Charge for Research and Assessment Unit
Approved by LMT on Feb. 7, 2007, revised 12/18/2008 to reflect CUL reorganization

Mission

The Research and Assessment Unit (RAU) assembles and assesses data to report on Library performance and to provide evidence and context for Library priority-setting and decision making.

Guiding Principles
The Research and Assessment Unit

- Relies on functional experts in its work and trusts the wisdom and contribution of its colleagues;
- Strives to stay data-neutral in its research and analysis;
- Commits its resources to high-priority library projects;
- Produces user-friendly products with trustworthy quality and timeliness;
- Recommends but does not enforce innovative changes for functional units.

Organization

RAU resides within the Administrative Services Division and reports to the Assistant University Librarian for Strategic Initiatives. It receives directional guidance from the Library Executive Group. RAU collaborates broadly with other library and University units and groups, such as PSEC, Technical Service Senior Management Team, ITEC, CDExec, Library Communications, Administrative Operations, and the University Office of Institutional Research and Planning, to execute its assignments.

Scope
RAU’s primary responsibilities fall in three categories:

1. It commissions data from library units. It organizes, analyzes, and reports on CUL performance to support reporting requirements, process improvement, and decision making.
   - It defines CUL’s responses to data requested by ARL, ACRL, the National Center for Education, and other external entities.
   - It communicates the definitions to appropriate functional and organizational units within the library.
   - It assembles and interprets data reported by the units and submits them on behalf of CUL to requesting entities.
   - It produces the CUL Annual Statistics Report and redeployed collected data in support of CUL activities and public relations when called upon.

2. It maintains and improves a shared library data repository to support library-wide assessment.
   - It partners with experts in other library units to build a central data repository that facilitates the storage, preservation, and use of library performance data in both qualitative and quantitative forms.
   - It repurposes assessment data, such as survey results, queries, collection analysis, to support on-going self-examination of library operations, collections, and services.
   - It strives to make data submission and use easier for both data producers and consumers.

3. It conducts high-priority research and assessment projects to support
   - Evidence-based decision making
   - Usability analysis
   - Innovation

In this role, RAU focuses on the usefulness and impact of library services. It assists library project teams and functions both as an “intelligence unit” that conducts environmental scans in the project area, spots patterns and trends, and suggests innovative changes; and also as a “consultant” that recommends techniques for assessment, and participates in assessment instrument design, administration, analysis.
and reporting as requested by the project. RAU relies on the project team for its expert knowledge and works closely with designate resources from the project team when executing its assignments.

Relying on a network of CUL information providers, RAU coordinates and develops a knowledge base with processes, resources, and accessible measures. It drafts policies and procedures for approval by LMT and other bodies as appropriate. It produces/publishes results to advance evidence-based librarianship.