

Research Library Issues

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Special Issue on the ARL Strategic Plan 2010–2012

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Introduction

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Strategic Plan, adopted in 2004 and revised during 2009, frames the work of the Association within Strategic Directions and Enabling Capabilities (see illustration below). This organization is rational and purposeful and focused to meet the challenges of the ARL Mission Statement.

ARL Mission Statement

ARL influences the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, facilitating the emergence of new roles for research libraries, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations.

ARL Strategic Directions & Enabling Capabilities 2010–2012



The illustration conveys the conceptual model that underpins the work and close relationships between and amongst the Strategic Directions and Enabling Capabilities, and highlights the transformation zone that lies at their intersection. Each of the domains circumscribed by the three Strategic Directions is dynamically and radically evolving, often with influences on the others. Research libraries remain vital by embracing opportunities to improve their

performance *even as changes are still taking place* in the realms of public policies and in systems of scholarly communication, thereby advancing a strategic transformation locally in ways that enhance research and scholarship at each member institution. Accordingly, ARL maintains a strong capacity for advocacy and influence, for measurement and assessment, for environmental scanning and strategic thinking, and for developing leadership for positive change. Some of the ways ARL works in the transformation zone between and among the Strategic Directions identified above include:

- Analyze trends and needs, and identify solutions.
- Assess policies, new models, new strategies.
- Advocate for positive change.
- Enable collective member library responses and action.
- Articulate and promote best practices.
- Extend community and expertise through alliances and partnerships.
- Serve as a convener of member libraries initiating experimental projects.

The Nature and Influence of ARL's Membership

ARL's strategic plan was reviewed and updated by member library representatives in the same year that the world economy was in a freefall, with conditions unmatched since the Great Depression of the 1930s, when the Association was established. The contemporary economic circumstances were a stark reminder to this generation of research library leaders that ARL's very reason for being—and its greatest asset—is its ability to convene the leadership of major research libraries and foster collective positions and actions that can achieve an impact greater than would be possible if undertaken by one or a smaller number of libraries.

ARL represents 124 large and distinctive research libraries in the US and Canada. Speaking with one voice, these institutions exert a significant level of influence within the North American research and higher education marketplace and communities. And when ARL libraries partner with other kinds of libraries and with other organizations in common cause, they further extend their influence. ARL's new strategic plan recognizes this strength and underscores the need for the Association and its member libraries to have a bias for collective actions and

collaboration. The new plan also builds on long-standing guiding principles articulated in 2005 and reaffirmed in the recent review process by the Strategic Plan Review Task Force (see accompanying statement of Guiding Principles).

Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the ARL Strategic Planning Review Task Force in its work. The “we” in these statements refers to the Association.

Distinctive Mission

- We complement and build on the strengths of other organizations.
- We rethink historic assumptions.
- Our policy positions guide our strategies.

Community

- We are a member-driven organization.
- We are accountable to our members.
- We provide opportunity for full engagement by all member representatives.
- We respect the diversity of our membership.

Intellectual Freedom and Scholarly Communication

- We promote and advocate barrier-free access to research and educational information resources.

Collaboration

- We build relationships with other higher education societies and associations that share our common goals.
- We work closely with other library-related associations, councils, federations, etc.

Diversity

- We encourage and support our members as they strive to reflect society’s diversity in their staffing, collections, leadership, and programs.
- We strive to employ a diverse staff.

Challenges ARL Will Address in the Next Three Years

What problems will ARL be addressing during the three-year life of the new strategic plan? The plan identifies challenges that research libraries face in common and, in particular, those where ARL can play a role in finding a solution that can be achieved principally through collective action and with modest resources. These are all challenges that are mutable and, if not soluble in the next three years, should at least be positively influenced through our concerted actions. In looking across the trends that are underway within and among the three Strategic Directions, the following large and long-term problems emerge.

• **Out-of-Balance Intellectual Property Policies**

Complex policy and legal environments for intellectual property in Canada and the United States are dominated by an emphasis on commercial goals.

For example, this occurs despite the US constitutional requirement that copyright is granted “to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing *for limited times* to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.” In some instances, higher education communities lack unifying positions on different intellectual property domains (patents, copyrights, public domain), and adopt highly varied policy and practice at the local level.

- **The Absence of Mechanisms for Research Libraries to Influence the Marketplace**

Many consider the scholarly communication environment to be dysfunctional and fragmented, evincing monopolistic characteristics, and failing to deliver all disciplinary research at a reasonable price and on an equal footing. There is an absence of robust and sufficiently powerful mechanisms for cooperative action by the research library community to influence markets and undertake common project development.

- **Policies and Practices that Inhibit Innovation and Enduring Access**

Accessible technologies and ubiquitous networks have transformed individual expectations about access to information and methods of communication. New forms of publishing and innovative scholarly products have emerged and in some disciplines have sparked entirely new systems of scholarly communications. Many public and institutional policies and practices lag behind these changes and need to be updated in order to support rather than inhibit innovations and enduring access to scholarship and information.

- **The Need to Reconfigure Research Library Organizations and Services**

The value of research libraries to the research enterprise is changing. Especially in a constrained economic climate, a new place must be created for the research library that recognizes and leverages the “Google world” and the emergence of collaborative research. New strategies are needed to reconfigure research library organizations and services and build increasingly diverse and talented staff to provide leadership and technical skills that are responsive to this rapidly changing environment.

With these long-term problems clearly in mind, ARL can exploit varied tactics for moving forward the research library agenda. The outcomes designated in the 2010–2012 Strategic Plan provide a framework for ARL's work and the strategies suggest areas where actions may bear results. The problems noted above are the ones we seek to address across ARL programs and in close cooperation with our partners, the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), as well as with any other allied organization that shares with us common memberships or goals.

The Roles of ARL's Enabling Capabilities

ARL's budget and staff are organized around the plan's Strategic Directions and Enabling Capabilities. The Strategic Directions are described fully in the plan that follows. Enabling Capabilities are categories of effort that provide support across the entire organization. They include Governance, Membership Meetings, Communications & Alliances, as well as two key areas that warrant a closer look to illustrate their contributions to ARL's agenda: Statistics & Assessment and Diversity & Leadership.

Statistics & Assessment

The ARL Statistics & Assessment program focuses on describing and measuring the performance of research libraries and their contributions to research, scholarship, and community service. ARL serves a leadership role in the development, testing, and application of academic library performance measures, statistics, and management tools. The program provides analysis and reporting of quantitative and qualitative indicators of library collections, personnel, and services by using a variety of evidence-gathering mechanisms and tools.

Library assessment has gained in prominence as institutional calls for greater accountability abound. The Library Assessment Conference (co-sponsored by the University of Virginia Library and the University of Washington Libraries) is a biennial event gathering a vibrant community of practitioners and researchers engaged with the critical mission of demonstrating the value of the library in today's ever-changing environment.

The recent strategic planning process reinforced the Statistics & Assessment program's collaboration with the Transforming Research Libraries Strategic Direction. There is a need to articulate transformed library roles and to

accelerate the development of qualitative indicators of the contributions of research libraries, as well as tools that research libraries may use locally to demonstrate their value. The Statistics & Assessment capability also contributes to the other Strategic Directions by providing data about the characteristics and use of research libraries that describes the transformations underway and can be used to advocate for positive change.

Diversity & Leadership

ARL's Diversity Programs recruit people from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups into careers in research libraries and prepare minority librarians for advancement into leadership positions in ARL libraries. An annual Leadership Symposium—a component of the ARL Diversity Programs—provides MLIS students with programming on the strategic directions of ARL as well as on issues related to transitioning into, and building career networks in, research libraries.

In addition to those being undertaken through the Diversity Programs, ARL's other leadership development efforts have been focused on two priorities: executive leadership development and succession planning in research libraries. The most recent strategic planning process reinforced these priorities as key to preparing the next generation of library directors and preparing senior library administrators to take on the challenges of the transformed research library.

The centerpiece of ARL's efforts to pursue succession planning is the Research Library Leadership Fellows (RLLF) Program. The RLLF is ARL's executive leadership program, designed and sponsored by ARL member libraries. The program offers an opportunity for development of future senior-level leaders in large research libraries, exposing and engaging library staff with the potential for leadership to themes and institutions that enhance their preparedness to be a dean or director in an ARL library.

Beginning in 2010, ARL's diversity and leadership development activities are being brought under the guidance of a new Board committee on Diversity & Leadership, with the goal of creating a nexus that will provide a pipeline from Diversity Programs into the senior leadership development program. The work in the arenas of diversity and leadership makes a direct contribution to the Transforming Research Libraries Strategic Direction, which seeks to have a diverse and growing body of professionals prepared to develop new roles and work in new modes. In addition, success in this work contributes to the fulfillment of mandates for increased advocacy that recur within the goals of the other Strategic Directions.

Identifying ARL's Action Agenda

By deliberate decision, the three-year plan omits a detailed action agenda. Action agendas are developed on an ongoing basis by ARL committees, working groups, and task forces populated largely by member library representatives. The committee structure reflects the framework of the Strategic Plan (see illustration on page 9), with three Strategic Direction Steering Committees carrying primary responsibility for defining priorities in their arenas. The Board has final authority with respect to adoption of the action agenda.

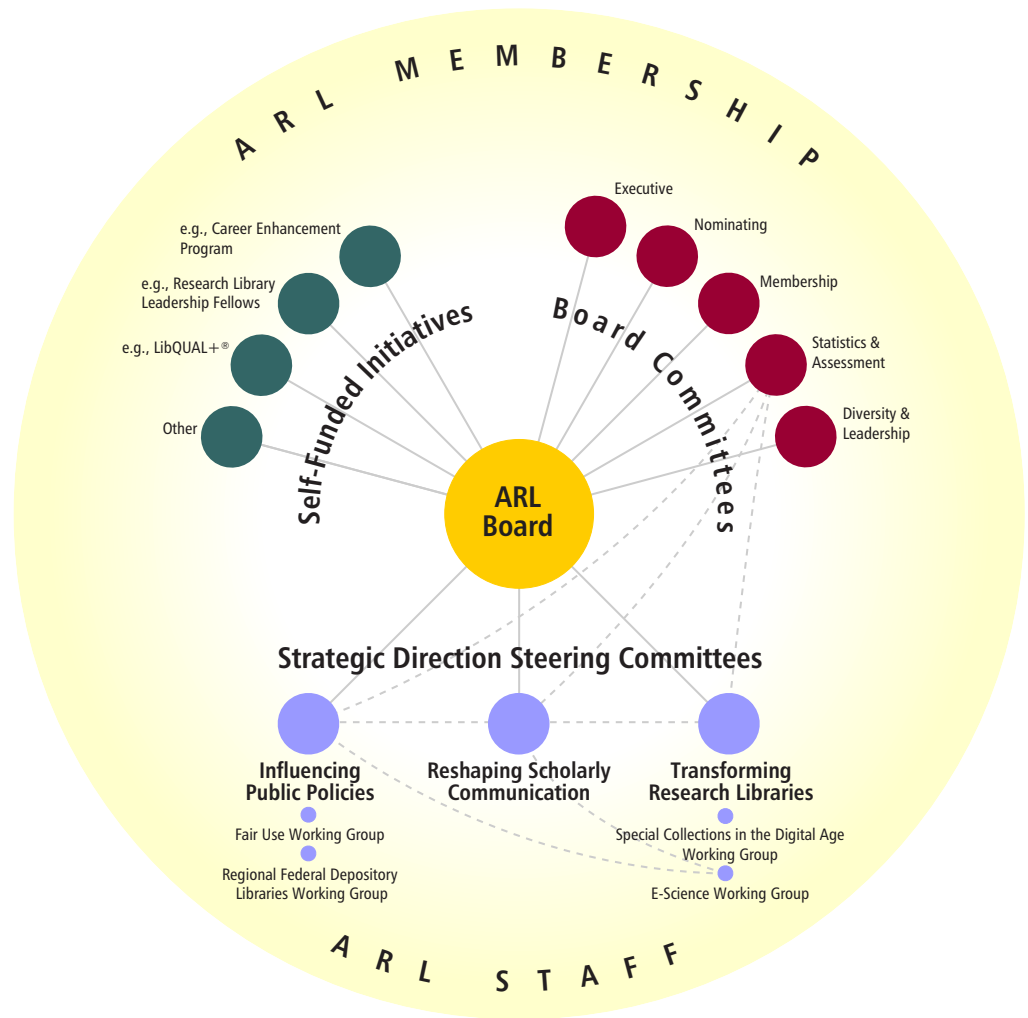
The continuous communications among members of the ARL Board (which includes the chairs of the three Strategic Direction committees), committees, working groups, task forces, and ARL staff creates synergies and mitigates against the potential for efforts to become silos or miss relevant trends or initiatives. Such cohesion and synergy is also served by periodically assessing progress in the context of the large-scale problems such as those suggested above.

Presented in the context of these problems, below are examples from ARL's 2010 action agendas, efforts that tie directly to the Strategic Plan's Outcomes and Strategies. This illustrative and thematic presentation of the action agenda reflects how the Strategic Directions and Enabling Capabilities work together.

A Thematic Illustration of ARL's 2010 Action Agenda

- **Influencing Out-of-Balance Intellectual Property Policies**
 - Develop strategies to resolve orphan-works challenges.
 - Launch copyright-education campaigns that lead to development of a code for best practices for fair use in libraries and availability of resources for explaining author-rights options in a Google world.
 - Advance user rights under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and the Copyright Act.
- **Strengthening Mechanisms for Research Libraries to Influence Marketplace**
 - Document and communicate the impact of the current economic environment on research library budgets.

- Promote language for inclusion in library license agreements that will enable flexible reuse of any scholarly content created by authors affiliated with the institution.
- Advance appropriate collective membership action in the marketplace.
- **Promoting Policies and Practices that Support Innovation and Enduring Access**
 - Support legislation and executive action to promote public access to federally funded research.
 - Examine library options to support at-risk print journals.
 - Accelerate contacts between university presses and research libraries and foster opportunities for collaborations.
 - Advocate for policies and strategies that enable reform of the Federal Depository Library Program.
 - Promote the development of expertise in data curation in research libraries.
- **Clarifying Strategies to Reconfigure Research Library Organizations and Services**
 - Articulate visions for the 21st-century research library and define elements for describing their value and contributions in support of research and scholarship.
 - Promote new models for preservation, management, and access to monographs, for both existing print collections and e-books, including national strategies that foster efficient use of the numerous storage facilities managed by members.
 - Advance collaborative/coordinated efforts among ARL members in the management and preservation of digital special collections.
 - Strengthen linkages between diversity recruitment strategies and ARL’s succession planning program for research library director positions.



ARL's Committee Structure

The current roster of ARL committees is posted on the ARL Web site at <http://www.arl.org/arl/governance/cmte.shtml>.

As needed, the Steering Committees establish subgroups: working groups to monitor certain areas and to offer advice on an ongoing basis, or task forces to fast track analysis of a specific question. Through these committees and other groups, member library representatives continuously collaborate with ARL staff to develop, prioritize, and assess actions and next steps. The resulting action agendas are summarized through working documents formally called "Review of Activities, Projects, and Priorities"; more commonly called the "grid reports," a shorthand name derived from their format. As working documents, the grids breathe life into the Strategic Plan by detailing the steps planned or taken to advance an outcome. The grids are updated quarterly and posted on the members-only directors wiki, and reported on at semi-annual ARL Business Meetings.

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<http://www.arl.org/resources/pubs/rli/archive/rli268.shtml>.

ARL Strategic Plan 2010–2012

Endorsed by ARL Board of Directors, October 15, 2009

ARL Mission Statement

ARL influences the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. ARL pursues this mission by advancing the goals of its member research libraries, providing leadership in public and information policy to the scholarly and higher education communities, fostering the exchange of ideas and expertise, facilitating the emergence of new roles for research libraries, and shaping a future environment that leverages its interests with those of allied organizations.

2010–2012 Plan

The following strategic directions, outcomes, and strategies form the heart of ARL's strategic plan.

- The **strategic directions** identify major areas of emphasis for ARL in the coming three years. They are broad and also closely linked and interdependent. All have been identified as critical priorities for ARL at this point in time.
- The **outcomes** provide some indications of what might be expected as a result of moving in these directions.
- The **strategies** suggest how ARL might begin to implement these directions. Over time, as strategies are implemented, new strategies will be identified or current ones modified to meet the changing environment and evolving needs of ARL libraries.

Responsibilities for Managing the Strategic Plan

ARL is a member-driven organization and this plan is fundamentally shaped by that fact. The distribution of the responsibility for assuring that it is executed with the intentions of members in mind is defined through the governance structure.

- The **Board of Directors** is responsible for ongoing oversight to assure that various projects advanced from the committee and working group structure and the efforts of the ARL staff fall within the boundaries set by the plan and remain focused on the core directions, avoiding any drift in execution of the mission.
- The principal work of the strategic plan is carried out by staff in partnership with member representatives and through the **committee and working group structure**. Normally, the formal governance structure is the instrument through which work gets done. However, on occasion groups of interested members may be convened to take on specialized work ad hoc.
- **ARL staff work through these mechanisms** to generate the ongoing agenda that results in outcomes of the Plan. In particular, staff must assure orderly progress and efficiency in executing the agenda developed through the governance structure. In addition, staff support the activities during membership and board meetings and assure that there is progress on agendas between meetings, thus guaranteeing agility of the Association. Equally important, the staff work closely across strategic directions and enabling capabilities to achieve close coordination of agendas when, for example, the same issue needs to be addressed simultaneously but in different contexts and/or different fronts or, when issues transition from policy implementation. Similarly, staff work closely with SPARC and CNI to minimize redundancy of effort and maximize the synergy that leads to success in advancing common goals with modest resources.

Strategic Directions

Influencing Public Policies

ARL will influence information and other public policies, both nationally and internationally, that govern the way information is managed and made available.

Outcomes

As ARL moves forward in this strategic direction, some expected outcomes in the next three years include:

Outcome A: ARL will have influenced laws, public policies, regulations, and judicial decisions governing the use of copyrighted materials so that they better meet the needs of the educational and research communities (e.g., Fair Use and Fair Dealing will thrive and the public domain will be expanding). ARL will also have influenced other laws, public policies, regulations and judicial decisions that are of importance to research libraries.

Outcome B: ARL will have contributed to reducing economic, legal, and technical barriers to access and use of the research results from publicly funded research projects, enabling rapid and inexpensive worldwide dissemination of facts and ideas.

Outcome C: ARL will have proposed and influenced new models for the management and access to government information.

Outcome D: ARL's administrative and academic counterparts in research institutions will have a better understanding of the implications of public policy choices for advancing transformed systems of scholarly communication and of key public policy issues of import to research libraries.

Outcome E: ARL will continue to be a leader in advocacy and educational efforts within North American and international research and educational communities.

Strategies

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

Strategy 1: Expand ARL's capacity for analysis and advocacy and for proposing, influencing, and responding to legislation and other policy issues, e.g. transforming the Federal Depository Library Program, ongoing and emerging copyright and intellectual property issues and more.

Strategy 2: Expand ARL's capacity for advancing open access/open science and access to data through increased advocacy and collaboration with other allied and partner organizations such as the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC).

Strategy 3: Expand and strengthen alliances with organizations that share common goals to advance policy issues, such as the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, higher education-related associations including the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, the American Association of Universities, the Association of College and Research Libraries, leading Internet companies, the Library Copyright Alliance, and others.

Strategy 4: Promote, facilitate and conduct research in relevant areas of public and information policy.

Reshaping Scholarly Communication

ARL will be a leader in the development of effective, extensible, sustainable, and economically viable models of scholarly communication that provide barrier-free access to quality information in support of the mission of research institutions.

Outcomes

As ARL moves forward in this strategic direction, some expected outcomes in the next three years include:

Outcome A: ARL will be a leader in articulating and characterizing the dynamic system of scholarly communication.

Outcome B: ARL members will be leaders in implementing and assessing selected new models of scholarly communication

Outcome C: ARL will have influenced the marketplace so as to advance fair pricing, and improve the terms and conditions under which content is made available, including openness and transparency in contract agreements.

Outcome D: ARL will have a range of powerful and effective alliances to help shape and promote the various new models appropriate for different disciplines and communities.

Strategies

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

Strategy 1: Encourage and facilitate alliances with and among groups of research institutions, other organizations serving research libraries and their institutions, and the for-profit and nonprofit publishing sectors, and build new relationships and communication strategies with university presses and scholarly societies to create understanding and advance development of new functionally complete systems of scholarly communication that serve their communities.

Strategy 2: Sponsor, conduct, and promote research that will inform the development and assessments of models of scholarly communication.

Develop projects and activities that address scholarly communication issues such as cost and use/impact of open-access articles and licensed journals, future of the extended argument and changing trends for the scholarly monograph, continuing access to data and other varieties of content beyond traditional published literature, linked digital repositories for managing scholarly output, the role of universities in the dissemination of scholarship, and policies regarding the creation and ownership of scholarly work, especially author rights and rights associated with the collaborative creation of new types of complex media.

Strategy 3: Actively pursue the development of a variety of appropriate responses to unacceptable business practices (e.g., develop and assess strategies that libraries could take in the marketplace that are within acceptable legal practice, monitor faculty actions, broaden the cadre of economists and legal anti-trust scholars undertaking research on new pricing models, assess consequences of bundling, develop principles and best practices around licensing terms).

Strategy 4: Accelerate and enhance outreach and communication efforts to inform the educational and research communities on trends, findings, opportunities and their impact on faculty assessment (e.g., promotion and tenure, post tenure review, and annual review); new models of peer review for research and teaching; evolving university budget and financial planning, and strategic visioning. Encourage and support outreach and communication efforts to educate new scholars and graduate students about scholarly communication systems and their roles as researchers and authors. Expand offerings through the ARL/ACRL Institute on Scholarly Communication.

Strategy 5: Build on current relationships with partners such as the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, Coalition for Networked Information, Association of College and Research Libraries, Canadian Association of Research Libraries, and through alliances with the Association of American Universities, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, and other organizations that share common interests in influencing the changing environment of scholarly communication.

Transforming Research Libraries

ARL will articulate, promote and facilitate new and expanding roles for ARL libraries that support, enable and enrich the transformations affecting research and research-intensive education.

Outcomes

As ARL moves forward in this strategic direction, some expected outcomes in the next three years include:

Outcome A: ARL and its members will have a clear and dynamically evolving vision of new roles and key transformations that must occur to ensure that library expertise and assets are aligned with and advance the research process. The value of these new roles and services will be increasingly understood by the research and university community.

Outcome B: ARL members will be engaged in a variety of innovative collaborations and partnerships at their institutions and among the membership that enhance the capacity of the research library to contribute to advancing research, scholarship, and graduate education.

Outcome C: ARL members will be making significant contributions to e research and cyberinfrastructure development and will be engaged in a variety of partnerships for data management and sharing of research content with faculty. They will be an integral part of university centers and collaboratives for cyberinfrastructure, including multi-institutional programs.

Outcome D: Faculty and researchers at ARL institutions will have more and better access to material in any form that extends their capacity for research. Individually and collectively, ARL members will have increased their capacity to manage, preserve, and make accessible unique content in all formats for which they assume primary responsibility, including institutional memory documents and materials harvested from the web. Members will have a balanced relationship between physical and digital collections appropriate to changing methods of research and scholarship, and an effective base of practice for managing and preserving print and digital collections.

Outcome E: ARL libraries will have a diverse and growing body of professionals prepared to develop new roles and work in new modes.

Outcome F: ARL will have close ties to and highly visible collaborative undertakings with organizations that focus on advancing the processes of research and the scholarly research enterprise.

Strategies

Strategies that ARL may pursue in moving forward include:

Strategy 1: Initiate visioning and scanning activities focused on emerging roles for research libraries in the processes of research, scholarship, and graduate education. Encourage and facilitate member engagement in adopting new roles in advancing research and scholarship.

Strategy 2: Promote efforts to reconceptualize collection development including in areas of special collections (broadly defined), global resources, and other content distinctive to research libraries. Encourage new approaches, including global partnerships, to ensuring and enhancing the value of research collections through preservation, management, and access for existing collections as well as evolving digital content (including digital preservation and data curation).

Strategy 3: Engage in assessment of new library roles, articulate the value propositions for new services, promote and publicize successful collaborations, and encourage and promote conversations about them with scholarly organizations and throughout the research and higher education communities.

Strategy 4: Work with the scholarly community and societies to develop discipline-specific strategies for monitoring and analyzing trends in research practices. Identify opportunities for library / scholar partnerships and clarify the resource and service implications of libraries adopting new roles in advancing research.

Strategy 5: Promote and facilitate the development of a diverse group of library professionals who have the expertise and knowledge to lead and participate in new partnerships with researchers and university faculty.

Strategy 6: Build and strengthen ties with allied organizations (the Coalition for Networked Information and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) and other organizations that engage actively in complementary activities relating to e-research, digital preservation, data management, and cyberinfrastructure.

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Leadership Rosters

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