

**ACRL DOLS Strategic Plan 2021-2024**  
**Adopted by the DOLS Executive Committee June 15, 2021.**

**Overview:**

The Strategic Plan was created with guidance and information from the ACRL DLS Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and the Strategic Plan Survey Report December 2020 – February 2021.

**Review:**

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually and revised every three years.

**Section Mission Statement:**

The Distance and Online Learning Section (DOLS) is a section of the [Association of College and Research Libraries](#), a division of the [American Library Association](#). DOLS supports and promotes library services to off campus, distance education, and online students; provides a vehicle for the professional development and exchange of ideas among librarians working with off campus and distance education students.

**Core Section Values:**

Distance and Online Learning Section is committed to:

- Leadership in the area of distance and online library services from within the section, cross unit collaborations within ALA, and providing our members with the tools necessary to be leaders within their communities and on their individual campuses
- Member support through services, resources, and professional development
- Support to libraries and librarians serving distance and online learning populations
- Create welcoming learning environments for all distance and online learning stakeholders with a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Collaborating with other sections, divisions, committees, and organizations through our research, leadership, communication and promotion, and professional development.

The plan is divided into four goals: research; leadership; communication and promotion, and professional development. The goals are interrelated and build on the Section's previous activities.

**Goal I. Research**

Strategic Initiative: The Distance and Online Learning Section will address the major forces affecting distance and online learning library services. Activities of the section will reflect the environmental forces that affect its future and create changes, developments, and trends to its external environment. The section will be proactive in promoting research findings to members and nonmembers.

Objective 1: Foster and disseminate research studies in library support for distance and online learning communities

Action Items:

- Mentor members in research and publication concepts and processes
- Sponsor research presentations at the DLS, ACRL, and other relevant conferences
- Advocate for submitting research to scholarly journals (e.g., *Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*) to support distance and online learning

Objective 2: Identify current trends, issues, data that reflect changes, and developments in the external environment related to distance and online library services

Action Items

- Conducting an environmental scan, surveying the membership or specific constituencies (instruction librarians, resource sharing librarians)

Objective 3: Initiate projects, research studies, ad hoc committees, and discussions that promote best practices and contribute to the knowledge base in distance and online learning library services.

Action Items

- Conduct research with librarians around their perceptions of distance and online library services

## **Goal II. Leadership**

Strategic Initiative: The Distance and Online Learning Section is the acknowledged leader in developing

and articulating effective practices in distance and online learning library services.

Objective 1: Define best practices and plans in distance and online learning library services

Action Items

- Revise and assess the ACRL Standards for Distance Learning Library Services

Objective 2: Become the leading source for locating best resources and tools on distance and online library services

Action Items

- Develop resource guides for distance and online learning library services

Objective 3: Take leadership in developing formal or informal learning and training opportunities for DOLS members and nonmembers.

Action Items

- Explore partnering with MLIS program to provide students with a credential in online learning.
- Provide opportunities for DOLS members to serve as mentors.

Objective 4: Translate DEI work into the online space and make concrete and practical guidance available for stakeholders.

#### Action Items

- Create best practices list for creating inclusive learning environments ensuring the tips are practical and promote psychological safety.

### **Goal III. Communication & Promotion**

Strategic Initiative: The Distance and Online Learning Section provides timely, accurate, and useful information related to distance and online library services. This includes promoting and communicating the activities and resources of the Distance Library Section to librarians within individual institutions, regional accreditation associations, directors of state libraries, library/information science schools, and to professional library and higher education associations and institutions as well as developing mechanisms to ensure input from these organizations.

Objective 1: Communicate and promote the activities and resources of the committee to the distance and online library community

#### Action Items

- Maintain and continuously improve communication channels, utilizing all available tools.
- Promote and distribute the ACRL Standards for Distance Learning Library Services
- Reach a broader audience through encouraging personal networking and sharing.

Objective 2: Provide member support services to promote networking and communication

#### Action Items

- Encourage an increased use of ALA Connect for people to ask questions, discuss new ideas, and create a community of practice around distance and online librarianship
- Support the exploration of a community of practice within distance and online librarianship

Objective 3: Actively recruit new members for the section and into the profession

#### Action Items

- Membership drives

- Active participation in ACRL membership activities
- GoSocials at conferences
- Emphasis placed on library schools and diversity residency programs to increase both physical diversity and diversity of thought into the section.

Objective 4: Recognize contributions to the profession and distance and online library services

Action Items

- Acknowledging outstanding achievements in service and research with awards
- Highlight and publicize research in distance learning librarianship

Objective 5: Increasing visibility of the section beyond ALA through communication of section activities to non-ALA associations

Action Items

- Develop relationships with associations such as American Association for Higher Education, Distance Learning Association, EduCause, IMS Global, etc.

Objective 6: Find ways to partner and collaborate with ACRL and ALA units outside of DOLS for communication of the section and the expertise inherent with distance and online learning.

**Goal IV: Professional Development**

Strategic Initiative: Distance and Online Learning Section committees will facilitate the development and sharing of expertise, practice, resources and research in distance and online learning library services among librarians, administrators, teaching faculty, instructional team members, and students, both individually and as members of professional groups and associations.

Objective 1: Promote and provide opportunities for professional development in all aspects of distance and online librarianship both for DOLS members and nonmembers.

Action Items

- virtual poster session
- discussion meetings
- provide mentoring opportunities for members.

Objective 2: Offer professional development and continuing education opportunities for librarians and libraries who have or plan to implement services for distance and online learners by developing programs exploring the scope, issues, and research of distance and online learning library services.

Action Items

- Hosting discussion groups, interest groups, program planning, webinars and workshops in appropriate environments
- Developing programs for presentation at ALA, DLS, and regional library conferences
- Developing formal training for librarians who want to improve their distance and online learning skills