

ACRL Representative Report

Unit Representative to: ALA Liaison to American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

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Background Information:

Founded in 1848, AAAS is affiliated with 252 societies (including ALA) and academies, serving more than 10 million individuals and “representing the world’s largest federation of scientific and engineering societies.” The AAAS is “dedicated to advancing science for the benefit of all people.” Interest in AAAS increased dramatically in the last two years, spiking noticeably after the presidential inauguration. AAAS added more than 20,000 members in 2017, possibly aided by its creation of a new (lower cost) membership category—science advocate—to strengthen outreach to new individual members who are “not scientists or engineers, but believe in the importance of science for our society.”

In tandem with the membership surge, AAAS’s advocacy mission has assumed a renewed vigor. Its website “[Force for Science](#)” includes an action toolkit for STEM professionals to communicate their science, and it is a major supporter of the worldwide March for Science movement, now in its second year. AAAS publishes six peer-reviewed journals: its flagship journal *Science*, which reaches hundreds of thousands every week; *Science Advances*; *Science Immunology*; *Science Robotics*; *Science Signaling*; *Science Translational Medicine*. [Major program areas](#) include Science, Policy, and Society; Government Relations; R&D Budget and Policy; Advancing Capacity; Research Competitiveness; and others.

AAAS is a good membership organization choice for librarians and information professionals.

Major Activities of the Unit:

- The theme of the 2018 annual meeting, held February 15-19 in Austin, Texas, was “[Advancing Science: Discovery to Application](#).” The [video archive](#) includes the meeting’s plenary lectures.
- For 45 years, the AAAS Mass Media Fellows program has given STEM undergrads, grad students, and post-docs the opportunity to spend 10 weeks working as science journalists at publications around the nation.
- AAAS hosts the online platform Trellis, where members connect and collaborate via discussions, events, webinars, and more. Examples of Trellis communities include AAAS Member Central, Public Engagement with Science, C4Sci—Communities for Science Communication, AAAS Force for Science Group, [NSF INCLUDES](#) Open Forum, AAU Undergraduate STEM Education Initiative, as well as several groups created by individual universities to address STEM education topics, and groups for each of the [AAAS Sections](#).

Implications for ACRL:

- AAAS is heavily invested in helping STEM researchers and students develop science communication and public engagement skills. AAAS sees these KSAs as vital to the future of science, in that they prepare scientists to make the case for science to laypersons, policy makers, and others outside the academy. AAAS boosts scicomm in several ways, including traveling workshops on scicomm, fellowships for science communicators, a major annual prize for science communication, and sponsoring scicomm research. As more and more STEM departments add public engagement to their strategic plans, libraries and librarians are supporting them in communicating their science with the public, just as they have traditionally supported them in scholarly communication.
- *Annual Librarians' Session at AAAS Annual Meeting.* Thirty-one librarians attended a librarians' session held during the afternoon of the first day of the 2018 AAAS Annual Meeting, in the Perry-Castañeda Library on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. Eleven librarians gathered for lunch-arounds preceding the meeting. AAAS generously provided coffee and pastries for the meeting, and Ryan Rexroth, AAAS Senior Institutional Licensing Manager, addressed us briefly. Six attendees gave short presentations, on topics including a math day event for high school students, using Kahoot for game-based instruction, on-demand purchasing of engineering standards, training for undergraduates for science communication, librarians' liaison roles, and a comparison of agricultural databases. Librarians then toured either the new Engineering Library or the Fine Arts Library's MakerSpace.
- *Sponsored Librarians at the AAAS Annual Meeting.* On August 28, 2017, Alison Ricker, the previous AAAS liaison, issued a call via STS-L for people to sign up for free registration to the Annual Meetings. Fifty-seven people responded, of which 35 were first-time AAAS Annual Meeting attendees. AAAS provided free registration for 30 librarians to attend the 2018 Annual Meeting, and reduced-rate registration for three librarians. As in past years, some librarians presented posters in the General Poster session. In the weeks after the 2018 Annual Meeting, nine librarians contributed notes on the sessions they attended to be compiled in a document. Due to the concerns of some, these notes were shared only within the librarians group. Future plans are to share these Annual Meeting notes more widely, possibly via STS-L, *ACRL Insider*, *C&RL News*, *ISTL*, and/or other ACRL venues.

Upcoming Activities:

- The 2019 Annual Meeting of AAAS will be held February 14-17, at the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C.
- Submissions for [e-posters](#) will be accepted beginning in July 2018.

Respectfully submitted,



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