

Assessment Plans

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Columbia University Libraries
2007 through 2009

February 1, 2007
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Executive Summary

In 2006 an *ad hoc* Assessment Team was gathered and charged with exploring assessment activities across Columbia University Libraries. The Team examined assessment as a concept and practice in libraries, conducted interviews with staff members, worked to define what assessment means for CUL, outlined assessment goals and priorities, and developed the recommendations in this Plan.

Goals of an assessment program at CUL:

- To foster a culture of assessment at the Libraries.
- To enable data-driven decision-making at all staff levels.
- To promote information transparency in the work environment.
(see page 8 for further explanation)

Recommendations

Assessment Priorities

The following areas have been identified as needing assessment support, and will be given priority. (see page 11 for further explanation)

Ongoing

- Usability Program
- Reference Services Assessment
- Collection Development analysis support

2007

- Library as Place: Construction and Renovation Projects
 - Lehman Library Renovation
 - Information Commons: Lehman, Butler, Sciences
 - Business Library Renovation
 - The Sciences Library
 - Geology Library Renovation
 - Starr Library Renovation
- Faculty Brochure Survey
- Access Services Quality Service Survey
- Document Delivery and Paging Services, planning support
- Faculty Focus Groups

2008

- Library as Place: Construction and Renovation Projects
 - Avery Library
 - The New Business Library
 - Math Library
- Graduate Student Focus Groups

2009

- LibQual+ Survey

- Undergraduate Focus Groups

Creation of an Assessment Working Group (AWG) (*refer to page 7 for further explanation*)

The formation of an ongoing Assessment Working Group (AWG) is recommended. The charge of the AWG includes initiating, supporting and monitoring a sustainable assessment program at CUL, assisting in identifying and maintaining assessment priorities, ensuring that appropriate training and support for staff is provided, publishing results of assessment initiatives as appropriate and advocating for a culture of assessment at the Libraries.

The Director of Access Services will serve as the liaison between the Assessment Working Group and the Management Committee.

Online Assessment Center (SWIFT) (*refer to page 16 for further explanation*)

The Assessment Center will provide staff with direct access to training opportunities, resources on assessment, guidelines for assessment initiatives, contact with the AWG, and updates on assessment projects.

Long-term goals for the Assessment Center include data bank-like functionalities, enabling staff to access information and run reports independently.

<https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/libraries/staffweb/adm/assessment/index.html>

The Assessment Coordinator would like to thank the members of the Assessment Team for their contributions to the development of the Assessment Plan. Their various perspectives, expertise and experience were invaluable.

The Assessment Team, an *ad hoc* group, was gathered to support the Assessment Coordinator in the research and preparation of this plan.

Membership:

Access Services: Bill Sees
Collection Development: Jeff Carroll
LDPD: Joanna DiPasquale
Reference: Jane Winland
Technical Services: Iris Wolley

Introduction

Assessment encompasses all areas of information gathering (qualitative and quantitative) and analysis in relation to decision-making and the management of the Libraries. Collections analysis, usability studies, user input studies, and internal analysis of policies and procedures are currently the four major areas of assessment at CUL. Assessment attempts to measure CUL's collections, websites, services, policies and procedures against the users' expectations and CUL's strategic goals and mission. Assessment initiatives must have a compelling motivation, a rigorous and valid research process, and a commitment to engaging and applying the information gathered.

CUL is an organization that is familiar with assessment. In recent years the Libraries have conducted two rounds of LibQual+ Surveys, User Input Focus Groups, the E-Reference Assessment, numerous usability tests, staff focus groups, and "local" surveys, as well as continually collecting data for ARL Statistics. Reference staff found the analysis of E-Reference transactions to be enlightening, especially in determining staffing models for future E-Reference services. In general, staff have found that opportunities to gather and interpret user feedback have proven to be incredibly valuable and informative. These efforts have illustrated user needs that may not have been previously perceived, and have allowed the Libraries to focus on improving service for user. Library use statistics such as gate counts have enabled the Business and Social Sciences libraries to advocate for extending service hours. All in all, CUL has a stable, well-established foundation of conducting assessment that can now be expanded, enhanced, and formalized through the implementation of the Assessment Plan.

An Assessment Program is intended to provide staff with the tools necessary to make the decisions that are expected of them throughout the continuous process of managing and working in the Libraries. The following is an example from Jane Winland, the Director of Social Sciences Libraries at Lehman Library:

Assessment has helped me considerably in getting funding. We had to make a decision on how to prioritize our renovation project; having data from students on their needs for the library space and services allowed me to advocate for implementing those changes.

In addition, assessment aims to support and enable staff to improve in all aspects of service:

Transforming our libraries to reflect a culture of assessment is essential to increasing our success with customers and stakeholders, and maintaining relevancy in a competitive environment. (Lakos, Amos and Shelley Phipps. "Creating a Culture of Assessment: A Catalyst for Organizational

Change," *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 345-361. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2004.)

A successful assessment program depends upon the following:

- A focus on supporting the patron's information and communication needs
- Performance measures that are included in the strategic plan
- A commitment to supporting assessment from the Libraries' leadership
- Staff recognition of the value of assessment
- Staff support for and participation in assessment initiatives
- Continuous communication with patrons
- Routine collection and analysis of data and user feedback
- Commitment to applying assessment results in decision-making

Derived from: *Amos Lakos, "Defining a Culture of Assessment"*
<http://personal.anderson.ucla.edu/amos.lakos/CUtoolkit.html>

In an effort to better understand the current state of assessment at the Libraries, the heads of each library, as well as the key players in Technical, Public, and Access Services were interviewed. The following concerns and needs were identified:

CUL concerns:

- Not enough time and support for analyzing and engaging data collected in assessment efforts
- Limited ability to access data independently
- The need to make statistics gathering routine and consistent
- Targeting data gathering towards information needs and strategic goals
- Organizational commitment to data-driven decision-making is not established: Is this a priority? Expectation?
- Maintaining the ability to tailor assessment tools to a library's unique needs
- Lack of transparency about and lack of access to current data sets
- "Survey Fatigue"

CUL needs:

- To make assessment initiatives, such as statistics-gathering and focus groups, routine
- The ability to freely access data independently, immediately
- To develop tools and skills supporting the design and implementation of assessment initiatives
- Support for data analysis and displaying data effectively
- A central location for the storage and sharing of data
- Training, workshops, best-practices for assessment

Assessment Working Group

The formation of an ongoing Assessment Working Group (AWG) is recommended. The charge of the AWG includes initiating, supporting and monitoring a sustainable assessment program at CUL, assisting in identifying and maintaining assessment priorities, ensuring that appropriate training and support for staff is provided, publishing results of assessment initiatives as appropriate and advocating for a culture of assessment at the Libraries.

The first priority of the AWG is to create an Implementation Plan for tracking the progress of the outlined assessment priorities. Project management software to support these efforts is being sought. The Implementation Plan will outline the goals, timeframe, key players, and methods of assessment for each project, and will assign an AWG member to work with the key players and the Assessment Coordinator to ensure that the assessment is carried out successfully.

For example, the Faculty Brochure Survey goals are to understand which library services faculty are aware of, which services they value the most, and about which services they would like to learn more. Key players include the Communications Committee and selectors. The information is needed by the end of February 2007 in order to stay on-task with the brochure project timeline. This information will be gathered via an online survey for timeliness, ability to document the data collection, and convenience for the participant. This data, in combination with information gathered via the LibQual+ Survey and the User Input Focus Groups will inform decisions regarding marketing services to faculty. The Communications Committee will develop, administer, and monitor the survey and is committed to applying the information collected to their project.

The AWG will work closely with the Management Committee to ensure that strategic planning initiatives have the appropriate assessment support, and that the information needs of the Management Committee are satisfied in a timely manner. The Director of Access Services will serve as the liaison between the Assessment Working Group and the Management Committee.

In this manner, the AWG will function as a consulting group for assessment initiatives. Staff members designated as Strategic Plan project leads are encouraged to contact the AWG regarding assessment projects.

Membership

Assessment Coordinator (Chair)
Director of Access Services (Core Member)
A.D. of Collection Development (Core Member)
Web Services Librarian, or appropriate counterpart from LDPD (Core Member)
Access Services Committee Member (rotating, two year commitment)

Reference Coordinating Committee Member (rotating, two year commitment)
2 members (two year commitment)

Manager of Training Programs (*Ex Officio* Member)

The Assessment Team proposes a nomination process to fill the remaining seats on the AWG. Professional staff who are interested in joining the AWG and supporting assessment initiatives at the Libraries are asked to self-nominate or nominate their colleagues. Nominations can be sent to jb2563@columbia.edu. The AWG will review the nominations and select 2-3 staff members, in consultation with supervisors, to serve on the Working Group. Every effort will be made to ensure that all divisions of the Libraries are equally represented through the membership and work of the AWG.

The AWG is committed to building relationships with partners on campus and in libraries across the country, and will explore exciting new ways to develop such partnerships.

Goals & Priorities

Culture of Assessment

CUL is committed to building a culture of assessment within the organization.

“A Culture of Assessment is an organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders. A Culture of Assessment exists in organizations where staff care to know what results they produce and how those results relate to customers’ expectations. Organizational mission, values, structures, and systems support behavior that is performance and learning focused.”

– Amos Lakos

<http://personal.anderson.ucla.edu/amos.lakos/>

Data-driven Decision-making

One goal of building a “culture of assessment” at the Libraries is to foster a deeper commitment toward incorporating data into the decision-making process of all levels of staff. Amos Lakos states that “In essence, we are advocating a change in our institutional cultures, from a static, institutionally and professionally inwardly focused culture to an externally focused institution and profession that needs to embrace the notion of decision-making based on measurements, and analysis based on customer expectations.” (Evidence Based Library Management – A View to the Future, pg 3.) Data-driven decision-making

is a concept closely related to evidence-based management. "It just means finding the best evidence that you can, facing those facts, and acting on those facts - rather than doing what everyone else does, what you have always done, or what you thought was true." (<http://www.evidence-basedmanagement.com>) CUL is moving towards creating a work environment where staff are encouraged and expected to base decisions on information gathered to support and inform our management needs. Of course, not every decision requires a thorough data-analysis. The goal here is to identify information needs, and perform the necessary assessment, enabling data-driven decision-making.

One great example of data-driven decision-making involves determining terminology for a website. This type of decision is clearly an opportunity to gather information from users that will directly inform the decision. The website is a service that the Libraries provides for users. It is a simple exercise to put together a list of possible terms and consult users to discover which ones have the most meaning for them. Collection development is another area where data can directly inform decision-making. Even renovation projects give opportunity to consult library users: Should we get couches or armchairs? Carpet or tile? These are all opportunities for staff to step back, ask questions, and collect relevant information from users to guide decisions and enable CUL to provide the best possible service.

Information Transparency

Ensuring that all staff have access to organizational information, as appropriate, is a major priority of the assessment program. "Information transparency" refers to the end result of breaking down internal barriers that prevent access to valuable information. This can mean providing fluid and immediate access to meeting minutes, circulation statistics, gate counts, shelving statistics, survey results, etc., to all members of the staff. In each case, there is currently someone at CUL who is responsible for this information. This often means that staff are required to consult this person for access to the information. Having a culture of "information transparency" would mean that staff are able to *independently* access all types of organizational information without having to involve an intermediary.

The Assessment Center on SWIFT will be tool allowing staff to access information independently, and in timely manner.

One long-term goal for the Assessment Center includes data-bank-like functionalities, allowing staff to access reference statistics, circulations statistics, gate counts, etc., from all libraries through one central interface. (Much like the Penn Data Farm.) This type of tool contributes greatly to a "information

transparency”, and a “culture of assessment” in that staff are enabled to access necessary information, when they need it, and run reports independently – helping to make assessment an easy, natural, part of working at CUL.

Training

In coordination with the Manager for Staff Training, topical training, workshops, and information sessions will be held to prepare staff for participation in developing and administering assessment initiatives. Staff education topics include focus group facilitation, interview skills, survey development, project management, change management, and techniques for displaying data effectively.

Data Analysis

A major concern among CUL staff is time and the ability to analyze and apply data collected from an assessment effort. The Assessment Coordinator and the AWG will provide support for data analysis and interpretation, as well as assistance developing charts and graphs. Staff members can request support by contacting the AWG or the Assessment Coordinator.

Critical analysis of complex data requires some skills that are not typical among library professionals. Most library assessment literature recommends seeking partners in the larger community who can help with advanced statistical data analysis. The AWG is committed to forging relationships at the University that can supply this type of support.

Assessment Program Priorities

Based on reviewing the 2006-2009 CUL Strategic Plan, User Input Focus Group results, and the 2006 LibQual+ Survey, the following assessment priorities have been identified. These initiatives will be given priority in terms of resources (funding and staff time), support, and staffing over the next three years, and are subject to change with the environment.

- **Usability Program**

The Strategic Plan implicated usability in many areas of online tool development, such as “seek[ing] out or develop[ing] tools that use catalog data to effectively aid resource discovery and access,” “develop[ing] a common interface and request service for the ReCAP and collections,” and “reviv[ing] the idea for a Special Collections Gateway.” The EPAG group works diligently to review E-resources pages, request usability studies and suggest improvements. In 2006 the LibQual+ Survey indicated that the Libraries were not meeting user expectations regarding “a library website that enables [users] to locate information on [their] own.” Other areas of the LibQual+ Survey also implicated usability, though often

indirectly. Faculty assigned low scores for “print and/or electronic journal collections [they] require for [their] work” - indicating a possible deficiency in marketing, and technological barriers preventing user-friendly access to the sometimes complex resources CUL provides. In order to support CUL’s commitment to developing relevant, intuitive online tools and websites for users, LSO and LDPD are dedicated to incorporating standard usability practices to analyze those online tools. A comprehensive usability program will:

- Establish routine usability procedures for LDPD and LSO, integrated into the development of online tools and websites
- Establish a method for staff and committees to request usability tests for existing websites and tools
- Provide a pool of participants for usability tests, as well as incentives
- Support and maintain prioritization of usability projects
- Explore partnerships with CNMTL, DKV and CU regarding usability practices
- Explore concepts of information architecture, and how this will play a role in website re-design and management

Usability Project Priorities:

- LSO
 - Spring 2007
 - E-journals websites
 - Library Public Workstation Re-design
 - Future projects
 - Course Reserves
 - New Books Lists
 - E-journal analysis: Partner with ILL and Collection Development
 - SWIFT
 - Voyager: Partner with peer institutions using Voyager to discover and develop interface design best-practices
- LDPD
 - Spring 2007
 - RBML and Archives websites
 - FAQ development (in coordination with Access Services)
 - HR websites
 - Future projects
 - “Behind the Scenes” websites
 - “Request It” websites

- “Services” websites
- Digital Collections and Special Collections websites

- **Library As Place: Construction and Renovation**

The following building projects were identified in the Strategic Plan, and will incorporate user input as to the configuration of the spaces, as appropriate. Methods of incorporating user input into construction and renovation planning include surveys, focus groups, discussion groups, and observational studies. The AWG will work with the lead staff member of each project to ensure that assessment needs are met.

- Information Commons: Lehman, Butler, Sciences
 - Lehman Library Renovation
 - The Sciences Libraries
 - build a new partially consolidated science library
 - renovate the Geology Library space
 - refurbish or renovate the Math/Science Library
 - Business Library
 - Avery Library
 - Starr Library
- **Reference Services**
 - Indirectly mediated
 - FAQ development (in coordination with Access Services)
 - Subject Guides
 - Directly mediated
 - Understand use patterns, preferences and motivation for using Reference services via the desk, website, email, IM or Chat and other online tools. Gauge user satisfaction, and identify user expectations and needs
 - E-Reference Analysis
 - Gather user input on e-reference tools
 - Determine preferred methods of communication
 - Understand expectations and needs for reference support
 - Gauge user satisfaction with current E-Reference options; provide a benchmark for upcoming changes
 - Develop methods for benchmarking and measuring all new initiatives in Reference Services
 - Track the use of print and online reference resources to better understand use and inform collection development
 - Quality Service

- Participate in Quality Service assessment initiatives
- Assess Reference transactions for quality and user satisfaction

- **Quality Service Continual Survey**

The Access Services Division will be piloting a Quality Service Continual Survey in Butler Library for the Fall of 2007. This survey will enable users to provide feedback on any Access service point in Butler Library (Circulation, LIO, ILL, PMRR, and the Stacks), via online forms. Feedback will be collected in a database, and will be accessible by staff for analysis.

This survey will be structured so as to be easily scalable and incorporate Access service points at all Libraries, as well as Reference service points. The AWG will be working with the Access Managers and LSO on the development and marketing of the survey.

- **Document Delivery and Paging Services**

The AWG will work with the Director of Access Services and the Head of ILL to establish assessment projects in support of these initiatives.

- Paging Service:
 - Benchmarking Questionnaire
 - Statistics gathering
 - Cost-benefit-analysis: "book-by-mail" vs. CUL Mail Service models
 - Develop system requirements for a tracking system
 - Faculty Survey
- Document Delivery:
 - Benchmarking Questionnaire
 - Process Analysis
 - Interface Usability Studies

- **Collection Development**

The following assessment priorities were identified by the Director and A.D. of Collection Development. Assessment methods will be identified to support the following projects:

- Gather and analyze e-resources use statistics
 - Explore software tools to support these efforts
- Update Collection Development policies
- Explore the liaison experience, in relation to collection development
- Develop a documentation system for the vendor analysis process

- Analysis of Borrow Direct / ILL statistics, partner with LSO
- Explore software tools for collection analysis

- **LibQual+ Survey**
 - CUL will continue to use the ARL LibQual+ Survey to gauge user perceptions of our performance as a “big picture” marker.
 - LibQual+ will be used to track our progress in key areas of concern, as well as identify future assessment needs.
 - LibQual+ will be used on a three year cycle; the next instance being Spring of 2009. The schedule is easily adaptable if circumstances change.
 - CUL will make an effort to identify peer institutions who also participate in the LibQual+ Survey, and encourage coordination and sharing results in an effort to provide benchmarking.

- **Annual Focus Groups**
 - In an effort to build avenues of communication with users, provide continual feedback, support ongoing strategic planning efforts and build on the success of the User Input Group, the AWG will coordinate annual focus groups of user populations. Based on a three year rotation, aligned with the LibQual+ survey schedule, focus groups will be held for the core user populations: faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.
 - 2007: Faculty
 - 2008: Graduate Students
 - 2009: Undergraduate Students
 - Topics for the focus groups will be determined based on key areas of concern identified through the LibQual+ results, strategic goals, and consultation with the Public Services Committee.

A note on ARL Statistics and the Libraries Manager of Financial Planning: The Assessment Coordinator will keep close contact with Jane Sahnner, and seek new ways to apply and publish data collected annually for ARL Statistics, ensure that data collection mechanisms are relevant and usable, and provide unfettered access to these data and reports.

A note on incentives: A budget has been established to fund incentives for users participating in assessment efforts. To request incentives for an assessment initiative, please contact the Assessment Coordinator. Special thanks to the Deputy University Librarian for supporting this valuable initiative.

Roles

Assessment Coordinator

The Assessment Coordinator (i.e. Program Coordinator for Marketing and Assessment), reporting to the Director of Access Services, functions as an initiator, coordinator and advocate for assessment at CUL. The Assessment Coordinator is kept aware of all assessment initiatives taking place in the Libraries, provides support and direction as needed, chairs the Assessment Working Group and manages assessment priorities, ensuring that CUL's information needs are met.

Management Committee & Strategic Planning

As the Assessment Plan and priorities are based on the direction of the CUL Strategic Plan, and functions to support strategic planning goals, communication between the AWG and the Management Committee will be critical to the success of the Assessment Plan.

Leadership support is an indicator of a strong culture of assessment. The AWG, Assessment Coordinator, and the Assessment Plan's success depend heavily on the support and involvement of Library Directors in assessment initiatives and their advocating for and participating actively in building a culture of assessment at the Libraries.

Requesting Assessment

Staff members who wish to request an assessment initiative, or seek advice or support for assessment in their libraries are invited to contact the Assessment Coordinator. Depending on the scope of the assessment initiative in question, the Assessment Coordinator will be able to fulfill the request directly, or will refer the request on to the AWG, who will review requests, and determine their level of priority. Priority will depend upon relation to the strategic goals and staff availability for necessary support. The AWG will work with the requester to explore the topic at hand, and develop a plan for the assessment initiative.

Please notify the Assessment Coordinator of any assessment initiatives in the Libraries in an effort to maintain information transparency and coordination across the system. Coordination is one way of ensuring the avoidance of survey fatigue.

Online Assessment Center – SWIFT

The Assessment Center will connect staff directly with assessment tools, best practices, and valuable data. The Assessment Center will also serve as the main pathway for communication between staff, the AWG and the Assessment

Coordinator. Staff will be able to track the progress of assessment initiatives, request assessment projects, request support or training, and access data independently.

<https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/libraries/staffweb/adm/assessment/index.html>

Data Bank

A long-term goal for the Assessment Center is to house a CUL Data Bank that would facilitate access to statistics that staff regularly require for their work. Examples include: reference statistics, collection use statistics, e-resources use statistics, CLIO statistics, etc.

The planning and execution of the Data Bank will be managed by the AWG, in conjunction with LSO's database programmer, and LDPD.

The Future of Assessment at CUL

User-centered Design

The AWG is committed to exploring opportunities for incorporating methods of ethnographic research and observational studies as an element of a user-centered design approach to the development of services and online tools. User-centered design aims to enable the organization to better understand user behaviors, needs and expectations regarding information gathering.

Learning Outcomes

The AWG will investigate methods for measuring learning outcomes in relation to bibliographic instruction and general library use, in an effort to understand and measure the influence of the Libraries on scholarship at Columbia University.

Disseminating Assessment Results

The AWG will explore avenues for communicating assessment results to the Libraries' staff, patrons, administration, and colleagues around the country. Publishing the results of assessment efforts, and illustrates the Libraries commitment to employing the information collected, our commitment to our users and our value of their input.

CUL Annual Reports

The AWG strongly encourages Library Heads and Directors to include a review of assessment initiatives in each library's annual report.

Assessment Forums

The AWG will arrange for regular Assessment Forums to be held at the Libraries. Topics should address various methods of assessment, and will contribute to the building a culture of assessment here at CUL. Potential topics include: planning assessment initiatives, focus groups, assessment and marketing: a dynamic relationship, assessment success stories, Penn Data Farm, decision-making, and change management.

Identifying Partnerships

The Assessment Coordinator and the AWG are dedicated to identifying potential partners in assessment, on campus as well as at peer institutions. The AWG will assist in reaching out to appropriate partners at CU, and building outside relationships.

Assessment "Fellow"

Each year the AWG will nominate one staff member who has shown considerable interest in assessment, initiative in supporting assessment, and has become an advocate for a culture of assessment in the Libraries. This person will be recognized by the Libraries and given opportunity to develop his or her assessment skills by either attending a conference, workshop, or training session on an assessment topic, at the Administrative rate.

Results of the CUL Culture of Assessment IQ Test

In January 2007, a “Culture of Assessment IQ Test” was distributed as a survey to professional staff. About 30 staff responded. This tool, based on the work of Amos Lakos, served as a benchmark for gauging CUL’s understanding of assessment, by definition, and the extent to which the concept and practice of assessment are present in the organizational culture.

The results of the survey, as illustrated below, illustrate the *majority* response for each question.

Assessment is evident in our library planning documents such as strategic plans	True
Assessment is a campus priority	False
Library administrators are committed to supporting assessment	True
Staff accepts responsibility for assessment activities	True
There is support and rewards for staff who engage in assessment	False
Library policies and procedures are designed to enable, not inhibit, user information needs	True
Collaboration and cooperation exists among individuals and departments of the Libraries	True
My library considers user needs when allocating resources	True
My library actively cultivates a positive relationship with its users	True
Assessment leads to results in my library	False
My library routinely collects, uses, and disseminates meaningful user data and feedback	False
My library evaluates its operations and programs for quality	True
Staff have expertise and skills in assessment	False

These results, combined with the responses to final question “What does ‘assessment’ mean to you?,” clearly indicate that CUL has a clear understanding of the concept of assessment, and values assessment. Assessment is present in the strategic plan, the perception that library administration is committed to assessment, and staffs’ expressed willingness to accept responsibility for assessment are all signs that there is a strong foundation for a more comprehensive assessment program to build on.

There are, of course, challenges with assessment as well. While the concept of assessment is clearly understood and valued, the practice of applying assessment data to management practices has not yet become part of our culture. False responses to “assessment leads to results in my library,” “my library routinely collects, uses, and disseminates meaningful user data and feedback,” and “staff has expertise and skills in assessment” illustrate areas for improvement.

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Library System

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HOWARD
UNIVERSITY

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Library Assessment Plan

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Related pages > [Survey Questionnaire](#) | [Values & Beliefs, Vision, Mission](#)

GOAL 1: ACCESS TO INFORMATION -- Patrons informational needs for education, research and service are fully met

- **Objective A:** > [Template](#)
Patrons have access to resources that adequately support their information needs, regardless of format, time, or location
- **Objective B:** > [Template](#)
Patrons use high performance technologies to locate the information they need, regardless of format, time, or location
- **Objective C:** > [Template](#)
Patrons obtain information not available at Howard libraries, promptly and with minimum effort

GOAL 2: INFORMATION EMPOWERMENT -- The student's information skills as foundations for life-long learning are developed or enhanced

- **Objective A:** > [Template](#)
Patrons receive effective ready reference and consultation assistance (Satisfaction)
- **Objective B:** > [Template](#)
First-year students can use finding tools effectively to identify useful resources and locate needed information (learning outcome)
- **Objective C:** > [Template](#)
Upper-level undergraduates and graduate students completing departmental research methods courses can readily identify appropriate finding tools expeditiously, evaluate information sources and their content critically, and document information content accurately (learning outcome)
- **Objective D:** > [Template](#)
Students and faculty will acquire advanced skills in searching particular finding tools--Sterling Online Catalog; WWW; specialized databases (learning outcome)

GOAL 3: APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT -- Presentation and exchange of knowledge and ideas are facilitated by appropriate spaces

- **Objective:** > [Template](#)
Patrons will experience an inviting, safe, secure and resourceful environment that nurtures creative thinking, productivity and intellectual fulfillment (Satisfaction)

GOAL 4: EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION -- Enhanced organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and sustained financial growth

- **Objective A:** > [Template](#)
Workforce is effective, informed and motivated
- **Objective B:** > [Template](#)
Library has a financial management strategy

HOME | [SEARCH / BROWSE](#) | [RESEARCH ASSISTANCE](#) | [SERVICES](#) | [SPECIAL](#)

SITE MAP

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/vprovost/assessment/pdf/UTlib-Assessment-Plan_07182006.pdf

The University of Texas at Austin
Administrative Unit Assessment Plan

University of Texas Libraries
Fred Heath
June 9, 2006

Updated July 19, 2006

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I. Mission Statement

The University of Texas Libraries advances the academic mission of the University and enriches the intellectual life of the people of Texas by fostering information discovery, enabling teaching and research, nurturing creativity, partnering in the development and dissemination of new knowledge, and contributing to the intellectual growth and fulfillment of the individual.

II. Goals

1. Access and services

Deliver the broadest array of information resources, systems and services, accessible on demand, to enable users to satisfy their information needs.

2. Leadership

Provide library leadership that results in effective service provision and efficient management and operations.

3. Spaces

Create library spaces that enable and support evolving learning and research behaviors by providing comfortable and functional learning environments.

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/vprovost/assessment/pdf/UTlib-Assessment-Plan_07182006.pdf

III. Objectives

1. Access and services

- a. Build our collections of record by adding key resources.
- b. Provide users with immediate access to information at the point of need by supplying more electronic information through collaborative initiatives and by transforming spending patterns.
- c. Organize the libraries around products and services most valued by our users, and retrain and realign staff to deliver those products and services more effectively.

2. Leadership

- a. Develop a sustainable business model for library operations, collections, and spaces.
- b. Put the advancement plan (attached) into effect, including activities of the advisory council, fundraising efforts, and collaboration with others on campus.
- c. Advance collaboration with University of Texas System libraries, other research libraries in Texas, and other state and regional institutions and organizations.

3. Spaces

- a. Re-engineer library public spaces to accommodate current and emerging technologies and user behaviors.
- b. Improve user seating and group study spaces within library facilities.
- c. Redesign public areas in the Libraries to enable patrons to use spaces and services more productively; make the spaces more attractive to users and potential donors.

V. Implementation Plan

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
Access and Services Build our collections of record by adding key resources.	University of Texas Libraries is ranked by the Association of Research Libraries as one of the top fifteen ARL Libraries based on collections	Association of Research Libraries survey	Assessment Coordinator and Associate Director for Research Services	Collect unit statistics (includes gate count, circulation, reference transactions) Submit unit statistics to ARL Analyze and report on results	Due first week of the month Completed annually in the fall Survey results are disseminated by ARL one year after submission
	UT Libraries maintain a satisfaction rating in the LibQUAL+ survey in the category of Information Control that is equal to or higher than its peers	LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator and Associate Director for Research Services	Run LibQUAL+ survey Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative) Report on LibQUAL+ results	Annually/Biennially in spring semester Spring and summer of survey year Fall and winter of survey year
Provide users with immediate access to information at the point of need by supplying more electronic information through collaborative initiatives and by transforming spending patterns.	Steady shift in resource allocation from print materials to electronic materials	Budget analysis of expenditures	Executive Associate Director and Associate Director for Research Services	Review Libraries budget and assign funding	Annually
	Steady increase in downloads	Usage statistics for Libraries web site and online resources	Assessment Coordinator and Associate Director for Research Services	Analyze Libraries usage statistics and vendor provided usage data and report to Administrative Council	Annually

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
Organize the libraries around products and services most valued by our users, and retrain and realign staff to deliver those products and services more effectively.	Analysis of trend data pulled from the LibQUAL+ survey shows customer satisfaction improving year to year	LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator	Run LibQUAL+ survey	Annually/Biennially in spring semester
	Continued use of Libraries facilities and services	Collection of monthly unit statistics	Assessment Coordinator, Associate Directors for Public Services, Student Services	Collect unit statistics (includes gate count, circulation, reference transactions, web site usage) Organize and analyze unit statistics Report on unit statistics (including posting online for Libraries staff use)	Due first week of the month Biannually Annually
Libraries staff spend 5% of work year in training and development	UT Libraries maintain	Libraries training database	Head of Libraries Human Resources	Report on LibQUAL+ results	Fall and winter of survey year
				Run annual report on staff training time Analyze and report on results	Annually Survey results are disseminated by ARL one year after submission
		LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment	Run LibQUAL+ survey	Annually/Biennially in

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
	an overall customer satisfaction rating in the LibQUAL+ survey that is equal to or higher than its peers		Coordinator	Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative) Report on LibQUAL+ results	spring semester Spring and summer of survey year Fall and winter of survey year
Leadership Develop a sustainable business model for library operations, collections, and spaces	University of Texas Libraries is ranked by ARL as one of the top fifteen ARL Libraries overall	Association of Research Libraries survey	Assessment Coordinator	Collect unit statistics (includes gate count, circulation, reference transactions) Submit unit statistics to ARL Analyze and report on results	Due first week of the month Completed annually in the fall Survey results are disseminated by ARL one year after submission
Put the advancement plan	UT Libraries maintain an overall customer satisfaction rating in the LibQUAL+ survey that is equal to or higher than its peers	LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator	Run LibQUAL+ survey Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative) Report on LibQUAL+ results	Annually/Biennially in spring semester Spring and summer of survey year Fall and winter of survey year
	Relative standing of	Monthly Gift Reports	Vice Provost, Chief	Review reports	Monthly

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
<p>into effect, including activities of the advisory council, fundraising efforts, and collaboration with others on campus.</p> <p>Advance collaboration with University of Texas System libraries, other research libraries in Texas, and other state and regional institutions and organizations.</p>	Libraries endowments steadily improves when measured against ARL Libraries and UT Austin campus units		Development Officer, Major Gifts Officer	distributed by the Office of the Vice President for Development	
	Increasing investment in resources by UT System and improving cost avoidance strategies	Libraries Advancement Plan	Vice Provost, Chief Development Officer, Major Gifts Officer	Review and update advancement plan	Annually
	Steady increase in downloads within UT System	Budget analysis of expenditures	Executive Associate Director, Associate Director for Research Services	Review Libraries budget and consortial purchases and assign funding	Annually
<p>Re-engineer library public spaces to accommodate modern technologies and user behaviors.</p>	Steady increase in downloads at Texas Digital Library web site	Usage statistics for UT System and other consortial resources	Executive Associate Director, Associate Director for Research Services	Review usage statistics collected from UT System libraries	Annually
	UT Libraries maintain a customer satisfaction rating in the category of Library as Place in the LibQUAL+ survey that is equal to or higher than its peers	Progress reports from the Texas Digital Library project	Associate Director for Digital Initiatives	Collect and review usage data for TDL	Annually
Spaces		LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator	Run LibQUAL+ survey	Annually/Biennially in spring semester
				Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative)	Spring and summer of survey year
				Report on LibQUAL+ results	Fall and winter of survey year

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
Improve user seating and group study spaces within library facilities.	Able to respond to 50% of customer comments received annually	Quality Council	Assessment Coordinator	Analyze comments and propose responses Report on progress at Administrative Council meetings	Monthly Biweekly
	Annually complete at least 10% of projects identified in the Facilities Analysis	Facilities Analysis	Associate Director for Administrative Services	Report on progress at Administrative Council meetings	Biweekly
	UT Libraries maintain a customer satisfaction rating in the category of Library as Place in the LibQUAL+ survey that is equal to or higher than its peers	LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator	Run LibQUAL+ survey Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative) Report on LibQUAL+ results	Annually/Biennially in spring semester Spring and summer of survey year Fall and winter of survey year
	Annually complete 5% of projects related to furniture in the Facilities Analysis	Facilities Analysis	Associate Director for Administrative Services	Report on progress at Administrative Council meetings	Biweekly
	Annually complete 5% of projects related to study spaces in the Facilities Analysis	Facilities Analysis	Associate Director for Administrative Services	Report on progress at Administrative Council meetings	Biweekly

Objective	Measure(s) of success	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Task	Timetable
Redesign public areas in the Libraries to enable patrons to use spaces and services more productively; make the spaces more attractive to users and potential donors	UT Libraries maintain a customer satisfaction rating in the category of Library as Place in the LibQUAL+ survey that is equal to or higher than its peers	LibQUAL+ Survey	Assessment Coordinator	Run LibQUAL+ survey Analyze LibQUAL+ survey results (qualitative and quantitative)	Annually/Biennially in spring semester Spring and summer of survey year
	Continued use of Libraries facilities	Collection of monthly unit statistics	Assessment Coordinator	Report on LibQUAL+ results Collect unit statistics (includes gate count, circulation, reference transactions) Organize and analyze unit statistics Report on unit statistics (including posting online for Libraries staff use)	Fall and winter of survey year Due first week of the month Biannually Annually
		Annual University Room Inventory	Associate Director for Administrative Services	Report on progress at Administrative Council meetings	Biweekly

**Western Libraries:
Assessment Committee Plan
2007/08 – 2010/11**

Introduction

In Western Libraries' strategic plan, the section on "Measuring our Success" begins, "Operating within a culture of assessment, our strategic plan incorporates and integrates performance indicators (quantitative and qualitative) for priorities in each of the key areas to provide benchmarks that will allow us to measure and validate the outcomes and impact of our proposed actions" (see Appendix attached). In a "culture of assessment" libraries make decisions based on facts, research and analysis, and use that information to plan and improve service. At the core of a culture of assessment are the users. Library users determine quality, and it is through their eyes that we learn how well we are doing and whether the library services and resources we provide add value to the institution.¹

Within the context of Western Libraries' broader external focus on overall accountability to the University, the Assessment Committee has focused internally in this Assessment Plan to look at how we could build on the organizational infrastructure already in place for assessment to support the Libraries' decision-making and planning. The Committee chose three key priorities including LibQUAL+™ analysis, review of collections data and collections analysis, and the engagement of leaders and staff in assessment initiatives. These three priorities involve everyone in the Libraries, and the Assessment Committee is committed to providing support wherever possible.

Over the next four years Assessment Committee members will be working with leaders and staff library-wide to:

- review existing measures;
- support assessment initiatives throughout the Libraries;
- support the review of new tools both qualitative and quantitative;
- provide in depth analysis of qualitative data such as LibQUAL+™ to leaders and staff engaged in working to improve specific areas of service;
- facilitate the sharing of results of library assessment projects; and
- provide information sessions on assessment topics designed to meet particular needs as we increase our knowledge, and build methodological and analytical skills.

¹ Hiller, S. and Self, J. *Making Library Assessment Work: Practical Approaches for Developing and Sustaining Effective Assessment* Presentation given to the University of Western Ontario Libraries, March 9, 2006.

Priorities, Outcomes and Action Plan for 2007/08 – 2010/11

Priority:

Analysis of LibQUAL+™ 2007 survey of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students with priority to be given to data pertaining to graduate students and faculty ‘gaps’ for the purpose of achieving service improvements for those priority areas.

Outcomes:

- Canadian libraries benchmark data that will allow for Western Libraries comparison with the collective performance of G13 libraries.
- Packaged data analysis of Western Libraries data to demonstrate notable improvements since 2004 survey and/or new service ‘gaps’.
- Web and print publications, similar to those used with 2004 survey, to communicate notable improvements and comparisons with G13 institutions.
- Further statistical analysis of actual data files.
- AC identification of appropriate balance among undergraduate, graduate and faculty assessment initiatives deriving from the survey.
- Assessment Committee (AC) identification of stakeholders within each priority area. Engagement with those stakeholders in developing action plans to achieve service improvements over the next four years.
- New assessment initiatives undertaken in selected areas.
- AC/stakeholder communications that report on action and successes of new assessment initiatives, relating these to the overall Western Libraries’ strategic plan and multi-year budget submissions/reports to the University Administration.

Potential Action:

- Assessment Librarian to undertake SPSS training to assist in data analysis, summer 2007.
- Identify required data analysis skills and seek collaborative initiative with appropriate graduate student and faculty supervisor, summer 2007.
- Request budget support in 2007/08 budget submission for these action initiatives, September 2006.
- AC analysis of survey results to establish priorities and balance of assessment initiatives for undergraduates, graduates and faculty, by September 2007.
- Facilitate establishment of new assessment initiatives, 2007/08 – 2010/11 and assist in developing appropriate assessment methodologies to measure the success of each of the initiatives.
- Consideration of participation with next Canadian consortium LibQUAL+™ survey.

Priority:

Review of collections data sources, both quantitative and qualitative, and collections analysis tools, with priority placed on data related to graduate education and research programs. The review should include identification of data related to the expansion of

internationalization and interdisciplinary programs and/or any other new or emerging area of research interest for Western.

Outcomes:

- A comprehensive set of collections policies posted as appropriate.
- A clear understanding of Scholars Portal data survey and analysis initiatives and how this may facilitate assessment initiatives for Western Libraries.
- A clear understanding of availability of data using the Innovative Web Management and Electronic Resource Management Reports.
- Purchase of tools for analysis of collections, especially 'packages,' to identify redundancy and rationalize collections. Ultimately this will facilitate the switching of funds to support new and emerging areas of research.
- Identification of new or emerging areas of research priority, in association with collections analysis. Subsequent needs assessment of researchers in those areas will be required in order to ascertain collections needs specific to the area.

Potential Action:

- Ascertain timelines and scope of Scholars Portal data analysis projects.
- In collaboration with AUL (Information Resources), Library Directors and Subject Liaison Librarians, investigate the usefulness of OCLC and Bowker Collections Analysis tools and how the results of such analysis may be used in establishing priority areas for needs assessments.
- Establish a list of web sites where information may be found about successful Tri-Council grant funds awarded to Western researchers, other externally funded research grants and internally funded grants for the purpose of establishing new and emerging areas of research.
- Facilitate needs assessments for new and emerging areas of research.

Priority:

Engagement of leaders and staff in assessment initiatives.

Outcomes:

- Staff understanding of what is a 'culture of assessment' as a result of Assessment Committee outreach to specific groups/committees to talk about assessment initiatives and to share information, and from presentations by other staff or external experts in assessment.
- More effective data and information gathering processes.
- Needs assessments to identify unit or Libraries-wide assessment initiatives, giving priority to initiatives associated with graduate students and research teams.

Potential Action:

- Establish an outreach schedule, spring 2007.
- Undertake a review of how and why internally collected Western Libraries data are collected and used.
- Continue to maintain web site listing Western Libraries' Assessment Projects.
- New Intranet communications with a status report on Assessment Plan initiatives.

Measuring our Success

Operating within a culture of assessment, our strategic plan incorporates and integrates performance indicators (quantitative and qualitative) for priorities in each of the key areas to provide benchmarks that will allow us to measure and validate the outcomes and impact of our proposed actions.

Library performance indicators for use at the institutional level include library data (if available) from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Graduate and Professional Student Survey (GPSS); and the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE).

Other performance indicators currently available to the academic library community also will be used for Western Libraries: a wide range of ARL quantitative indicators; ARL LibQUAL+™ survey data providing qualitative data; Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) Scholars Portal survey data supplying both quantitative and qualitative information; and, library questions on the Western Survey of Graduating Students.

As the University places a priority on library acquisitions Western Libraries places a priority on assessment of the quality, quantity and use of our collections. ARL data have been used in the past to measure the extent/quantity of collections and the size of library acquisitions expenditures. There is now a greater need for usage and qualitative data. There is also the need for collections analysis tools that will allow for ongoing analysis of existing collections, especially electronic packages, in order to avoid redundancy and to optimize spending of acquisitions funds. An important new development for Western Libraries is the OCUL plan to implement mechanisms to monitor use of Scholars Portal services and to solicit input and feedback from end users. This Scholars Portal data, in conjunction with data available from our own Web Management and Electronic Resource Management reports, will allow for further optimization of library acquisitions expenditures.

Performance indicators that will provide general measures related to the academic quality of undergraduate education outcomes include the Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents (OCAVP) *University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations*, in conjunction with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy standards. For graduate education, indicators are derived from Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) program review and graduate degree expectations; cyclical external peer review of Departments, Schools, and Faculties; and, accreditation of professional programs, as all require and include assessment of the extent and depth of information resources in support of the programs.

Western Libraries will also use selective needs assessments targeted to specific groups using a variety of techniques: focus groups, usability studies, web surveys or one-on-one consultation. Action plans will be developed based on needs assessments followed by

implementation of programs with the process coming full circle by assessing how successful we are in meeting the identified needs while simultaneously identifying further improvements. Priority will be given to needs assessments and development of assessment initiatives related to graduate students and research teams, or initiatives related to identified specialist information needs (language resources, new research publications/databases, archival services, etc.).

The identification of data and testimonials related to service quality for records centre activities, alumni services, and services to the community-at-large will be selective.

Outcomes:

- A Western Libraries Assessment Plan that is an integral part of the strategic planning process.
- Performance indicators that meet both the University-level needs and our own internal needs to measure the extent and quality of collections, services, and use of space.
- Priority given to engaging our librarians/archivists and leaders in the assessment action plan in order to obtain qualitative and quantitative data so that we can make informed decisions for achieving our strategic priorities and measure how successful we are at meeting identified needs in priority areas.

