

Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) Strategic Plan 2004-2009

Adopted by the ARC Steering Committee on November 10, 2004

Proposed Mission: The Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) of the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System (CMRLS) is a coalition of academic libraries, and public and special libraries that have research collections, working together to facilitate the sharing of resources and services for the benefit of their users.

Goal I – Create a stable and smoothly functioning administrative structure which will respond to the needs of member libraries for the ultimate benefit of the users of those libraries.

Objective A

Formalize ARC basic operational procedures.

Activities:

1. Formulate a governance document that outlines how ARC leadership succession will be provided, how ARC business will be conducted, how the decisions of ARC will be funded and implemented, and what the relationship is between CMRLS and ARC.
2. Write a description of the responsibilities of each leadership position.
3. Write a description of the structure and responsibilities of each standing committee. This "job description" should include: the purpose of the committee, responsibilities, membership, term of membership and membership selection procedures. Decide on specific term limits for chairs and have job descriptions for the chairs and incoming chairs.
4. Reorganize the current committee structure to respond to identified needs.

Objective B

Assess the needs of participating libraries to discover the ways in which ARC can uniquely serve its member libraries.

Activities:

1. Design and administer a staff needs assessment to be completed by library staff at all levels of participating institutions.
2. Analyze the results for themes which can be appropriately and uniquely addressed by ARC.

Goal II - Energize ARC through staff and leadership development

Objective A

Establish standing committees and interest groups.

Activities:

1. Empower standing committees by assigning projects and integrating results into ARC operations.
2. Devise a formal process for proposing new projects to be accomplished by standing committees, ad hoc committees, and interest groups.
3. Offer each standing committee the opportunity to have a "Director Advocate" if they feel they would benefit from having one.
4. Have standing committee chairs attend every ARC Directors meeting.
5. Send appointment letters and thank you letters to standing committee chairs and interest group coordinators.
6. Plan and conduct an annual standing committee chair orientation and goal setting session.
7. Plan and conduct an annual interest group coordinator planning session to decide on appropriate and non-redundant programs and activities for the year.
8. Consider forming ad hoc task forces for specific projects which are cross functional and temporary (having a definite beginning and end).

Objective B

Provide opportunities for ARC leadership development

Activities:

1. Establish a formal orientation program to ARC for new members with a mentoring program that includes communication with less active directors.
2. Offer professional development opportunities in leadership, meeting facilitation, and planning skills for any interested ARC library staff.

3. Initiate annual thank you letter to ARC Chair and her/his appropriate dean or authority.

Objective C

Enhance role of CMRLS staff as resources.

Activities:

1. Implement regular updates on CMRLS projects by CMRLS staff at ARC Directors meetings.
2. Acknowledge, to the appropriate authority, exceptional helpfulness "above and beyond the call" by CMRLS staff to ARC projects.
3. Examine relative value of a single dedicated ARC liaison vs. distributed contacts in CMRLS.

Objective D

Develop and promote effective continuing education opportunities.

Activities:

1. Promote existing CMRLS calendar of CE opportunities by demonstrating the online calendar to ARC libraries and encouraging all ARC library staff to submit relevant listings
2. Involve all members in a needs assessment for continuing education and implement the findings.
3. Identify CE needs requiring funding for outside expertise
4. Showcase "best practices" on different topics at interest group and directors' meetings.
5. Where feasible, explore partnering with other academic groups, i.e. human resources offices or institutional IT departments to make existing training available to ARC members.
6. Empower a committee to organize an annual conference which focuses on current academic issues and which replaces "social" of previous years.

Goal III – Review and enhance services to ARC patrons and identify funding sources

Objective A

Assess currently unmet user information and service needs through surveys and focus groups.

Activities:

1. Collect information about the offerings of similar consortia around the country to find new ideas for other services which ARC might offer.
2. Create a Task Force to investigate a needs assessment tool for use with a representative sample of students and faculty in every member institution.
3. Conduct the needs assessment and prioritize the results according to their feasibility and relevance to ARC and/or CMRLS.
4. Identify resources needed for implementing services.
5. Identify a way to assess the effectiveness of all programs/services and regularly assess them for quality and relevance.

Objective B

Select, fund and implement the best and most relevant ARC projects.

Activities:

1. Determine which might be suitably funded by the WACL Development Fund.
2. Identify sources/grants on regional/state level to support projects.
3. Fund a part time CMRLS grant writer for ARC projects.

Goal IV – Demonstrate the value of ARC services.

Objective A

Appoint a committee to publicize ARC services to ARC constituencies.

Objective B

Quantify the value of individual ARC library services in a report to be used by ARC Directors in reporting to their administrators.

GOAL V - Develop and sustain a vision for cooperation between ARC libraries and other CMRLS libraries.

Objective A

Encourage a free flow of ideas between ARC and non-ARC libraries

Activities:

1. Open participation in ARC Interest Groups to other CMRLS members.
2. Encourage ARC libraries' staff participation in CMRLS governance, professional development, advocacy, and social events to demonstrate solidarity with all library colleagues.
3. Communicate with CMRLS libraries that ARC libraries and staff are resources for the library community.
4. Develop collaborative projects with non-ARC libraries, for example a digital "Worcester County Memory Project".
5. Regularly communicate with non-ARC libraries by creating an interesting and useful ARC Web-site which highlights ongoing projects and by contributing articles to *Centralities*.
6. Encourage participation by ARC Directors on CMRLS Board and have regular reports from ARC members who are on the CMRLS Board to ARC Directors meetings.