



The Importance of a Director in Charge of the Academic Library

April 2020

The Statement

CARLI Governing Member Libraries are led by an administrator, dean, or director whose duties are focused on the planning, administration, and management of the library. Directors should be qualified to run a library, either by education or by experience. They bring their knowledge and experience of library services, technologies, history, and philosophy to bear on both the achievement of local goals and their roles as a critical point of contact between the work of their institutions and the consortial work of CARLI. A director must be prepared and available to participate fully in the consortium. The director is critical for the campus, its community of learners, and higher education throughout the State of Illinois.

“The [CARLI Bylaws](#) define a director as the person who is operationally responsible for the staff, services and budget of the library. Titles of eligible individuals include, but are not limited to, Director, Dean, Chair or Head Librarian. Directors are expected to familiarize themselves with the [CARLI Membership Agreement](#), and, if applicable, the CARLI I-Share Participant Institution Agreement.

“CARLI directors’ responsibilities include:

- Signing the CARLI Membership Agreement, and, if applicable, the CARLI I-Share Participant Institution Agreement, within the organizational framework of approving contractual agreements of the institution. Once signed, these agreements remain in effect until terminated.
- Ensuring library compliance with the terms and conditions of the CARLI Membership Agreement, and, if applicable, the CARLI I-Share Participant Institution Agreement.
- Designating an I-Share Liaison (for participating libraries.) Detailed information about the role of the liaison is available from the I-Share Liaison's Guide.
- Providing timely notification of any intention to terminate agreement(s), as outlined therein.
- Serving as the institution’s voting representative for CARLI Board elections and Bylaws revisions.
- Keeping all contact/liaison names and information up to date with CARLI.
- Ensuring all CARLI communications are distributed to staff and campus/governing authority officials, as appropriate.
- Serving on the CARLI Board of Directors if elected or appointed.”¹

¹ CARLI Responsibilities of Directors: <https://www.carli.illinois.edu/membership/memagree>

Background

Why a Statement Is Necessary

The impetus for this statement is that CARLI, its Board of Directors, and members, seek to act as a resource for organizations contemplating a staffing decision such as the one described in this statement, namely the library no longer has a director. For this reason, the statement is intended to articulate why having a dedicated, library-focused director is a prudent choice, not just for continuity of service, but also for leveraging interlibrary cooperation and ensuring that the campus investment in the library is optimized by a representative who can advocate for innovation and service excellence.

Explanation of the Issue

At its December 6, 2019, meeting, the CARLI Board of Directors discussed the issue that some members' organizations are not filling the library director position when the incumbent leaves, for example, retires or resigns. The college or university simply "assigns" the library to a campus administrator, like a vice president or assistant provost, who may have many other responsibilities. Sometimes a mid-level library staff member is named as "in charge" without title or compensation change. These assignments erode the effectiveness of the library in many ways, but also dramatically diminish the ability for the consortium to interact in a meaningful way with the library. As a result, services and programs that could be extended to faculty, staff, and students, are never offered or promoted. The entire consortium is weakened as a result.

As a result of the December 2019 discussion, the board recommended that a statement should be published outlining the consortium's shared philosophy that a qualified library director should be in place at all member institutions. Three CARLI Board of Directors members plus the CARLI Senior Director agreed to work on this statement, constituting *the Importance of CARLI Member Director Ad Hoc Task Force*.

Pervasiveness of the Situation

In preparing this statement, the task force documented at a minimum seven institutions where a director was formerly in charge of a CARLI Governing Member Library and has been replaced by another campus employee with an already-full portfolio, or the library was given to a library staff member without alteration of title or compensation. The situation is happening primarily in community college and small private college libraries, and is also happening more frequently in recent years, with most of the occurrences taking place in the last two years. Although not corroborated with campus administrators, the task force members posit that the rescission of library director positions is almost certainly correlated with campus budgets and the larger State of Illinois financial picture.

The Rationale behind Having a Dedicated Library Director

The duties of ensuring synthesis between the library and the campus, providing advocacy for resources and learning support, and aligning faculty and student needs with library services and programs, cannot be tacked on to other campus administrators' portfolios. These duties

are not only critical to the campus, they are important and constitute a single, identifiable full-time job as is demonstrated by CARLI Governing Member Library directors statewide.

Ensuring synthesis between the library and the campus

The library and, therefore, the library director, has many external critical roles on campus, including liaising with teaching faculty and other campus units in shaping the curriculum. The library is integral to ensuring that the teaching and learning are at a scope aligned with the organization's goals. Library services, materials, and programs act as a reinforcement to classroom content. Further, in an age when instantaneous access is expected, the library and its resources are available long after class has ended, supporting needs and providing guidance just in time.

Providing advocacy for resources and learning support

Current technologies make access to many library services and resources transparent to library users; but they are always the result of extensive curation, organization, and negotiation by CARLI library directors and their staffs. Much of this work is internal at each library, but much is also the result of cooperation and collaboration among all of CARLI's governing members.

Aligning faculty and student needs with library services and programs

CARLI member libraries strive to ensure capacity in terms of collections, services, and support. The ability to offer a broad spectrum of services, resources, and programs, comes from the long tradition and now, the embedded culture, of resource sharing and support. CARLI is an organization that provides services at scale; success is only possible because every member contributes to a foundation of cooperation. All CARLI members benefit from each other and depend on distributed collections of specialties, even large research libraries like those at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign or Chicago, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago. Most of CARLI's 125+ members are small and medium-sized libraries that depend heavily on the consortium to fulfill users' needs. More than signed agreements and/or occasional meetings, partnerships among diverse institutions require dedicated, focused attention to ensure shared understandings and a commitment to working toward shared goals. The library goes beyond tools and transactions, however, addressing new needs and technologies for research such as scholarly communication, including digital publishing and support for open educational resources.

Adopted at the March 2020 CARLI Board of Directors Meeting

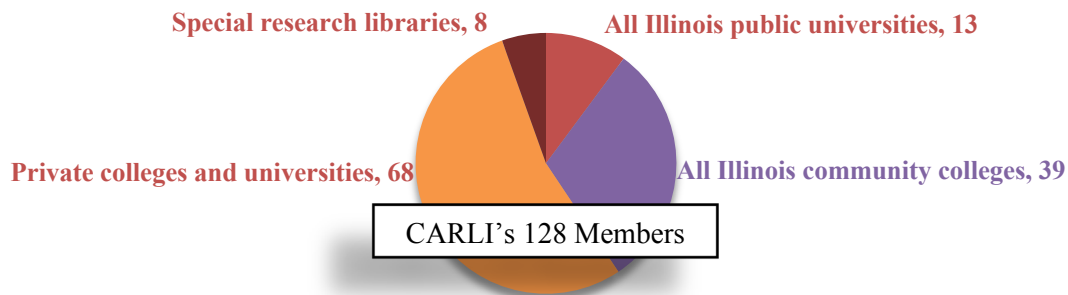
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About CARLI

CARLI (the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois) is a membership organization of 128 academic and research Illinois libraries.



The CARLI membership is diverse in terms of its statewide coverage; its mix of urban, suburban, and rural members; and the spectrum of its membership types. CARLI counts among its members all 13 public universities, including the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; 68 private colleges and universities, including those with enrollment numbering fewer than 200; and all 39 of Illinois' community colleges. Eight special research libraries like the Chicago History Museum, the Newberry Library, the State Library, and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, expand CARLI's research depth. CARLI members share a rock-solid commitment to collaboration and resource sharing that makes possible programs at scale and cooperative ventures.

Sources Consulted

The following is from the Association of College and Research Libraries, the "[Value of Academic Libraries Statement](#)," Executive Summary:

Academic libraries provide critical direct and indirect value to institutions of higher education in the following areas:

- I. SUPPORT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, & MATRICULATION
 - a. Academic libraries provide services and facilities that attract students and help increase the likelihood of persistence and graduation.
- II. ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING
 - a. Academic libraries provide opportunities for students to learn marketable skills or to apply what they have learned in their courses in a real-world environment.
 - b. Several studies show correlations between students' use of academic libraries and positive changes in GPA.
 - c. Academic libraries support student learning in areas that employers increasingly seek, such as critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and integrative and lifelong learning.
 - d. Academic libraries provide an environment that fosters student engagement across all elements of the curriculum and student population.
- III. SUPPORT FACULTY RESEARCH & TEACHING
 - a. Academic librarians assist faculty with the research process and help faculty navigate the shifting landscape of scholarly communication.
 - b. Academic libraries provide an infrastructure for open data management and open access publishing required by a growing number of granting agencies and foundations.
 - c. Increased access to faculty research through institutional repositories and university presses enhances institutional standing and positively impacts economic development.
 - d. Academic librarians support faculty teaching by highlighting new electronic and alternative resources, and provide faculty support in the transition to online course delivery.
- IV. RAISE INSTITUTIONAL VISIBILITY & CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY
 - a. Academic libraries serve as a driver of innovation by facilitating the implications of new technology on pedagogy, course delivery, and research productivity.
 - b. Academic library facilities foster collaboration, and serve as a unique area on campus that promotes interaction between people of many different cultures, ethnicities, gender identities, and backgrounds.
 - c. Library services and resources contribute to the welfare of the communities in which institutions of higher education operate.
 - d. Special collections and archives help preserve the history of the institution or region for future generations.

The document “Standards for Libraries in Higher Education,” from the Association of College and Research Libraries, 2018, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>, lists relevant language in two parts:

7. Management/Administration/Leadership: Library leaders engage in internal and campus decision-making to inform resource allocation to meet the library’s mission effectively and efficiently. ...

7.3 The library allocates human and financial resources effectively and efficiently to advance the library’s mission.

8. Personnel: Libraries provide sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.

8.2 Library personnel have education and experience sufficient to their positions and the needs of the organization.