

Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Libraries: Three-Year Strategic Plan

Developed Spring 2017

*The Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Libraries is also known as
The Association of Christian Librarians*

Contents

Background..... 3

Mission and Vision 3

Strategic Plan Development..... 3

 Task Force Membership 4

 Resource Material and Guiding Documents 4

Three-Year Strategic Priorities: 2017-2020..... 6

Year One: 2017-2018..... 7

 Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment..... 7

 Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment 8

 Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment 8

 Priority 4: Scholarship 9

 Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development 9

 Priority 6: New Revenue Streams 9

Year Two: 2018-2019 10

 Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment..... 10

 Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment 10

 Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment 10

 Priority 4: Scholarship 11

 Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development 11

 Priority 6: New Revenue Streams 11

 Priority 7: Virtual Initiatives 11

Year Three: 2019-2020 13

 Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment..... 13

 Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment 13

 Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment 13

 Priority 4: Scholarship 13

 Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development 13

 Priority 6: New Revenue Streams 14

 Priority 7: Virtual Initiatives 14

Appendix A: Assumptions about the Relevant Future..... 15

Appendix B: Selected Principles and Performance Indicators 17

Background

During the summer of 1956, the first Christian Librarians' Fellowship convened, with just five members in attendance—Shirley Wood of Columbia Bible College, Dorothy Spidell of Nyack Missionary College, Mary Jane Kergerize and Marian Boyjjam of The King's College, and Emily Russel of Faith Theological Seminary. In 1957, the Association of Christian Librarians was established and today it is one of the oldest--and largest--evangelical academic library organizations in existence, with more than 550 individual and nearly 200 institutional members representing a wide spectrum of denominations.

Membership is open to Christian librarians who work in an institution of higher learning and affirm the ACL mission and testify to their faith in Christ. Associate memberships are available to any other Christian librarians or non-librarians who are interested in librarianship and affirm the ACL mission and profess faith in Christ.

ACL is a non-profit organization governed by a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, an Executive Director, and six directors-at-large. The Home Office staff are responsible for the daily operations of the Association. Multiple teams develop and direct programs that carry out the mission of ACL.¹

Since the Association's inception in 1957, ACL members have worked hard to produce quality publications, meeting a variety of needs inside and outside the Association. These publications include the *Christian Periodical Index* (CPI), *The Christian Librarian* (TCL), *The Librarian's Manual*, and the *ABHE Library Guidelines*. ACL has one official meeting, which is the annual conference, held in early June at rotating locations.²

Mission and Vision

Mission: The mission of the Association of Christian Librarians is to strengthen libraries through professional development of evangelical librarians, scholarship, and spiritual encouragement for service in higher education.

Vision: The Association of Christian Librarians is an influential, vibrant, growing community that integrates faith, ministry, and academic librarianship through development of members, services, and scholarship.

Core Values: We are dedicated to being a caring Christian community that integrates faith and academic librarianship, emphasizing ministry and service. We are committed to having members serve Christ as librarians in institutions of higher learning.

Strategic Plan Development

The three-year plan presented in this document was developed by the Strategic Plan Task Force, which was created by action of the ACL Board of Directors in October 2016.

¹ Sharon Bull, ACL Archivist, 2011-present

² "About Us." Association of Christian Librarians, <http://www.acl.org/index.cfm/about-acl/>

Task Force Membership

Strategic Plan Task Force

- Linda Poston (Chair; ACL Director-at-Large)
- Anita Gray (ACL Secretary)
- Beth Arjona
- Jo Ann Rhodes
- ACL Executive Director (Janelle Mazelin), ex-officio
- ACL President (Denise Nelson), ex-officio

The task force includes two current members of the Board of Directors, one of whom has previously served the Association as its President. The other two members of the task force were selected for their ability to represent recent and long-term perspectives, respectively, regarding ACL's activities and priorities. The latter of these members has also previously held the office of ACL President. The members serving on the task force by virtue of office provided support for the strategic planning process.

The Strategic Plan Task Force began work under the leadership of Chair Linda Poston in November 2016 and submitted its draft plan for review in April 2017, thereby fulfilling the charge to complete its work prior to the June 2017 meeting of the Board of Directors. Team and other program leaders received the draft report for review and response prior to the annual June meeting of the ACL Board of Directors. The Board of Directors received all feedback and conducted a detailed review and revision of the initial draft during the June 2017 Board meeting.

Resource Material and Guiding Documents

Information regarding previous and ongoing planning efforts was gleaned by the Executive Director from internal documents including several years of Board meeting minutes and the 2014 SWOT analysis.

Two documents adapted by the task force from outside sources helped inform the work of the group, as well. The first of these, titled *Assumptions about the Relevant Future*,³ specifies a series of expectations about the larger context within which ACL must function in the near future. These expectations are organized into five broad categories: Economic Factors and Global Business Environment, Legislation and Regulation, Demographics, Technology and Science, and Professional Structure. See Appendix A to review the document in its entirety.

The second outside document, titled *Selected Principles and Performance Indicators*⁴ identifies relevant principles and performance indicators from among the *ACRL Standards* and adapts them to better reflect the structure and function of ACL. This customized version of the document helped guide the work of the task force by ensuring that each goal identified in the three-year strategic plan could be mapped to one of the principles deemed essential for healthy functioning of the Association. See Appendix B to review the adapted *ACRL Standards* document.

³ Public Library Association, 2014. Strategic Plan. Adapted for the Association of Christian Librarians from <http://www.ala.org/pla/about/strategicplan>.

⁴ Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011. Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. Adapted for the Association of Christian Librarians from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

The work of the Strategic Plan Task Force and the Board of Directors has culminated in a three-year plan comprised of specific goals relevant to a series of guiding priorities as well as measurable, actionable objectives for each goal. For each objective, a target date for completion has been established, and an individual or group has been assigned responsibility for ensuring the objective is completed.

The Foundation for the Advancement of Christian Libraries Three-Year Strategic Plan seeks to strengthen the Association of Christian Librarians by honoring its mission, operationalizing its vision, and reflecting its core values. The task force has carefully balanced the preservation and invigoration of long-standing priorities with the development or expansion of newer initiatives that position ACL for a healthy future. As always, the Association of Christian Librarians will continue to serve its members' needs, depend upon its volunteers' expertise, and seek in all things to glorify God.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

Galatians 6:9-10

Three-Year Strategic Priorities: 2017-2020

The strategic planning process that was initiated by the ACL Board of Directors, informed by previous planning efforts, executed by the Strategic Plan Task Force, and reviewed by various ACL program leaders resulted in seven strategic priorities:

1. Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment
2. ACL Legacy Endowment
3. Marketing and Recruitment
4. Scholarship
5. CILA Vision and Development
6. New Revenue Streams
7. Virtual Initiatives

The priorities emphasized in the Three-Year Strategic Plan have been selected for a variety of reasons. In some cases, the priority addresses a new opportunity for the Association to grow or become stronger. Others may address a need that has become evident through observation or through requests for support. In all cases, these strategic priorities are established in service of the overall mission of the Association of Christian Librarians.

The Three-Year Strategic Plan is not intended to be a comprehensive representation of the activities of ACL from 2017 to 2020. Some priorities (e.g., Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment) relate to all ACL teams and programs, and others relate to a particular group, but many teams and programs are not addressed specifically within the plan. The good work happening in all of these areas of the Association continues, as do the ongoing efforts of many individual volunteers and of the ACL Home Office.

Year One: 2017-2018

Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment

Goal 1: Ensure that all programs have useful, up-to-date manuals describing the operations and procedures related to their respective areas. (Management/Administration 7.3 and 7.8)⁵

Objectives

1. Develop organizational structure designating necessary components of individual program LibGuides within program documents repository
 - Board working group on leadership, by Aug. 2017
2. Articulate guidelines for what program decisions require board approval
 - Home Office + Board working group on leadership, by Oct. 2017
3. Create draft manuals for all programs without them
 - Program leadership, by Dec. 2017
4. Develop three-year review cycles for program documentation
 - President and Executive Director, by Dec. 2017
5. Develop comprehensive repository (LibGuides) for all program documents
 - Home Office (Sarah Wessel), by Feb. 2018

Goal 2: Ensure that program leaders and board members receive developmental training. (Management/Administration 7.8)

Objectives

1. Provide appropriate initial training for new program leaders and board members.
 - Executive Director, June annually
2. Provide appropriate ongoing training for program leaders and board members.
 - Executive Director, ongoing
3. Identify and recommend satisfaction survey options
 - Board strategic plan subgroup on leadership, by June 2017
4. Implement training satisfaction survey
 - Executive Director, by Aug. 2017
5. Implement a quarterly newsletter to communicate with program leadership
 - Executive Director, by Oct. 2017

Goal 3: Recruit and develop future leaders within the Association. (Members 8.3)

Objectives

1. Plan and deliver a leadership webinar annually
 - Executive Director + Virtual Initiatives Coordinator, by Apr. 2018
2. Create a plan for recruiting and preparing potential leaders and volunteers for service
 - Board working group on leadership + Nominations Team, by June 2018

⁵ Parenthetical content refers to the Selected Principles and Performance Indicators specified in Appendix B.

3. Create mechanism for current program leaders and board members to identify potential leaders within the organization
-Board working group on leadership + Nominations Team, by June 2018

Goal 4: Provide professional leadership development for members. (Members 8.3)

Objectives

1. Identify applicable leadership skills for development
-Board working group on leadership, by June 2018
2. Develop a plan for leadership development based on identified skills
-Board working group on leadership, by June 2018

Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment

Goal 1: Implement endowment campaign fundraising schedule. (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objective

1. Communicate with membership according to fundraising schedule from July 2017 through Jan. 15, 2018.
-Executive Director, as scheduled

Goal 2: Explore investment options for endowment funds received (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objectives

1. Identify at least two appropriate investment options
-Business Manager + Treasurer, Oct. 2017
2. Invest funds in at least one of the identified options
-Business Manager + Treasurer, Jan. 2018

Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment

Goal: Expand membership base. (External Relations 9.3)

Objectives

1. Create and distribute promotional material targeting ABHE academic administrators and librarians in advance of ACL presence at ABHE
-Outreach Coordinator + ABHE liaison as needed, Oct. 2017
2. Create and distribute promotional material regarding ACL annual conference to CCCU academic administrators and library directors
-Outreach Coordinator, Feb. 2018

Priority 4: Scholarship

Goal: Provide a venue for participation in the scholarly publication process. (Members 8.4)

Objectives

1. Draft a process for submission of material for peer-reviewed publication
-TCL Team, Oct. 2017
2. Draft eligibility criteria and procedural guidelines for potential peer reviewers
-TCL Team, Oct. 2017

Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development

Goal 1: Expand the vision for fulfilling CILA's mission. (Association Effectiveness 1.1, 1.4, 1.7)

Objective

1. Assess CILA Team organization
-CILA Coordinator, by Oct. 2017

Goal 2: Inform membership of history, vision, and opportunities related to CILA. (Association Effectiveness 1.4, 1.7)

Objectives

1. Draft plan for promoting CILA opportunities as they are identified
-CILA Team, by Oct. 2017
2. Implement an outreach project to ACL members
-CILA Team, by June 2018

Goal 3: Establish procedures for allocating resources from the Spidell Estate Gift. (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objective

1. Draft policy and procedures for dispersing resources from the Spidell Estate Gift
-CILA Team, by June 2018

Priority 6: New Revenue Streams

Goal: Seek ways to expand income-generating products and services to support the mission of ACL. (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objectives

1. Poll membership on potential products or services beneficial to them
-Business Manager + Treasurer + Executive Director, by Nov. 2017
2. Appoint a New Revenue Streams Task Force to identify and explore options and make recommendations to the board
-President/Board, by Mar. 2018

Year Two: 2018-2019

Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment

Goal: Ensure that assessment takes place at all levels across the Association (Management/Administration 7.8)

Objectives

1. Identify key leadership positions that require succession planning
-Program leaders + Executive Director, by Oct. 2018
2. Develop an annual assessment cycle for all levels - leaders and volunteers – with annual reviews to be done by relevant reviewer
-Program leaders + Executive Director, by June 2019
3. Develop appropriate assessment tools for all leadership and volunteers
-Board working group on leadership + Executive Director, by June 2019

Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment

Goal: Promote identified scope areas for endowment: Scholarship, Research, Professional Development, and Projects. (Association Effectiveness 1.4)

Objectives

1. Draft a process for members to use an adapted version of the New Initiative Proposal Form to apply for endowment funds
-Business Manager, by Oct. 2018
2. Provide examples of appropriate projects or services for endowment fund use
-Business Manager + Board, by Oct. 2018
3. Implement application process for members to apply for endowment funds
-Executive Director, by Jan. 2019

Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment

Goal: Expand membership base. (External Relations 9.3)

Objectives

1. Explore ways to use infographics to market to various populations
-Outreach Coordinator, by Oct. 2018
2. Develop infographics to market ACL and its programs to various populations
-Outreach Coordinator, by Jan. 2019
3. Develop outreach plan to increase visibility of ACL among library science students, non-degree library employees, and academic librarians working outside Christian higher education
-Outreach Coordinator + Vice President + Executive Director, by May 2019

Priority 4: Scholarship

Goal: Provide a venue for participation in the scholarly publication process. (Members 8.4)

Objective

1. Submit report to ACL Board regarding effectiveness of peer-review process established in Year 1
-TCL Team, by Oct. 2018

Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development

Goal: Develop relationships within global ACL membership. (External Relations 9.2)

Objective

1. Highlight current international members in communication to all membership
-CILA Team, by Dec. 2018

Goal: Expand international library partnerships. (External Relations 9.1)

Objectives

1. Identify one international library organization/group to partner with
-CILA Team, by Oct. 2018
2. Collaborate with the group to identify a project/service
-CILA Team, by Mar. 2019

Priority 6: New Revenue Streams

Goal: Seek ways to expand income-generating products and services to support the mission of ACL. (Management/Administration 7.3 and 7.5)

Objectives

1. New Revenue Streams Task Force reports to Board with potential new revenue streams with action plan for implementation
-New Revenue Streams Task Force, by Oct. 2018
2. Launch trial of new revenue initiative
-Responsibility dependent upon initiative, by June 2019

Priority 7: Virtual Initiatives

Goal 1: Provide relevant professional development for members. (Members 8.3)

Objectives

1. Poll members on areas of interest for webinars
-Virtual Events Task Force, by Oct. 2018
2. Identify ACL/other professional experts on these topics
-Virtual Events Task Force, by Dec. 2018

3. Conduct webinar
-Virtual Events Task Force, by Mar. 2019

Goal 2: Provide effective Volunteer training. (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objectives

1. Request that program leaders include virtual training opportunity recommendations in their annual reports
-Executive Director, by May 2018
2. Develop training webinars to meet program needs
-Program leaders + Virtual Events Task Force, by Dec. 2018

DRAFT

Year Three: 2019-2020

Priority 1: Leadership Training, Development, and Assessment

Goal: Implement comprehensive leadership training and assessment cycle. (Management/Administration 7.8)

Objectives

1. All programs implement relevant evaluation forms and evaluation cycles
-Program leadership + Board contact + Executive Director, by June 2020
2. Develop a SWOT of assessment results at the program level
-Program leadership, by June 2020

Priority 2: ACL Legacy Endowment

Goal: Promote identified scope areas for endowment: Scholarship, Research, Professional Development, and Projects. (Association Effectiveness 1.4)

Objective

1. Assess application process for members to apply for endowment funds
-Executive Director, by Jan. 2020

Priority 3: Marketing and Recruitment

Goal: Expand Membership Base (External Relations 9.3)

Objective

1. Implement outreach plan created in Year 2
-Outreach Coordinator, by Sept. 2019

Goal: Develop partnerships with other professional organizations. (External Relations 9.1)

Objective

1. Identify key accrediting agencies to partner with
-Section Chairs, by Mar. 2020

Priority 4: Scholarship

Scholarship is addressed under Priority 7: Virtual Initiatives in this year of the Strategic Plan.

Priority 5: CILA Vision and Development

Goal: Expand international library partnerships. (External Relations 9.3)

Objective

1. Develop, market, implement project/service identified in Year 2.
-CILA Team, by June 2020

Priority 6: New Revenue Streams

Goal: Seek ways to expand income-generating products and services to support the mission of ACL. (Association Effectiveness 1.1)

Objectives

1. Assess results and success of new revenue stream efforts
-Business Manager + Treasurer, by June 2020
2. Dissolve trial status to become regular service/activity of the Association
-Board, by June 2020

Goal: Seek grant monies to promote overall mission of ACL. (Management/Administration 7.3)

Objectives

1. Explore grant funding sources that are available to organizations that are like ours – i.e. support our mission and goals.
-Business Manager + Treasurer + Executive Director, by Oct. 2019
2. Identify clearly defined projects for which grants will be written.
-Business Manager + Treasurer + Executive Director, by Nov. 2019
3. Identify ACL members who have successfully written a grant and/or are willing to obtain appropriate training.
-Volunteer Coordinator, by Jan. 2020

Priority 7: Virtual Initiatives

Goal: Provide effective volunteer training (Members 8.3)

Objective

1. Implement training webinars developed in Year 2
-Program leaders + Virtual Events Task Force (if appropriate), by Aug. 2019

Goal: Provide training resources for scholarly development (Members 8.3)

Objectives

1. Identify one scholarship-related skill that could be enhanced through a webinar
-Virtual Events Task Force + TCL Team (if appropriate), by Oct. 2019
2. Develop a webinar to address the development of a scholarship-related skill
-Virtual Events Task Force + TCL Team (if appropriate), by Jan. 2019
3. Deliver a webinar that addresses the development of a scholarship-related skill
-Virtual Events Task Force + TCL Team (if appropriate), Mar. 2020

Appendix A: Assumptions about the Relevant Future⁶

Economic Factors and Global Business Environment

1. While the previous dire economic conditions have lessened, library budgets will continue to be constrained with more competition for the same or shrinking pot of funds and increased expectations for accountability.
2. Private fundraising, grants, and other forms of alternative funding streams will become more and more necessary.
3. The Association must be able to demonstrate return on investment (ROI) to the members and to potential donors or grant-funding agencies.

Legislation and Regulation

1. The legal environment will require more time, energy, expertise and money.
2. Copyright and digital licensing will continue to evolve and be volatile.

Demographics

1. The value of interacting with others will continue, but the tools and approaches will continue to change (face-to-face versus online, social networking tools, etc.).
2. Trends in the way professional development is delivered will continue to affect the role of and the services provided by the Association.
3. Library staff will continue to stay in the workforce longer, thereby reducing opportunity for new library staff and limiting the pool of new members.

Technology and Science

1. Technology will allow the associate the opportunity to attract and serve new demographic groups.
2. Technology training will continue to be a challenge.
3. Online social networking will continue to evolve.
4. There will be a greater interest and demand for user-generated content.
5. Technology will give the Association the opportunity to provide services on a one-to-many basis.
6. Technology will allow the Association to offer customized services.

⁶ Public Library Association, 2014. Strategic Plan. Adapted for the Association of Christian Librarians from <http://www.ala.org/pla/about/strategicplan>.

Professional Structure

1. The traditional structure of libraries makes it harder for them to change.
2. The nature of our work is changing and the traditional staffing structure may have to be adjusted.
3. The Association will continue to be constrained by the ability and interest of the vendors in delivering solutions.
4. There will be an increased emphasis on partnerships to extend the Association's reach and to cooperatively address goals.
5. Many library Association competitors will continue to have better resources and larger budgets.

DRAFT

Appendix B: Selected Principles and Performance Indicators⁷

1. **Association Effectiveness:** The Association defines, develops, and measure outcomes that contribute to effectiveness and applies findings for the purpose of continuous improvement.
 - 1.1 The Association defines and measures outcomes in the context of the mission.
 - 1.4 The Association develops and maintains a body of evidence that demonstrates its impact in convincing ways.
 - 1.7 The Association communicates with the library community to highlight its value and effectiveness.
6. **Space:** The staff, leadership and members of the Association interact in both a physical and virtual environment to promote the mission and values of the Association.
 - 6.1 The Association creates intuitive navigation that supports user-centric design of virtual and physical spaces.
 - 6.2 The Association provides safe and secure physical and virtual environments conducive to the promotion of its mission and goals.
 - 6.6 The Association’s physical space features connectivity and up-to-date, adequate, well-maintained equipment and furnishings.
7. **Management/Administration:** The Association engages in continuous planning and assessment to inform resource allocation and to meet their mission effectively and efficiently.
 - 7.3 The Association allocates human and financial resources effectively and efficiently to advance the mission.
 - 7.5 The Association encourages partnerships with multiple institutions for greater cost effectiveness and to expand access to resources.
 - 7.6 The Association creates a “storehouse” of assessment tools to assist libraries in performing their own library assessments and possible comparison assessments with other ACL libraries.
 - 7.8 The Association staff and leadership model a culture of continuous improvement.
8. **Members:** The Association hires and recruits sufficient staff and volunteers to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.

⁷ Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011. Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. Adapted for the Association of Christian Librarians from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

- 8.3 Association members demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development, maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skill for themselves and their coworkers.
- 8.4 Association members contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.
9. **External Relations:** The Association engages the broader community using multiple strategies in order to advocate, educate, and promote its mission and values.
- 9.1 The Association contributes to external relations through communications, publications, events, and donor cultivation and stewardship.
- 9.2 The Association communicates with the members regularly.
- 9.3 The Association Board and members convey a consistent message about the Association and engage in their role as ambassadors to expand prospective member awareness of services and expertise within the Association.

Organization and other formatting for this document are adapted from the Do-Good Business Plan Template created by Rebecca Macfarlane (<http://www.rebeccamacfarlane.com>)