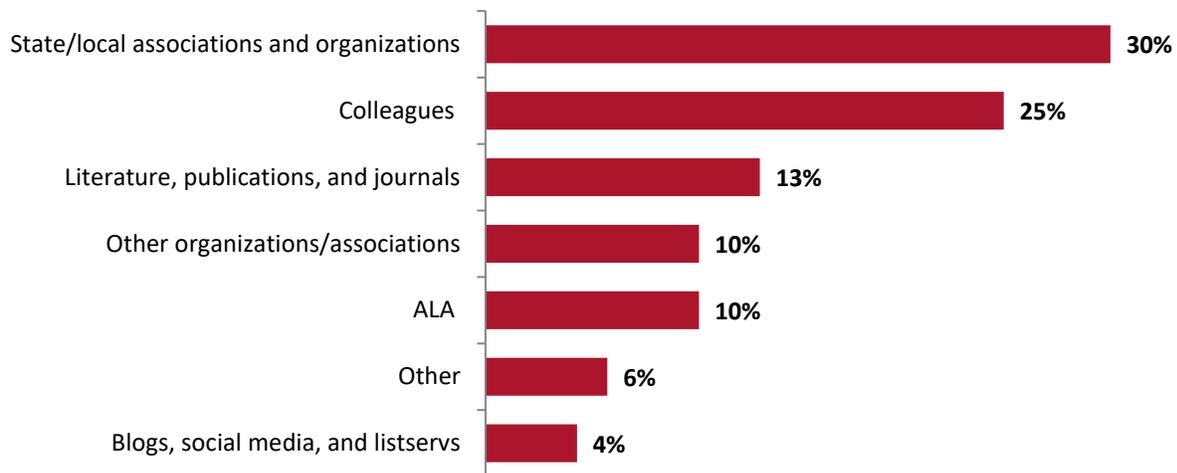
Additionally, respondents at smaller institutions are more concerned about financial and human resources issues than those respondents at larger institutions. When segmented by FTE, 49% of respondents at small institutions (3,000 or less FTE) selected “Declining financial support and increasing costs for academic/research libraries” as a top issue compared to only 33% of those at large institutions (more than 10,000 FTE). Also, 46% of respondents at small institutions selected “Human resources (insufficient staff, compensation, lack of diversity, succession planning, etc.)” as a top issue while only 33% of those at large institutions selected this as a top issue.

Crosstab analysis by position also reveals key differences. Sixty-one percent of librarians who are not in a supervisory role selected “student learning and information literacy” as a top issue while only 43% of those serving as a dean, chief officer, or director also selected it as a top issue. In addition, those serving as a dean, chief officer, or director were more likely to indicate that financial (51%) and human resources (52%) issues are a top concern when compared to those serving as a librarian not in a supervisor role (36% for both issues).

Crosstab analysis by institutional setting reveals that those in rural settings selected “human resources (insufficient staff, compensation, lack of diversity, succession planning, etc.)” (49%) at a higher rate than those in urban settings (34%). Those in rural settings also selected “declining financial support and increasing costs for academic/research libraries” (38%) at a higher rate than those in urban settings (38%).

Respondents were next asked where they turn, outside of ACRL, to address the issues they face. The top response was state/local associations and organizations (30%). This was followed by colleagues (25%) and literature, publications, and journals (13%).

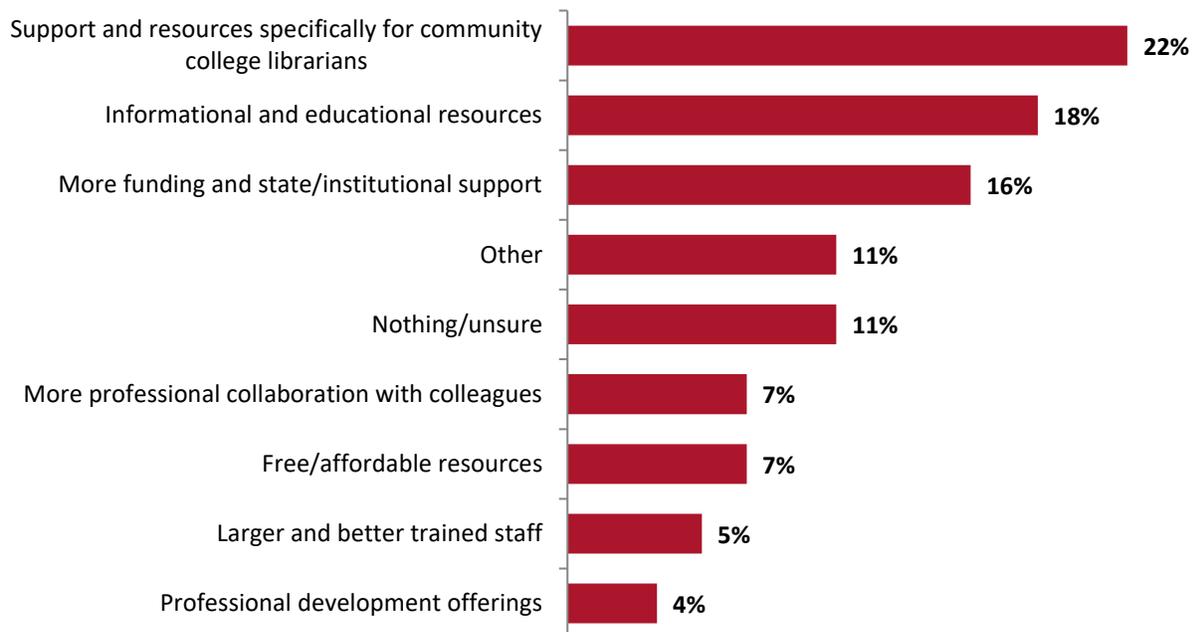
**Outside of ACRL, where do you typically turn for support in addressing the issues you selected in the previous question?  
(Open-ended, N=401, Coded sample of 100)**



Next, respondents were asked to identify resources which would better help them address the challenges they face. Twenty-two percent of respondents said that they would like support and resources aimed specifically at community college librarians. This was followed by information and educational resources (18%) and more funding and state/institutional support (16%). A sample of responses includes:

- *“I would love to see more resources (of all types) specifically dedicated to community college libraries. We seem to be an underrepresented group in the library world.”*
- *“More research and publications that look directly at community colleges. The ACRL publications seem to focus more on four-year schools and research institutions, than two-year schools and teaching colleges.”*
- *“Better access to national trends and articles related to the day-to-day struggle of being a community college librarian.”*

**What resources would help you better address these challenges?  
(Open-ended, N=318, Coded sample of 100)**

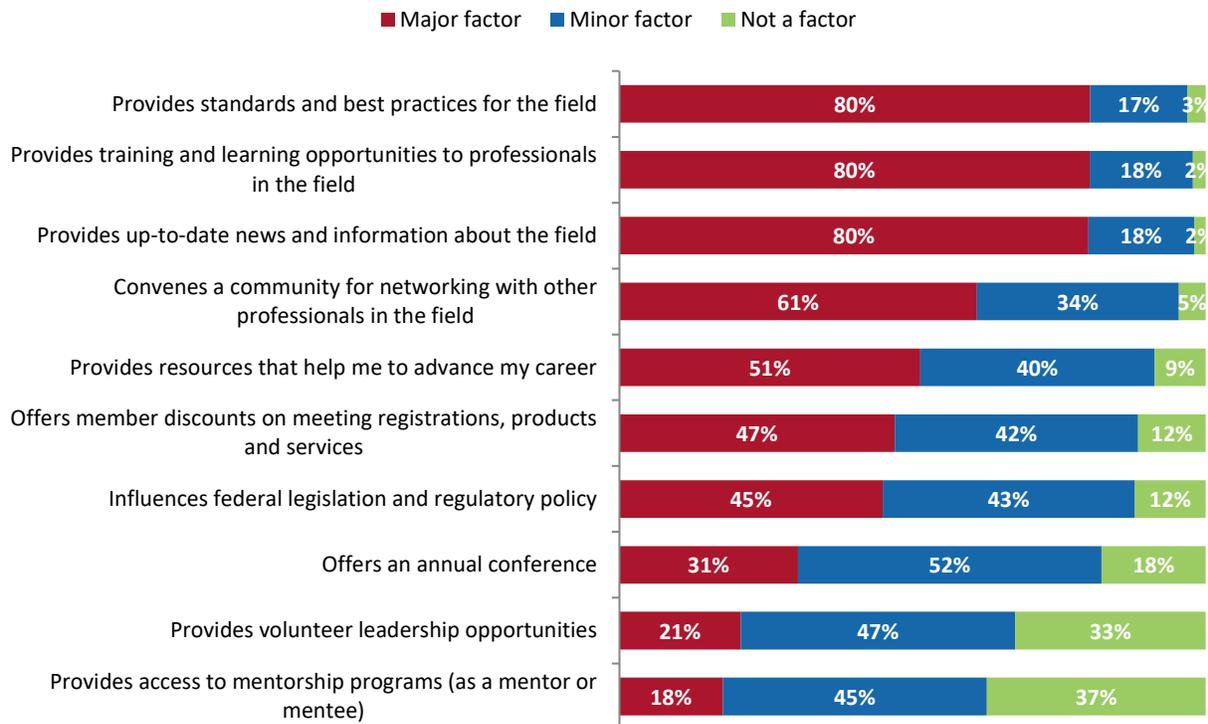


## Competitive Market

Respondents were asked to rate how much of a factor various options are when they consider membership in a professional society or association, and could choose “Not a factor,” “Minor factor,” or “Major factor.” “Major factors” included “standards and best practices for the field” (80%), “training and learning opportunities to professionals in the field” (80%), and “up-to-date news and information about the field” (80%). On the other hand, only 18% considered “access to mentorship programs (as a mentor or mentee)” as a major factor.

**When considering membership in a professional society or association, please indicate the extent to which the factors below influence your decision to join.**

**N = 544**



When segmented by tenure in the profession, key differences emerged between the segments. Those with five or fewer years of experience were more likely to consider “convenes a community for networking with other professionals in the field” (70%) as a major factor compared to those with 21 years or more of experience (55%). Not surprisingly, those with five or fewer years of experience were also more likely to consider “resources that help me to advance my career” (63%) to be a major factor compared to those with 21 or more years of experience (41%).



When considering membership in a professional society or association, please indicate the extent to which the factors below influence your decision to join. % selecting "Major factor" <i>By tenure in the profession</i>	5 years or less (N=62)	6-10 years (N=90)	11-20 years (N=173)	21 or more years (N=159)
<b>Provides training and learning opportunities to professionals in the field</b>	85%	78%	80%	77%
<b>Provides standards and best practices for the field</b>	82%	73%	82%	82%
<b>Provides up-to-date news and information about the field</b>	79%	75%	84%	79%
<b>Convenes a community for networking with other professionals in the field</b>	70%	67%	64%	55%
<b>Provides resources that help me to advance my career</b>	63%	57%	54%	41%
<b>Offers member discounts on meeting registrations, products and services</b>	60%	55%	47%	39%
<b>Influences federal legislation and regulatory policy</b>	48%	36%	44%	47%
<b>Provides access to mentorship programs (as a mentor or mentee)</b>	31%	20%	15%	15%
<b>Provides volunteer leadership opportunities</b>	24%	20%	22%	17%
<b>Offers an annual conference</b>	21%	32%	32%	32%

Additional segmentation by FTE shows that those respondents from large institutions were more likely to consider “influences federal legislation and regulatory policy” (48%) to be a major factor compared to those from small institutions (38%). Those from large institutions were also more likely to consider “an annual conference” (36%) to be a major factor compared to those from small institutions (25%).

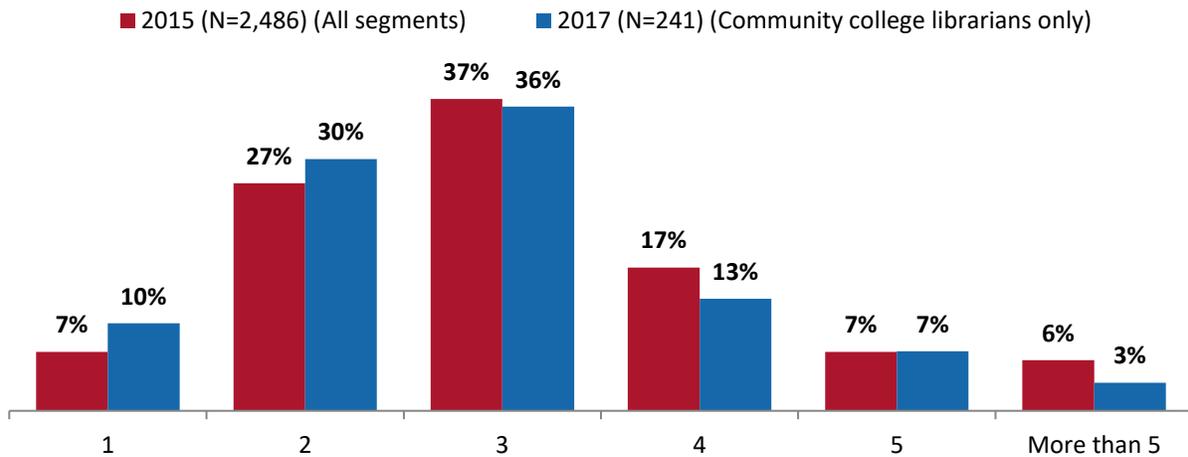
Segmentation by membership status revealed that the responses from both members and nonmembers were generally quite similar. However, one area of difference worth noting is that 67% of members rated “convenes a community for networking with other professionals in the field” to be a major factor compared to only 56% of nonmembers who rated it likewise.

Crosstab analysis by institution setting reveals that those in an urban setting selected “Convenes a community for networking with other professionals in the field” (68%) at a higher rate than those in a rural setting (55%). Those in an urban setting also selected “Offers an annual conference” (35%) at a higher rate than those in a rural setting (21%).

Respondents were then asked how many professional associations they belong to. The results of this question are compared to the results from ACRL 2015 membership survey which explored all membership segments, not just community college librarians. The 2017 results are very similar when compared to the 2015 results.



## How many professional associations do you belong to?

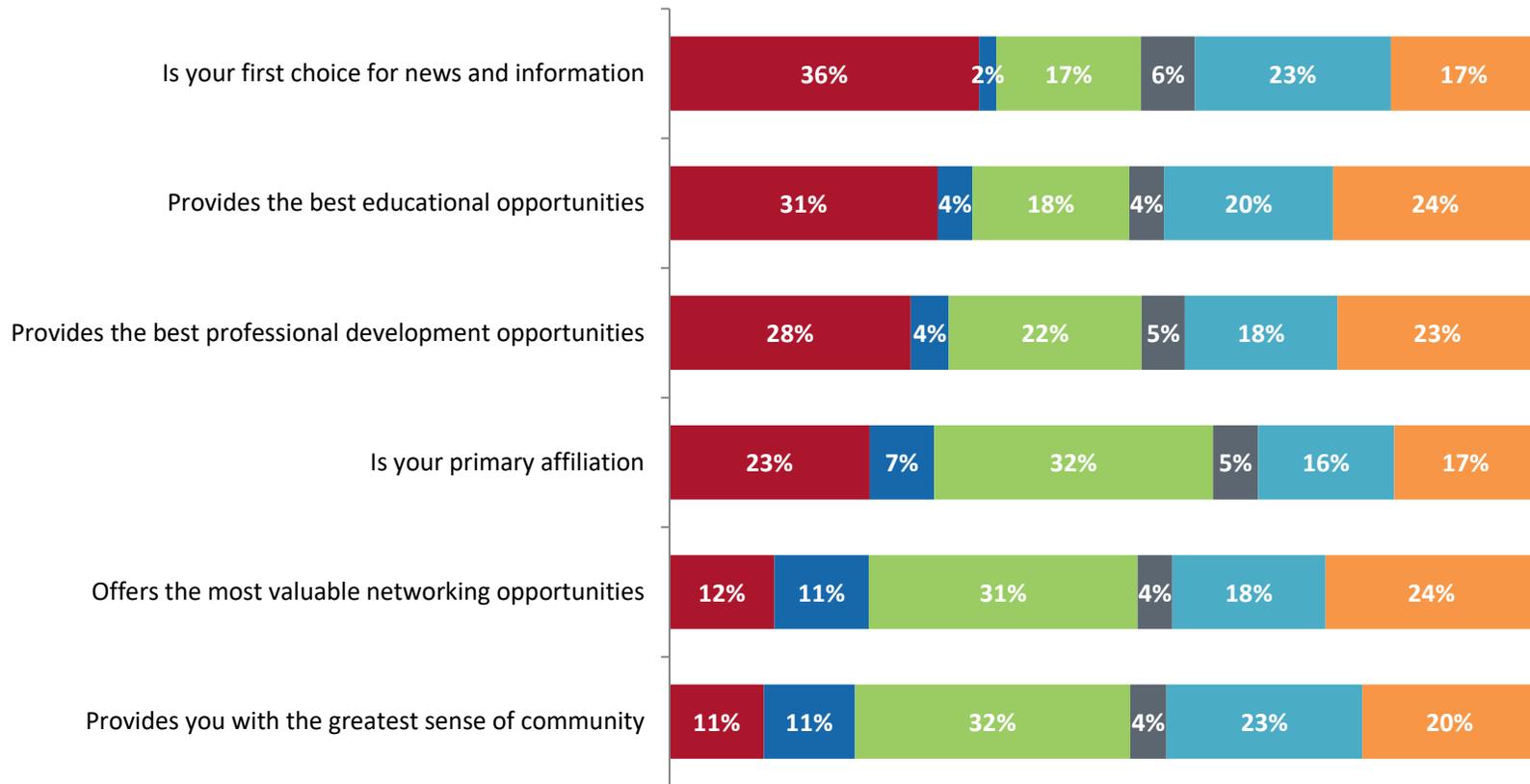


To gain a deeper understanding of where ACRL stands in relation to other resources in the market, respondents were asked to indicate where they turn for a variety of resources. As displayed in the graph on the following page, ACRL performed best in terms of being the first choice for news and information. Thirty-six percent of respondents selected “ACRL” when asked which organization/resource is their first choice for news and information. Of note, only 11% of respondents selected ACRL for “Provides you with the greatest sense of community.” While another 11% selected “ACRL chapter,” this is still an area where ACRL is not considered a leader in the marketplace.

Considering the organizations and resources listed below, which one:

N = 506

■ ACRL ■ ACRL chapter ■ Another professional association ■ Other ALA divisions ■ Another source ■ Unsure/not applicable



Segmentation shows that in general, small institutions are less likely to turn to ACRL when compared to larger institutions. In particular, only 31% of those from small institutions said ACRL is their ‘First choice for news and information’ compared to 41% of those from large institutions. In addition, only 20% of those from small institutions said ACRL is their primary institution while 30% of those from large institutions said ACRL is their primary affiliation.

Considering the organizations and resources listed below, which one: % selecting “ACRL” By FTE	Small (3,000 or less) (N=125)	Medium (3,000-10,000) (N=198)	Large (Greater than 10,000) (N=144)
Is your first choice for news and information	31%	34%	41%
Provides the best educational opportunities	25%	32%	34%
Provides the best professional development opportunities	25%	28%	30%
Is your primary affiliation	20%	21%	30%
Provides you with the greatest sense of community	13%	7%	14%
Offers the most valuable networking opportunities	13%	9%	15%

Respondents were then asked in an open-ended question to list any other sources they consult for their professional needs. Respondents listed a variety of associations and organizations, but the most commonly mentioned was ALA (7%). Roughly 12% of respondents mentioned literature, publications, and journals. Another 9% mentioned websites, blogs, and social media. A sample of responses includes:

- “Blogs, listservs (many of which are through ALA), colleagues, journals, pretty much anything I can get my hands on”
- “Library Journal and other journals offering book and electronic resource reviews”
- “I belong to several local and regional library groups that I rely on for professional information.”

## Professional Development

When asked to select the professional development opportunities they are most interested in, roughly two-thirds (67%) selected “Access to information on latest issues, news, trends, best practice and research.” This mirrors the finding that one of the top factors in joining an association is whether the association “Provides up-to-date news and information about the field.” “Opportunities to connect with and learn from others in the field” (54%) and “Attending professional development/educational programs” (53%) were the next most selected professional development opportunities of interest.

**Which of the following professional development opportunities are you most interested in? Select up to three.**

**N = 509**



The following table shows the question segmented by position. Those serving as a dean, chief officer, or director were more likely to select “developing standards that support quality and/or guidelines that define critical competencies” (49%) when compared to librarians not in a supervisory role (24%). In addition, librarians not in a supervisory role were more likely to select “attending professional development/educational programs” (60%) when compared to those serving as a dean, chief officer or director (45%).

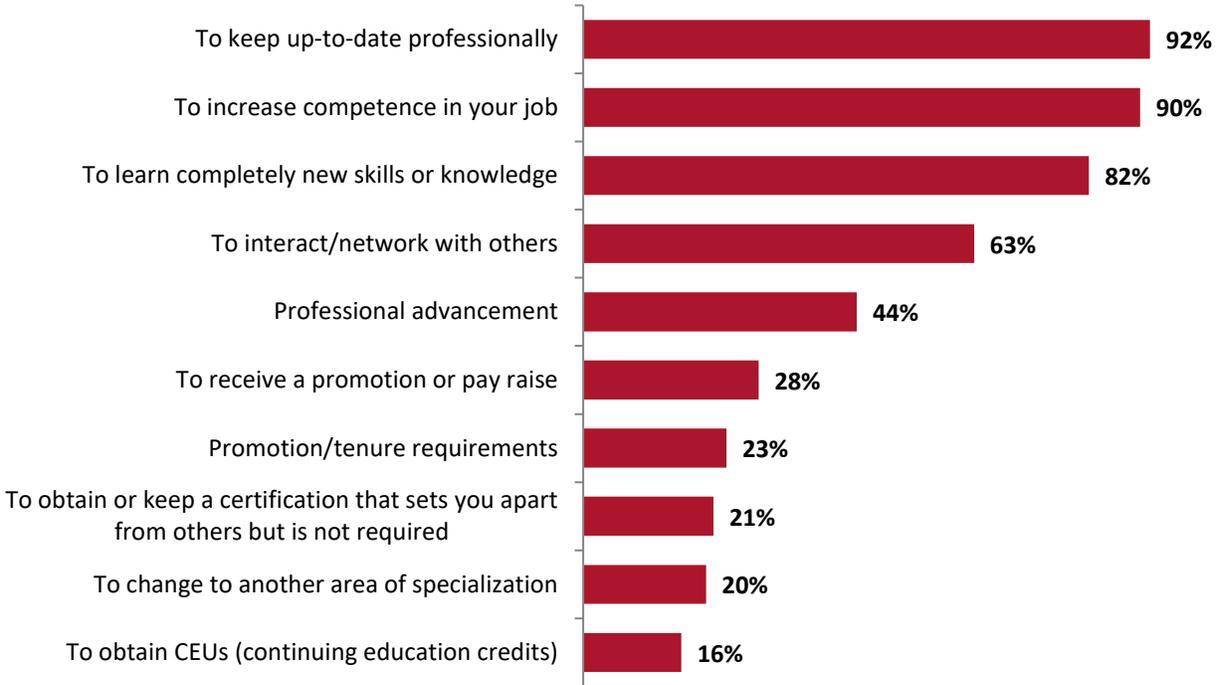
Which of the following professional development opportunities are you most interested in? Select up to three. <i>By position</i>	Librarian who does not supervise (N=201)	Manager/ Supervisors of support staff (N=53)	Department Head/Branch Manager/ Coordinator/ Senior Manager (N=50)	Dean/Chief Officer/ Director or Assistant Director (N=138)	Other (N=50)
Access to information on latest issues, news, trends, best practice and research	72%	72%	56%	63%	66%
Attending professional development/educational programs	60%	57%	54%	45%	54%
Opportunities to connect with and learn from others in the field	53%	49%	74%	56%	48%
Developing standards that support quality and/or guidelines that define critical competencies	24%	34%	40%	49%	26%
Opportunities to serve and contribute to the profession	20%	21%	22%	20%	28%
Advancing knowledge through research activities	15%	15%	4%	10%	12%
Supporting entry of new professionals into the field	8%	6%	16%	10%	20%
Mentoring opportunities	6%	6%	8%	7%	10%
Other, please specify	2%	2%	0%	4%	0%
None of the above	1%	0%	0%	1%	8%

Staying up-to-date appeared as the top reason to participate in professional development. When asked to rate how strong of a motivation various factors play in motivating respondent to participate in professional development, 92% of respondents rated “to keep up-to-date professionally” as a “4” or “5,” (both indicating very strong motivation) on a five-point scale. This finding is not surprising as the professional development opportunity respondents showed the greatest interest in was “access to information on latest issues, news, trends, best practice and research.” Another 90% of respondents rated “increasing competence in your job” as a “4” or “5” when it comes to participating in professional development.



**Please indicate how much of a factor each of the following plays in motivating you to participate in professional development.  
% selecting "4" or "5, very strong motivation"**

**N = 501**

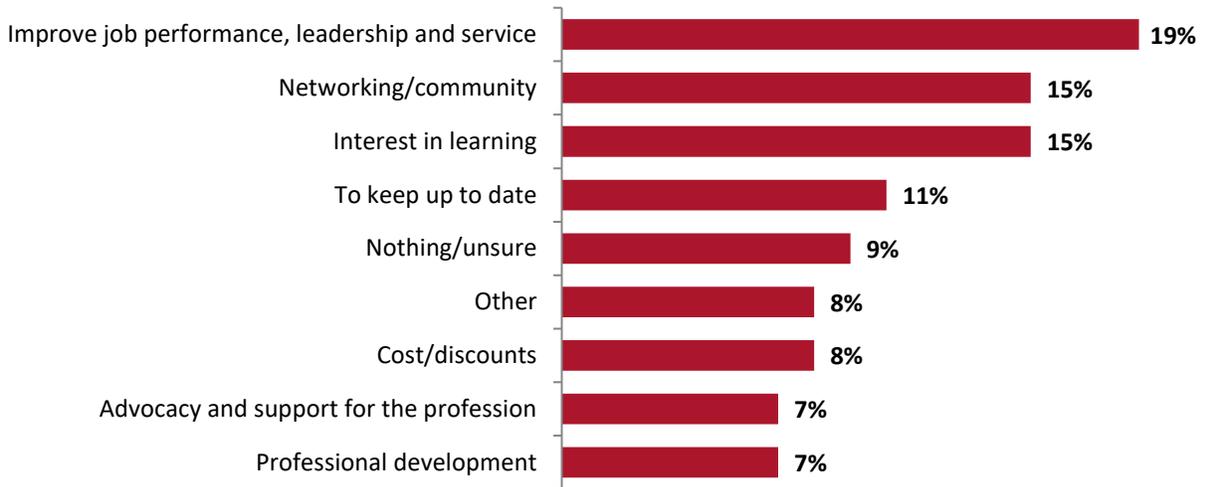


Key differences emerged when segmented by tenure in the profession. Seventy-three percent of those with 5 or fewer years of tenure in the profession rated “To interact/network with others” as a “4” or “5,” (both very strong motivations) compared to 62% of those with 21 plus years of tenure. In addition, 69% of respondents with 5 or fewer years of tenure rated “professional advancement” as a “4” or “5+ compared to only 30% of those with 21 plus years of tenure.

<b>Please indicate how much of a factor each of the following plays in motivating you to participate in professional development. % selecting "4" or "5, very strong motivation"</b>	<b>5 years or less (N=62)</b>	<b>6-10 years (N=89)</b>	<b>11-20 years (N=172)</b>	<b>21 or more years (N=158)</b>
<b>By tenure in the profession</b>				
<b>To increase competence in your job</b>	95%	95%	90%	88%
<b>To keep up-to-date professionally</b>	90%	92%	93%	91%
<b>To learn completely new skills or knowledge</b>	81%	87%	80%	84%
<b>To interact/network with others</b>	73%	63%	62%	62%
<b>Professional advancement</b>	69%	51%	47%	30%
<b>To receive a promotion or pay raise</b>	40%	37%	26%	23%
<b>Promotion/tenure requirements</b>	33%	27%	23%	17%
<b>To change to another area of specialization</b>	32%	18%	24%	11%
<b>To obtain or keep a certification that sets you apart from others but is not required</b>	32%	26%	23%	13%
<b>To obtain CEUs (continuing education credits)</b>	25%	21%	14%	12%

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify any other factors that motivate them to participate in professional development. The top response was to improve job performance, leadership and service (19%). This was followed by networking and the community (15%) and a general interest in learning (15%).

**Please use the space below to share any other factors motivating you to participate in professional development.  
(Open-ended, N=71)**



Respondents were then asked to rate various professional development formats in terms of their preference for the formats. Seventy-five percent of respondents rated “face-to-face meeting as part of a conference in my region” as a “4” or “5, most preferred” on a five-point scale. This was followed by “online tools and resources” (72%) and “webinar” (69%).

**Please rate your preferences for the following professional development formats.**

**% selecting "4" or "5, most preferred"**

**N = 499**



When segmented by tenure in the profession, 61% of respondents with 5 or fewer years of experience rated “face-to-face meeting as part of a national conference” as a “4” or “5, most preferred” while only 50% of those with 21 plus years of experience also rated it as a “4” or “5, most preferred.” The full crosstab analysis is displayed below.

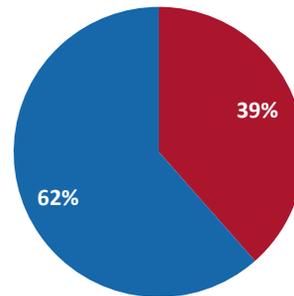
<b>Please rate your preferences for the following professional development formats</b> <b>% selecting "4" or "5, most preferred"</b> <b>By tenure in the profession</b>	<b>5 years or less (N=64)</b>	<b>6-10 years (N=92)</b>	<b>11-20 years (N=175)</b>	<b>21 or more years (N=163)</b>
<b>Face-to-face meeting as part of a conference in my region</b>	81%	85%	70%	74%
<b>Online tools and resources</b>	76%	67%	72%	74%
<b>Webinar</b>	67%	72%	63%	73%
<b>Face-to-face meeting as part of a national conference</b>	61%	43%	52%	50%
<b>Online course</b>	59%	51%	55%	60%
<b>Face-to-face meeting offered by my employer in-house</b>	49%	43%	42%	37%
<b>Face-to-face meeting, not at a conference</b>	38%	41%	40%	40%

To understand where ACRL stands in the minds of respondents when it comes to professional development resources, respondents were asked whether they consider ACRL to be their primary association for professional development resources. Thirty-nine percent of respondents do consider ACRL to be their primary association for professional development resources while the rest do not.

**Do you consider ACRL to be your primary association for professional development resources?**

**N = 491**

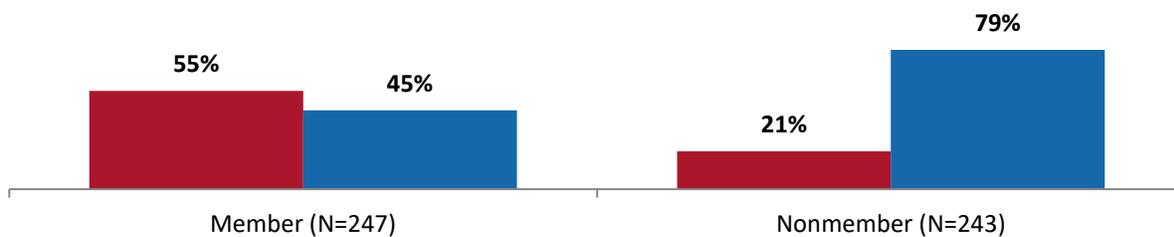
■ Yes ■ No



When segmented by membership status, current ACRL members are much more likely to view ACRL as their primary association for professional development resources. Fifty-five percent of members consider ACRL their primary association for professional development resources whereas only 21% of nonmembers feel the same.

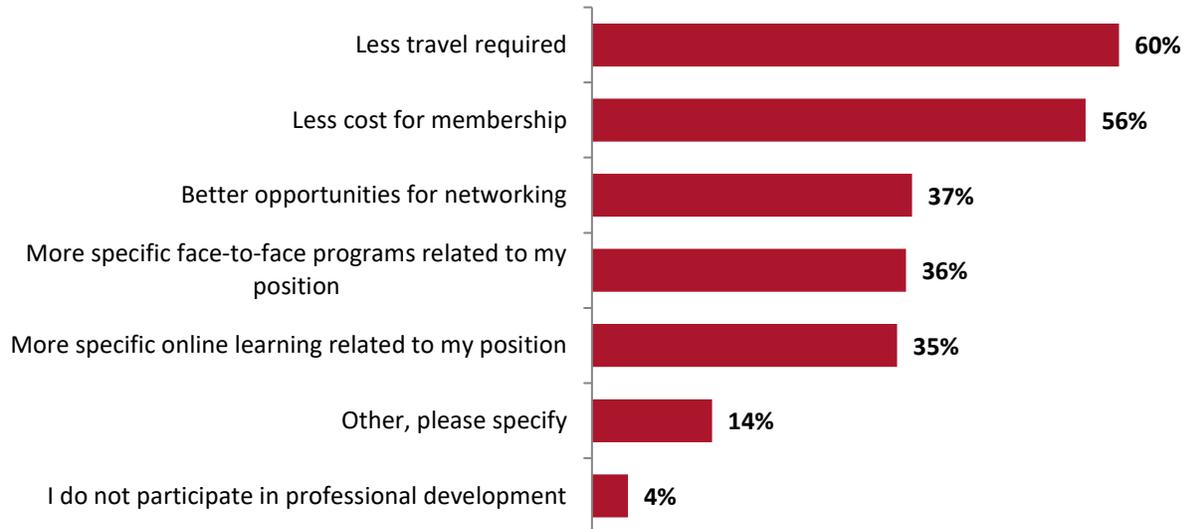
**Do you consider ACRL to be your primary association for professional development resources?  
By membership status**

■ Yes ■ No



Those respondents who indicated that ACRL is not their primary association for professional development resources were presented a follow-up question asking them to indicate what makes other associations more valuable than ACRL. The top response was “less travel required” (60%) reflecting a preference for local/regional resources. In addition, 56% of respondents selected “less cost for membership.” Segmentation by institutional setting reveals that 65% of respondents from rural settings chose “less travel required” while only 52% of respondents from urban settings also selected this answer option. Segmentation by membership status reveals that 63% of nonmembers selected “less cost for membership” compared to only 45% of members.

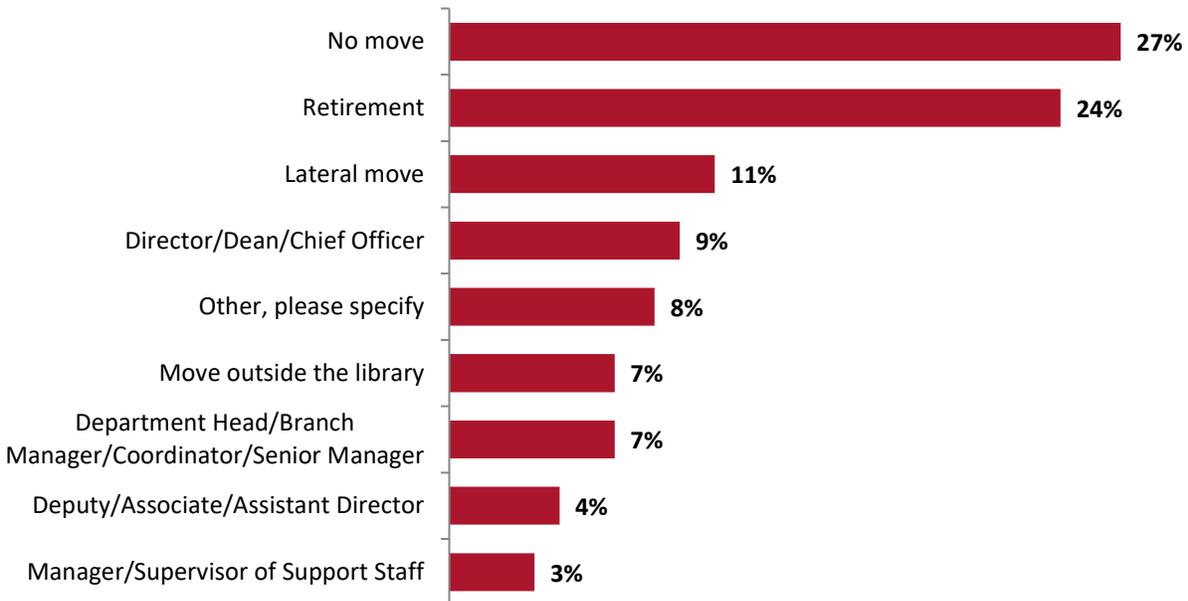
**If ACRL is not your primary association for professional development, what makes other associations more valuable than ACRL? Select all that apply.**  
**N = 293**



When asked to select the next job position/role they expect to move into, the greatest number of respondents selected “no move” (27%). This was followed by “retirement” (24%) and “lateral move” (11%). This indicates that 62% of respondents do not expect any upward movement in their careers.

**Considering your desired career progression, what is the next job position/role you expect to move into?**

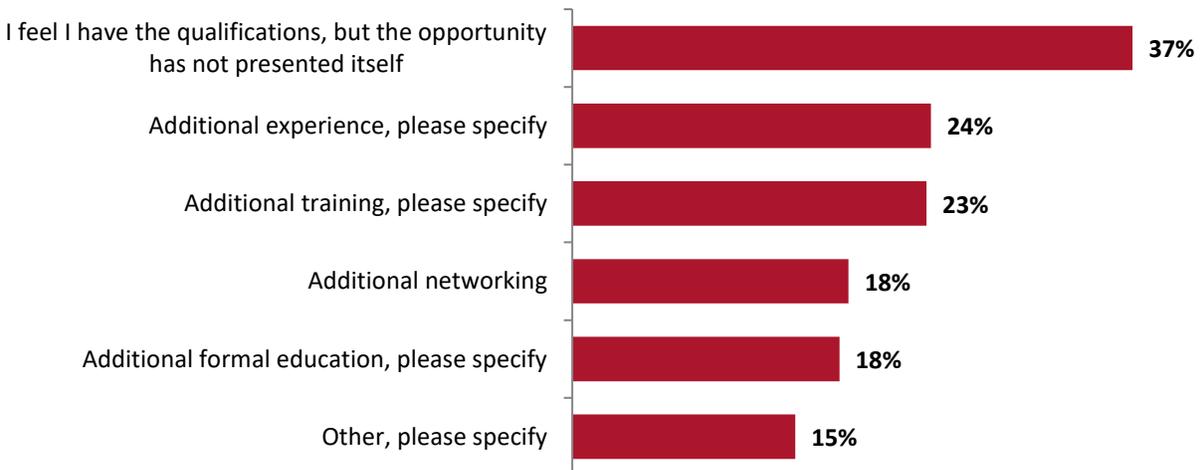
**N = 501**



Any respondent who did not select “No move” or “Retirement” in the previous question was presented a follow-up question asking what would be helpful in attaining the position they had selected in the previous question. Thirty-seven percent selected “I feel I have the qualifications, but the opportunity has not presented itself.”

**What do you think would be most helpful for you to attain the next position/role you indicated in the previous question? Select all that apply.**

**N = 349**



Segmentation by tenure in the profession shows that 51% of respondents with 5 or fewer years of experience selected “additional experience”, followed by “additional training” (41%), “additional formal education” (29%) and “additional networking” (27%).

Respondents had the opportunity to expand upon their selection for many of the options offered in the previous question. The tables below show the top three responses for each answer option that included an open-ended field.

**Additional experience, please specify:**  
(N=63)

- General experience, and time to get hands on experience (30%)
- Supervisory/management experience (23%)
- Budgeting experience (14%)

**Additional training, please specify:**  
(N=69)

- Business, management/ leadership training (41%)
- Technical training and tools (29%)
- Teaching, instructional design, assessment (11%)

**Additional formal education, please specify:**  
(N=57)

- Masters (27%)
- PhD (23%)
- EdD (9%)

**Other, please specify:**  
(N=47)

- Nothing, N/A (29%)
- Already reached goal (24%)
- Retired/soon retiring (24%)

## Recommendations

### MEMBERSHIP MARKETING PLAN

Community college librarians are a large untapped market for ACRL. Survey research demonstrates that this is a viable market for ACRL, with 21% of nonmembers reporting they are likely to join and 33% percent feeling neutral on the matter. Further, it appears there is limited market competition as there is no single association or organization dominating the marketplace. This is reflected in responses to the marketplace question asking respondents to identify the organization that provides the best educational opportunities, offers the most valuable networking, etc. Respondents were split across the board with a significant portion being unsure. This presents an opportunity for ACRL solidify its position as the professional home for community college librarians and grow its membership within this target audience. Today, the needs, preferences and expectations of community college librarians are closely aligned with many of ACRL's current benefits and services, making this a smart option for member growth. That said, work must be done to prepare the association to properly engage with this population:

- **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.

The following recommendations address Step 1. McKinley has developed a value proposition statement for the community college librarian audience and has identified strategies to address gaps in the value proposition to maximize value and ensure the association delivers on its member promise.

## Value Proposition

A value proposition highlights what a member may expect to gain by joining, how your product solves problems and improves situations, and offers a compelling summary of why members should buy from your association over your competitors. The value proposition of an organization is the lynchpin of its marketing, communications and branding efforts. Further, it provides direction to departments on the development of benefits and resources. The graphic below outlines the primary need of community college librarians, the current and aspirational products/resources that meet this need, the benefits of engaging in each product and the resulting value proposition statement. It should be noted that this value proposition statement should complement and support ACRL’s overarching value proposition statement, which should be relevant for all members and stakeholders.

<b>Target Market: <i>Community College Librarians</i></b>	
<b>Member Need:</b> Information, education, and the support of a likeminded community to strengthen their library and help students achieve their dreams.	
<p><b>Product Features:</b></p> <p><b><u>Webinars</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert Panels</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>• Trends and best practices</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Website</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curated resources</li> <li>• Online forum for peer-to-peer learning</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Newsletter</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACRL News and Opportunities</li> <li>• Trends and best practices</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Annual Meeting Track/Regional Meetings</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends and best practices</li> <li>• Networking and sharing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Member Benefits:</b></p> <p><b><u>Be Informed</u></b> – We focus on the topics that are most pressing and timely to our members so you can stay current on library trends and improve service to your community.</p> <p><b><u>Become Part of a Community</u></b> – Our welcoming community offers an ear to listen and a shoulder to lean on.</p> <p><b><u>Give Back</u></b> – Share with your peers, mentor the future leaders of the field and advocate for the profession as a valued member of the ACRL community.</p> <p><b><u>Life-long Learner</u></b> – Our content engages our members as life-long seekers of knowledge.</p>
<b>Value Proposition Statement Options:</b> With up-to-date trend news, customized education and a community of likeminded peers, ACRL gives you the support you need so you can help students achieve their dreams. ACRL is your professional home, providing customized education opportunities, tools and resources that help you implement best practices that are tailored to your unique academic setting.	

## Value Proposition Gaps

The following section highlights optional opportunities for ACRL to consider that would deliver on existing gaps in its value proposition statement. These recommendations are based on survey response data and McKinley's expertise and knowledge of best practices and may be implemented at ACRL's discretion.

### DEMONSTRATE IMPACT

ACRL's core value drivers (general news and trends, journals and information and providing a professional community) were cited as the top three reasons to join. However, a perceived disconnect emerged as respondents indicated they would gain *greater value* if ACRL placed more emphasis on community college librarians in communications, events and offerings; fostered a greater sense of community for the profession; and explicitly stated the value that membership brings to community college librarians. This shows that members are not able to make the connection between how ACRL is currently supporting community college librarians or the students they serve. Seeing this connection is critical to demonstrating value and creating the viewpoint that membership is not optional but rather necessary to the success of their libraries and student body. To strengthen the connection and demonstrate the impact ACRL has on community college librarians and their work, McKinley recommends the following:

- **Consistently reiterate the value proposition** and, where appropriate, specifically address community college librarians in messaging and communications.
- **Use testimonial narratives and impact stories** that communicate the tangible impact of ACRL membership on the issues that matter most to community college librarians. Include contact information, which will allow members to continue the conversation.
- **Instill a sense of pride in members' work and the field** overall by highlighting the important impact the profession has had on students. Consider including these key statistics in an infographic that clearly communicates the unsung contributions of community college librarians in a way that is easy to understand and share with the greater profession of librarians and educators.

### CREATE A PROFESSIONAL HOME FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIANS

A critical piece to establishing life-long membership value is rooted in developing an emotional connection with the association and fellow members. ACRL faces distinct challenges in integrating the community college librarian community as a valued part of the academic librarian community. Overall, just half of respondents agreed that they felt welcome in ACRL, less than half (47%) felt it is "THE organization for professionals like me," and only 31% felt like a valued member of the ACRL community. Responses from rural programs and managers/supervisors were more stark, with 22% of rural programs and 19% of managers/supervisors indicating that they felt like a valued member of the ACRL community – both groups significantly differing from their counterparts. While concerning, this does present some foundational opportunities to make changes that will enhance the feelings of inclusiveness and value. Establishing culture and changing preconceptions is a long-term process that requires consistent efforts and strong leadership.

**Revisit Organizational Values:** Organizational values represent essential, non-negotiable tenets that drive an organization’s behavior, decision making and culture. They help clarify the identity of the company and can be important tools in recruitment and retention efforts. Staff and volunteer leadership are stewards of an organization’s values and are responsible for ensuring these translate into the member experience. Given ACRL’s challenge in making all members feel welcome and valued, McKinley recommends the association adjust its Core Organizational Values, and consider values such as *respect*, *community* or even *inclusion*, to exemplify ACRL’s commitment to making everyone feel like respected members of the ACRL community.

**Ensure Representation in Volunteer Leadership:** ACRL’s website indicates that representation of community colleges on the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL division-level committees, including ACRL conference planning committees, could be expanded to provide a stronger voice from this member segment. The current listing of the Board of Directors indicates no obvious representation from community college libraries, although there is one designated representative per the requirements of ACRL Bylaws. In this instance, McKinley recommends noting this representation online by denoting the individual as the “Community College Representative,” and ensuring that the community college representative is recognized and acknowledged on the CJCLS website, to promote the active role of community college librarians within ACRL.

Overall, McKinley believes that ACRL would benefit from a high-level audit to ensure balance on public facing engagement opportunities. This would help community college librarians to identify with ACRL and feel their interests are represented. ACRL’s research data indicates that community colleges reflect 33.1% of postsecondary institutions. While proportional representation may not be the right goal, increasing the representation of community colleges would ensure that the views and needs of those libraries are represented within the association and its events. McKinley encourages ACRL to emphasize awareness among volunteer leaders of the need to enhance community college participation among the division level committees, with a goal of broadening engagement from this member segment through active and focused recruitment efforts. Bringing that voice into the room will not only increase participation by this segment, but it will demonstrate that those voices are valued by ACRL. Even the act of soliciting participation from this member segment will communicate that ACRL values community college libraries.

**Highlight in News and Member Profiles:** A review of the ACRL Insider blog revealed two features (*ACRL Member of the Week* and *ACRL Organizational Member of the Month*) used to highlight ACRL personal and organizational members in a Q&A format that provides greater insight into their interests, motivations, and goals. Not since inception of the *Organizational Member Spotlight*, nor since a November 2016 edition of the *ACRL Insider*, has a community college or a librarian at a community college been featured in these member profile pieces. When individuals or organizations cannot see themselves reflected in the association, they are less likely to participate or join. ACRL should conduct targeted outreach to these institutions and individuals to solicit interest in participation in the member profile articles. It appears that participation in these articles

may be based on self-selection; however, since this audience does not view themselves as part of the association, it will require ACRL to initiate outreach to engage their participation.

## **DEVELOP TARGETED RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Survey and interview research confirmed that community college librarians have challenges and preferences that are unique to their academic setting. As such, ACRL will need to develop targeted resources and communications that speak directly to this population. News, information and best practices appeared as key value drivers for this audience, yet only 37% of survey respondents agreed ACRL is the first place they turn for information and resources. Given these findings, McKinley recommends ACRL prioritize benefits and services that will position the association as a primary source of valuable news and information.

### ***Strengthen Visibility of Community College Libraries via the Website and ACRL Publications:***

Although ACRL currently offers a targeted website and newsletter for this audience, both offer limited value in their current state. The CJCLS website is difficult to find and is currently used to offer information on CJCLS versus providing tangible resources and benefits to the end-user. Association websites are often the primary touchpoint for membership and offer a key opportunity to engage members and deliver value. This is especially true in ACRL's case given the value drivers for community college librarians. ACRL has an opportunity to position the CJCLS website as the premier resource for community college librarians. Over time, ACRL should transition the website into a robust library of articles, tools and resources for this audience.

Similarly, ACRL could consider developing a column for its publication, *College & Research Libraries News*, to focus on the specific concerns of community college libraries. By consistently devoting space to this member segment within an association publication, ACRL can increase the visibility of this segment and communicate its value. Development of this news resource delivers value on many fronts, including an increased sense of community among this audience and an ability to see ACRL as their professional home and primary resource for news and information in this field.

***Organize a Curricular Track Within the ACRL Biennial Meeting:*** Survey respondents and interview participants indicated that they felt there was an insufficient amount of relevant content at conferences and that it was often scheduled simultaneously, precluding their ability to attend. With regard to motivation to participate in professional development, 92% of survey respondents indicated they were motivated by the desire to keep up to date professionally, and 63% indicated they were motivated by the opportunity to interact/network with others. Librarians with less position tenure were even more likely to be motivated by networking.

McKinley observed that two of the 82 program sessions listed for the 2017 biennial conference reflected the term "community college" and though that may not accurately reflect the number of speakers from, or the amount of content targeted to this audience, it does lend the outward appearance that the conference content may not have enough relevance to this audience to warrant investment in registration. Thus, McKinley recommends that ACRL develop a curricular track within the biennial conference dedicated to content relevant to community colleges, and ensure

that community college librarians are well represented within the conference program. A more visible presence would likely attract registrations and demonstrate value and inclusivity to the community college librarian member segment. Further, ACRL should consider facilitating targeted networking events onsite to enhance the sense of professional community for this segment.

***Create a Home for Community Colleges Within the ALA Annual Conference:*** In a review of the presenter list for the 2017 ALA Annual Conference, McKinley observed that only five presenters out of 871 listed a community college as their place of employment and only one educational session specifically addressed community colleges in its description. Not all community colleges use the term “community college” in their names, however, when a potential registrant is scanning a brochure to make a purchasing decision, they may develop an assumption that the content will have low relevance to them. This perceived limited representation and engagement by the community college member segment serves to strengthen the perception that ACRL is not the professional home for community college librarians. While McKinley acknowledges that the ALA conference must meet the needs of a broad array of librarians, ACRL could work to encourage submissions from community college librarians through targeted efforts to identify relevant content and the sharing of past successful proposals. To further facilitate the perception of a presence at the ALA Annual Conference, ACRL can create targeted marketing that highlights sessions and events that are particularly relevant to community college libraries. Finally, ACRL can create onsite “meetups” where community college librarians can gather to network and share ideas. Each of these strategies would serve to strengthen the perception of ACRL as the professional home for this member segment.

#### **ENHANCE COMMUNITY FOR PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING AND SUPPORT**

The data suggest that community college librarians consider having a community for networking with other professionals in the field (61%) to be a major factor influencing the decision to join a professional society. For members with less tenure, community was an even greater factor for consideration (70%). However, only 23% of respondents saw ACRL and/or its chapters as providing the most valuable networking activities and just 22% said that either provides the greatest sense of community. In both cases, 49% and 55% of respondents respectively indicated both networking activities and a sense of community are found in another association or source. With respect to professional development, opportunities to learn and connect with others in the field (54%) present the second greatest opportunity of interest.

A strong and vibrant professional community can be a central resource for information, news and best practices via word-of-mouth. Professionals often depend on their network for informal learning. When looking for support in addressing the challenges they face, community college librarians most often cited state/local associations and organizations (30%) and colleagues (25%) – both a reflection of professional community. If ACRL can position itself as the primary facilitator of community among community college librarians, it can improve its standing among this audience while creating a valuable core member benefit that will make ACRL a critical component of the professional lives of its members. In addition, ACRL can strengthen that bond among younger

members, enhancing the potential for long-term relationship and supporting the career pipeline. In light of these findings, McKinley presents the following recommendations:

***Transition Online Engagement Opportunities:*** ACRL indicated that its current discussion list for community college librarians (CJC-L) engages many nonmembers. ACRL and the ALA have a history of using discussion list technology to facilitate dialogue within the academic library community and both ACRL member and nonmember community college librarians have utilized this medium to exchange knowledge, dialogue, and best practices. Discussion lists, however, typically provide limited functionality, while more robust online community platforms provide options including interactive member directories, resource libraries, event calendars, blogging and keyword tagging.

ALA is about to debut the successor to ALA Connect which uses the Higher Logic platform and provides greater functionality than has historically been available. ACRL wisely made the decision to invest resources to support implementation of customized ACRL and ACRL section sites to facilitate a sense of community among ACRL members. In this light, McKinley recommends that ACRL continue on this path by adopting a long-term online community engagement strategy to transition the CJC-L to the Higher Logic platform, with its own custom site, to facilitate and support an enhanced and more transparent sense of community among this member segment. Survey respondents indicated that they would gain greater value from ACRL if there was a greater focus on community college librarians. Through provision of a customized site, ACRL can demonstrate tangible value to this member segment. The community also can serve as a catalyst for converting nonmembers to members by requiring authenticated login for nonmembers which provides an added benefit of allowing ACRL to track new member prospects.

***Engage Member Champions:*** With a strong community of devoted and satisfied members, ACRL has an opportunity to leverage existing members to welcome new members to the organization. It is recommended that ACRL identify “Ambassadors” who can foster a welcoming community for ACRL at the peer level. Ambassadors can welcome new members once or twice a year with a personal call or email and offer to answer any questions the member may have as a way to help new members feel welcome and engaged. Member champions may also be tasked with holding quarterly meet-ups with local members to support peer-to-peer sharing and strengthen the sense of community. ACRL can formally recognize Ambassadors on the website or at conferences and regional meetings with special name tags or ribbons that help them feel appreciated and valued by the organization. Member Ambassadors offer a number of benefits: increasing awareness, building a sense of community and offering leadership opportunities to future leaders within the field.

***Support Chapter and Local Meetups:*** Survey respondents expressed strong desire for ACRL to focus more on the needs of community college librarians, shared their greatest need (news and information), and noted a preference for face-to-face engagement opportunities. However, limited employer support and travel costs often prohibit community college librarians from attending valuable events and meetings. In light of these obstacles, ACRL could consider sponsoring chapter and/or local meetups for community college leaders to share best practices, news and knowledge, and strengthen the bond between those local members and the national organization. Sponsorship

may include monetary contributions, in-kind resource donations, marketing support through event announcements, event calendars and news coverage, and/or supply of event speakers. Ultimately, the goal is for ACRL to be perceived as the primary host behind the meeting to continue to enhance the value proposition that identifies ACRL as the professional home for community college librarians.

## **INCREASE ACCESS TO OFFERINGS**

**Review Pricing Barriers:** Cost appears to be a significant barrier preventing nonmembers and lapsed members from considering membership. This stems from limited employer support and perceptions of limited value based on the cost of dues. Although ACRL offers a strong portfolio of benefits and services, ACRL's current pricing structure may preclude community college librarians from participating. As such, ACRL may consider evaluating its pricing model for education programs.

In an informal review of offerings, McKinley observed that webinars are priced at \$50 each, conferences are priced from \$285 - \$390, and workshops ranged from \$1,150 - \$1,895 for hybrid and face-to-face programs – all exclusive of related travel expenses. Such pricing may not be in line with the market, or may not fit within the budgets of community college libraries. Due to the frequency with which costs were mentioned as an obstacle to participation, McKinley recommends that ACRL consider conducting a review of its educational program pricing strategy to determine competitiveness in the market and alignment with ACRL's target audiences, including community college librarians, with the goal of providing more budget-friendly options for education. In the interim, ACRL may use the following to increase the perceived value of and accessibility to its education offerings:

- Reinforce the value of ACRL membership by offering a free, members-only webinar or education credit each month, which should be clearly communicated and prominently displayed on the website.
- Offer one-time introductory pricing for prospective members or first-time participants to experience first-hand the value of ACRL education.
- Provide engaged members with “passes” to invite nonmembers or never-participants to smaller courses or events to expose their colleagues and peers to ACRL's offerings.
- Bundle relevant courses or offerings into special packages that can be purchased at a discounted price, geared at specific populations.
- Consider offering a discount on online education to those with limited local, in-person resources to acknowledge the barriers they face.

**Edit Website:** ACRL's website indicated multiple e-learning formats to include live webcasts (paid and free), online courses, webinars and online discussion forums. However, it is challenging to discern for which audiences these programs are targeted and when they are scheduled in relation to one another. McKinley recommends that ACRL develop icons or visual cues to represent the intended audiences for its e-learning programs to permit users to easily identify relevant programs. Additionally, website users would benefit from a consolidated and centralized event calendar or listing to identify content that meets their needs for timing. Since cost is a significant concern for

this segment and respondents were evenly split on preference for in-person and online educational programming, McKinley suggests measured expansion of content for this audience to address its cost constraints while minimizing risk to ACRL. Finally, McKinley recommends incorporating photos of individuals within the site to help visitors to be able to visualize their role within the professional community and to begin to identify with ACRL as a professional home.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Supporting the *ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education***

Feedback from survey respondents and interviewees indicated that feelings of frustration continue to persist among community college librarians regarding ACRL's recent transition from standards to a learning framework. Recognizing that ACRL is currently addressing these frustrations, McKinley offers the following suggestions to accelerate the transition in a way that recognizes these challenges and continues to move ACRL forward.

- **Continue to openly acknowledge challenges presented by the transition to the Framework.** ACRL is engaged in dialogue about the framework and should invite its members to express their frustrations and challenges in an open environment to demonstrate transparency. With initiatives that require change, vocal members are often simply seeking acknowledgement that their concerns have been heard. By providing validation and support, ACRL can demonstrate that it values feedback from its constituencies, thus strengthening the relationship with these groups.
- **Continue to identify and share success stories from members who have adopted the Framework.** As members begin to feel heard, they will be more open to considering how they could make use of the new framework. ACRL could highlight member *Impact Stories* – narratives that motivate individuals to consider how the framework has had a powerful, positive and tangible impact on the professional work of the individual and his or her students. These narratives are like testimonials but more in-depth and, at best, have story structure. Narratives can be presented in both written and video form. Compared to a testimonial which, in video form, could run as short as 10-15 seconds, these stories may run 1-2 minutes. The impact of these stories rests fundamentally in finding the member spokespersons with the strongest stories to tell. Ideally, stories shared in a variety of formats will reach a broad audience and begin to change the perceptions of the framework and ACRL.

## Appendix

### DEMOGRAPHICS

What type of organization best describes your work setting?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	743
Two-year/transfer associate degree (AA & AS degree)	75%
Two-year/four-year (predominately AA or AS degrees)	8%
Two-year/technical <sup>2</sup>	17%
Are you currently a member of the Association of College & Research Librarians (ACRL)?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	732
Yes	46%
No	54%
What type of organization best describes your work setting?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	495
Public	96%
Independent	3%
Tribal	1%
Which of the following best describes the setting of your institution?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	499
Suburban	43%
Urban	33%
Rural	24%
Which of the following best describes the residential status of your institution?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	498
Non-residential	72%
Mixed-type	18%
Residential	10%
How does your institution identify itself for the purpose of accreditation?	
<i>Sample Size</i>	497
Multi-Campus	60%
Single Campus	40%

- The majority (75%) of respondents selected “Two-year/transfer associate degree (AA & AS degree)” when asked what best describes their organization. Those respondents who did not indicate they work at a community college were excluded from analysis.
- Forty-six percent of respondents are current members of ACRL.
- The majority (96%) of respondents work at public institutions. Three percent work at independent and 1% at tribal institutions.
- When asked about the setting of their institution, 43% of respondents selected “Suburban”, 33% selected “Urban” and 24% selected “Rural.”
- When asked about the residential status of their institution, the majority (72%) selected “Non-residential”, 18% selected “Mixed-type” and 10% selected “Residential.”
- Sixty percent of respondents work at a multi-campus institution and the remainder work at a single campus institution.

<sup>2</sup> During survey fielding, the answer option was changed from the single option “Two-year/technical” to two options, “Two-year/transfer associate degree (AA & AS degree)” and “Two-year/four-year (predominately AA or AS degrees).” Respondents that did not select these answer options were excluded from analysis.



<b>How does your institution identify itself by FTE (Full-Time Equivalent)?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	496
Very small: Less than 1,000	5%
Small: 1,000-3,000	22%
Medium: 3,000-10,000	42%
Large: 10,000-30,000	26%
Very large: Greater than 30,000	6%
<b>Which of the following best describes your current employment status?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	491
Full time	89%
Part time	11%
<b>How many years have you been a member of the profession?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	501
Library school student	0%
Less than 1 year	1%
1 – 5 years	12%
6 – 10 years	19%
11 – 15 years	15%
16 – 20 years	20%
21 or more years	33%
<b>What best describes your position?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	497
Librarian who does not supervise	41%
Director/Dean/Chief Officer	26%
Manager/Supervisor of support staff	11%
Department Head/Branch Manager/Coordinator/Senior Manager	10%
Other, please specify	7%
Beginning librarian	2%
Deputy/Associate/Assistant Director	2%
<b>Which of the following best describes your tenure status?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	494
Tenured	29%
Non-tenured, on a tenure track	12%
Non-tenured, not on a tenure track	59%

- The largest percentage of respondents (42%) work at medium-sized institutions (3,000-10,000 FTE). Thirty-two percent of respondents work at large or very large institutions (10,000 or greater FTE) and 27% work at small or very small institutions (3,000 or fewer FTE).
- Eighty-nine percent of respondents currently work full time.
- Respondents showed long tenures in the profession. One third (33%) have been in the profession for 21 years or more. Only 13% have been in the profession for five years or less.
- When asked to select the position that best describes their position, 41% selected “Librarian who does not supervise”. Another 26% selected “Director/Dean/Chief Officer.”
- The majority of respondents (59%) are non-tenured and not on a tenure track. Twelve percent are non-tenured, but on a tenure track and 29% are tenured.

<b>What is your primary job function? Please select up to three. Top 10 Responses</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>501</i>
Instruction and/or reference	62%
Collection development/management	28%
Administration	28%
Library faculty/education	14%
Cataloging/technical services	12%
Electronic resources	11%
Research services	11%
Liaison	10%
Outreach and/or marketing	10%
Access services	7%
<b>Using your best estimate, when do you plan to retire?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>496</i>
Less than 5 years	20%
5-9 years	15%
10-14 years	14%
15-19 years	15%
20-24 years	14%
24-35 years	18%
More than 35 years	4%
<b>What is your gender or gender identity?</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>497</i>
Female	77%
Male	19%
Other, please specify	1%
Prefer not to respond	4%
<b>What is your ethnicity? You may select more than one option.</b>	
<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>497</i>
Caucasian/White	83%
Prefer not to respond	7%
Asian	5%
African-American	4%
Hispanic	3%
Native American	1%
Other, please specify	1%
Middle Eastern	1%
Non-White Hispanic	1%

- When asked to select their primary job function, the majority (62%) selected “Instruction and/or reference.” Twenty-eight percent selected “Collection development/management” while another 28% selected “Administration.”
- When asked to estimate when they plan to retire, respondents were quite varied in their responses. Every grouping of years except “Less than 5 years” and “More than 35 years” had between 10% and 20% of respondents. Twenty percent of respondents selected “Less than 5 years” and 4% selected “More than 35 years.”
- Seventy-seven percent of respondents identified as female and 19% identified as male.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents identified as Caucasian/white when asked about their ethnicity. Seven percent indicated they would prefer not to respond and 5% selected “Asian.”

In which state do you currently work? Grouped by Region	
<i>Sample Size</i>	492
South	34%
West	25%
Midwest	24%
Northeast	17%

- Over one-third (34%) of respondents are from the South region of the United States, 25% from the West, 24% from the Midwest, and 17% from the Northeast.