DATE: June 2, 2012

TO: ACRL Information Literacy *Standards* Committee

FROM: ACRL Information Literacy Competency *Standards* Review Task Force

RE: Task Force Recommendations

The Charge of the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force is as follows:

Comprised of ACRL information literacy stakeholders, the Task Force will "review the document and make a recommendation to retain the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* as written for the next five-year cycle, revise the standards, or rescind the standards if determined no longer useful. If the recommendation is to revise, the Task Force must suggest a process and time line for conducting the necessary revision".

As of June 2, 2012, the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force has reviewed current literature covering information literacy and related literacies, information technology, and critical theory, and discussed its findings. During the past eleven months, the Task Force has discussed the current *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* extensively via conference call and email. **Grounded in the scholarly literature and professional experience, members of the Task Force believe that the Association of College and Research Libraries *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* should not be reapproved as they exist but should be extensively revised.**

What follows in this document is the rationale for the position that the Standards should not be re-approved as they exist today, and should be extensively revised in the near future.

Adopted in 2000, the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* were designed to "[provide] a framework for assessing the information literate individual. [The *Standards*] also [extend] the work of the American Association of School Librarians Task Force on Information Literacy Standards, thereby providing higher education an opportunity to articulate its information literacy competencies with those of K-12 so that a continuum of expectations develops for students at all levels. The competencies … outline the process by which faculty, librarians and others pinpoint specific indicators that identify a student as information literate." [i]

The *ACRL Information Literacy Standards* encapsulate the core cognitive learning outcomes relevant to finding, evaluating, using, and citing information. In the last decade, however, changes in technology, scholarly communication, and the information life cycle have contributed to the changing face of information literacy in higher education. Today's college students are tasked with navigating a much wider world of information than ever before—online and in print. Students are not only information users, they are information creators, contributing online content that lives outside the print format, and may take the shape of videos, podcasts or other online multimedia works. Helping students become information literate is more critical than ever before.

Alternative Information Literacy Models

To address the changing information climate and information needs of students, in recent years several groups have revised their information literacy standards.

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) released in October 2007 the *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*.[ii] These standards replace the AASL and Association of Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) *Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning,* published in 1998.[iii] The new standards lead with the statement, "The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed. Information literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference resources to find information. Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological, have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century." The model breaks each learning standards down into four areas: skills (affective learning outcomes), dispositions in action (affective learning outcomes), responsibilities, and self-assessment strategies. The standards also acknowledge that individuals need to acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn independently, but also that learning has a social context, and that students need to develop skills in sharing knowledge and learning with others (collaboration).

Similarly, the UK-based Society of College, National, and University Libraries (SCONUL) released the *SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Core Model for Higher Education* in April 2011,replacing the organization's 1999 position paper on information literacy.[iv] The new *Pillars* document states, "Information literacy is an umbrella term which encompasses concepts such as digital, visual, and media literacies, academic literacy, information handling, information skills, data curation and data management."[v] They envision information literacy not as a linear model, but a three-dimensional circular model, where an information-literate person is developing continually and holistically within the seven pillars simultaneously and independently. In

addition to addressing "core competencies," the SCONUL model is also creating a series of lenses for different user populations (ex. Research Lens, Digital Literacy Lens).

Both examples illustrate new ways in which professional associations are expanding their definitions of information literacy and providing alternative models for ACRL to consider in discussing the future of the ACRL *Information Literacy Standards*.

Complementary and Interacting Literacies

In addition to broadening and revising definitions of information literacy, other literacies that have been – and often still are – considered part of information literacy are being further articulated or redefined.

In response to the ways in which technology has enabled all citizens to produce media, in 2008 the Center for Media Literacy published the second edition of *Literacy for the 21st Century: An Overview and Orientation Guide to Media Literacy Education* that expanded and redefined media literacy, stating that it provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. [vi] Media literacy is seen as a basic human right, aiming to empower individuals and endow them with the knowledge to participate in an increasingly digital, interdependent, and global world.

Digital literacy is a broad term that encompasses understanding, evaluating and integrating digital information; creating digital content; and taking action to share knowledge and solve problems. In a 2010 white paper from the Aspen Institute, it was recognized that people need the ability to access, analyze and engage in critical thinking about the array of messages they receive, create, and share in order to make informed decisions about the everyday issues they face [http://www.knightcomm.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Digital_and_Media_Literacy_A_Plan_of_Action.pdf]. In 2011, ALA convened the Digital Literacy Task Force to address how information literacy skills now encompass the need to be fluent with a variety of technologies and applications, based on the growing concern with the digital divide, 21st century skills, and participatory citizenship [http://connect.ala.org/node/140464].

In October 2011, ACRL approved the *Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*.[vii] These standards define visual literacy as "a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media," aim to "address some of the unique issues presented by visual materials", and are meant to complement the *Information Literacy Competency Standards*.

These examples further illustrate how literacies are being reshaped and adjusted to address what it means to be literate in higher education and society today.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Clearly, the scope of literacy is changing and we must respond. ACRL has already recognized that the *Information Literacy Competency Standards*, as they currently exist, do not provide enough guidance on visual literacy and digital literacy, often considered subsets of information literacy itself.

Further, one of the initial aims of the original ACRL information literacy model was to provide a continuum of expectations for students moving from K-12 to higher education. Since AASL has revised the competencies for K-12 students, the standards no longer meet one of the key purposes for which they were developed.

For these reasons, the Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force believes that the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* should not be reapproved in their current form. We recommend extensive revision, centered on the following areas of needed improvement:

1. ***The Standards must be simplified as a readily understood model for greater adoption by audiences (both disciplinary and collegiate) outside of ALA.***

   The new SCONUL model illustrates this simplicity with their *Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Core Model for Higher Education*: Identify – Scope – Plan – Gather – Evaluate – Manage – Present. The model, with its lenses for defined groups, allows greater flexibility in tailoring the core competencies of information literacy to a particular user group, information need, or framework.

2. ***The Standards must be articulated in readily comprehensible terms that do not include library jargon.*** Using clear, non-discipline-specific wordings will make the Standards more accessible to a wide array of audiences, both academic and non-academic, and will lead to greater and wider adoption of the Standards.

3.   The Standards must include affective, emotional learning outcomes, in addition to the exclusively cognitive focus of the current standards.

Bibliographic instruction focused on skills. In the shift to information literacy, instruction librarians began focusing on skills and cognitive learning outcomes (knowledge). To move beyond the current model, we need to shift our thinking to include affective (emotional) learning outcomes that address self-efficacy, student confidence, attitudes, motivation, and valuing what is being learned. Many librarians are already addressing affective learning in their library instruction, but these are not adequately reflected in the standards, either to help support the information literacy framework for teaching, or to facilitate wider, campus discussions with faculty and/or administrators.

4.   The Standards must acknowledge complementary literacies. a.
In the article, "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy," Jacobson and Mackey [vi] define metaliteracy as providing "a conceptual framework for information literacy that diminishes theoretical differences, builds practical connections, and reinforces central lifelong learning goals among different literacy types. Rather than envision these methods as unrelated or disconnected, we see information literacy as the essential framework that informs and unifies additional literacy types. Through this approach we recognize the standard information literacy characteristics (determine, access, evaluate, incorporate, use, understand) as integral to related literacy formats." The task force recognizes the need for unifying relevant literacies, including digital literacy, media literacy, and visual literacy, within the rubric of information literacy.

5.   The Standards must move beyond an implicit focus on format ,
Information literacy is not just about learning text (print) literacy, visual literacy, or digital literacy in isolation from each other, but about the interactions between all these literacies (formats). This idea, transliteracy, is more about understanding the ways various formats interact and the social meaning of literacy. With changes in scholarly communication and the evolving digital landscape, we recognize the need to break down the hierarchical structures for disseminating information and level the information playing field.

6.   The Standards must address the role of the student as content creator.
During the past decade, and moving forward, the Internet has brought the opportunity for students to independently author, create, and distribute content. The standards must reflect this critical ability.

7. ***The Standards must address the role of the student as content curator.***
The online environment has democratized the creation and curation of personal information collections. Just as important as accessing information is the ability to store, mine, share and archive information collections. Moving forward, the *Standards* must highlight not only the content creation process, but also the role users now hold in building, curating, and archiving their online information collections.

8. **The *Standards* must provide continuity with the American Association of School Librarians' *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*.**
Revised in 2007, the AASL standards provide an updated view of information literacy, framed in terms of "learning standards". In order to maintain maximum utility and relevance, the ACRL *Information Literacy Standards* must provide a bridge of continuity with the AASL *Standards*.

Future Task Force Composition

Composition of the task force charged with revising the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* should be as diverse as possible. The 1998 Committee included a member from a regional accreditation commission, in addition to academic librarians from research libraries and smaller college libraries. The Task Force recommends that the group charged with authoring the new standards include representation from information technology-focused groups (EDUCAUSE), school librarians (American Association of School Librarians), and groups focused on the future of librarianship (Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)).

For continuity, members of the current task force should retain involvement with the next phase of the revision / authoring process. The Task Force Chair has a listing of additional information literacy experts who have volunteered to assist with the revision process, and will be happy to share this list, upon request.

Future Task Force Actions

While listed as optional tasks, the Task Force had hoped to gather substantial member feedback to guide its recommendations; unfortunately, the condensed time line and ACRL Board needs did not allow for this portion of the charge to occur. Following the recommendations, the Task Force has included a draft survey, approved by the *ACRL Information Literacy Standards Committee* (May 2012), to collect feedback from core constituencies (Appendix A). It is our hope that the next iteration of this task force (if

appointed) will endeavor to include significant member feedback in the resulting new (or revised) ACRL *Information Literacy Standards*.

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[i] Association of College and Research Libraries. (2000). *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/*Standards*/informationliteracycompetency

[ii] American Association of School Librarians (2007). *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesand*Standards*/learning*Standards*/*Standards*

[iii] American Association of School Libraries & Association of Educational Communications and Technology. (1998). *Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning. Retrieved from* http://www.ala.org/ala//mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslissues/infolit/informationliteracy1.cfm

[iv] Society of College, National, and University Libraries. (1999). *Information Skills in Higher Education: A SCONUL Position Paper*. Retrieved from http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/information_literacy/papers/Seven_pillars.html

[v] Society of College, National, and University Libraries. (2011). *SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Core Model for Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.sconul.ac.uk/groups/information_literacy/seven_pillars.html

[vi] Mackey, T. P., & Jacobson, T. (2011). Reframing information literacy as a metaliteracy. *College & Research Libraries*, 72(1), 62-78. Retrieved from http://crl.acrl.org/content/72/1/62.full.pdf+html

[vii] Association of College and Research Libraries. (2011). *Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/acrl/*Standards*/visualliteracy

Appendix A: Recommended Feedback Survey Questions
Please note: A draft of the survey is available online at: http://tinyurl.com/ACRLinfolit2012

Which title best describes your current position?
select all that apply
- Instruction or reference librarian
- Subject librarian
- Web design / emerging technologies / learning design librarian
- Distance education / e-learning librarian
- Other type of academic librarian (technical services, etc...)
- Department Head
- Head of Instruction / Instruction Coordinator
- Dean / Associate Dean
- IT professional
- Retired
- Graduate student
- Other:

What percentage of your current position is related to information literacy and instruction?

- 0-10%
- 11-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-90%
- 91-100%
- n/a

Check the highest degree granting level for your institution:

- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Level
- n/a

Are you a member of ACRL?

- Yes
- No

Are you aware of the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education?

Yes
No

Do you use the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education?

Yes
No

I use the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

How have you used the Information Literacy Competency Standards?
select all that apply

To articulate information literacy learning outcomes for my institution.
To articulate information literacy learning outcomes for my classes.
To guide instruction program development and goals.
To facilitate conversations about information literacy and instructional outcomes with individuals within higher education.
To facilitate conversations about information literacy and instructional outcomes with individuals within K-12 education.
To provide students with a framework for gaining control over how they interact with information in their environment.
To assess students' information literacy learning outcomes.
To set or measure information literacy learning outcomes for students.
To orient administrators / faculty to information literacy learning outcomes.
To engage in instructional self-study and / or strategic planning.
Other:

I do not use the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

Please indicate why you do not use the Information Literacy Competency Standards.
select all that apply

Use international / regional / local / institutional standards instead.
Use subject specific standards instead.
The Information Literacy Competency Standards are not relevant to students' needs.
The Information Literacy Competency Standards do not provide quantitative guidelines for measuring student learning outcomes.
There is no campus support for use of the Information Literacy Competency Standards.
I was previously unaware of the Information Literacy Competency Standards.

I have not used the Information Literacy Competency Standards yet, but plan to in the future.

Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

Below are statements about the goals and/or components of information literacy. Please agree or disagree with the statements.

Information literacy standards should...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
...help students frame their information need.					
...integrate technology skills (e.g. using computer applications).					
...address how information is produced and disseminated.					
...reflect that learning is lifelong.					
...recognize the role of student as content creator.					
...acknowledge the socio-economic and legal issues surrounding the production and use of information.					
...promote how information can be used to meet a specific goal or need.					
...address affective (emotional) learning outcomes, such as self-confidence and persistence.					
...integrate digital literacies (e.g. understanding digital technologies and communications).					
...propose how to access information.					
...integrate personal library management skills,					

including curation, archiving, and organization.
...address how to understand different information formats.
...demonstrate the ethical and legal use of information.
...focus on critical evaluation of information sources.
...address cognitive learning outcomes, such as critical thinking, comprehension and reasoning.
...promote how to identify appropriate information sources.
...focus on rote or mechanical skills.
...demonstrate how to create effective search strategies.
...promote how to communicate or disseminate information to different audiences using different modes.

Other?

Do you feel that the ACRL Information Literacy Standards should be retained, revised, or rescinded?

Retain, with no changes to the current document.
Revise and update the current document.
Rescind and move forward with a new model.

Are there any other comments, suggestions, or feedback that you would like to provide to aid the review process?