

**ALA Annual Conference
Chicago, Illinois
June 24 – 27, 2005**

**An Activity Report Submitted to LIBRAS
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I would like to begin by thanking the LIBRAS Consortium for its support in funding attendance at professional conferences and events. This support helps address the budget concerns of all member libraries.

My current involvements within ALA are primarily within the Distance Learning Section of ACRL and the Education Committee of LAMA. During this year's annual I was completing a term of office in DLS as Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, so much of my conference time was dedicated to meetings. I did attend two specific programs which I will address in more detail later in this report, and I also spent several hours in the Exhibit Hall in conversation with various vendors.

I began on Friday by meeting with a specialist in science reference who had agreed to address my staff on the topic at a later date. From that meeting I went to the ACRL New Leaders' Luncheon to begin an afternoon of sessions on planning and operations. The discussions begun at that luncheon were continued at the Leadership Council meeting immediately following lunch. Among the topic discussed at this session were the ACRL Strategic Plan and an environmental scan tied to the plan and the incoming president's goals. Following Leadership Council the ACTRL Sections Council held its meeting. The Sections Council is a body composed of the chairs and chair-elects of each of the ACRL Sections. A portion of this meeting was dedicated to the Strategic Plan and the ALA member handbook.

Saturday morning began with a working breakfast with the chair of the DLS Awards Committee to review the past year's process and to discuss revisions to the process and the committee structure. Next came a hearing on the ACRL - DLS *Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services*. These guidelines are due for revision in the next couple of years, so we are beginning the process by holding open hearings to discuss issues and concerns about the current Guidelines. This hearing was attended by about 25, and one major issue that was raised was a concern that the Guidelines did not address accessibility issues explicitly enough. The question was also raised about the definition of distance learner. Both of these and other issues raised will be taken under consideration as the committee moves forward.

Saturday afternoon offered my first ever conjunction of programs. Two programs I was not only interested in, but also involved in, were actually held in the same hotel, on the same floor, and in adjacent rooms at the same time. Usually attendees at ALA need to make choices since the scheduling and placement of programs is not so convenient, but this time I got lucky. The Distance Learning Section program and awards ceremony and the LAMA Education Committee program were across the hall from each other, affording me the opportunity to move between them and get some of the flavor of each. The DLS program, *Distance Learning: We Know*

Where We've Been, But Where Are We Going? discussed future directions while also looking back at the development of distance learning librarianship. This program followed the presentation of the Section's second ACRL/DLS Haworth Press Distance Learning Librarianship Conference Sponsorship Award. The competing program – presented by the LAMA Education Committee – was titled *Are You Preparing for your Next Job?* This program grew out of a survey of new managers that the committee had administered in the previous year. The panel assembled to react to the survey results included a library school dean, an academic library director, and Gretel Stock-Kupperman, representing new managers. The conversation among the presenters and audience addressed levels of preparation and perceived needs of new managers.

Sunday mornings on my ALA schedule are always devoted to the DLS All-Committee Meeting. It is an opportunity for me to visit with the attending representatives of all our committees to keep up with ongoing activities and committee needs. In this year's case, it was also an opportunity to finalize committee appointments and address committee chair concerns. Sunday afternoon holds the DLS Executive Committee meeting. At this meeting, we agreed to create a new committee for the express purpose of assuming responsibility for the online publication *Library Services for Distance Learning: the Fourth Bibliography*, previously edited by Alexander Slade. The committee proposal was unanimously accepted and I was charged to populate the committee and identify an editor for this ongoing work.

On Monday, the Distance Learning Section moved away from the ALA venues to celebrate the Section's 15th anniversary by holding a morning event at National-Louis University's Chicago campus. This event was attended by about 75 people, including many former members and officers of the Section and its predecessor discussion group. Monday afternoon I finally managed to find my way back to McCormick Place for an extended tour of the exhibits.

This concludes my report on ALA Annual 2005 activities. I found the conference to be equally valuable and frustrating. The value, as always, is in the time spent with other attendees, whether they are local or from distant places. The frustration lies in the number of interesting programs offered at the same time in varying locations, making it nearly impossible to actually attend those that seem most useful. Again I thank LIBRAS for its support.