Cornell University Library Assessment and Communication:
Assessment Plan 2016-2018

Mission: Using words, numbers, and imagery the Assessment and Communication Department (A&C) helps users, staff, and other stakeholders to understand the Library and the external environment. Its focus is two-fold: to create, assemble, and analyze data to report on library performance and provide evidence and context for priority-setting and decision-making. It raises the Library's visibility and promotes the collections, programs, services, and expert staff to multiple audiences both on- and off-campus.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR NEEDS

CUL unit/department directors and committee/task force chairs need:

- Assessment of their collections, services, spaces, operations including usage, user needs, user behaviors, user satisfaction, cost and benefits, impact on users including learning outcomes, benchmark within CUL, benchmark against peers.
- Assessment of their progress towards goals and strategic plan priorities.
- Support to do self-assessment for projects and services.

AULs and UL need:
- Assessment of staff culture and staff satisfaction
- Rankings, benchmarking
- Evidence for funding, reaccreditation
- Evidence of value vs. cost
- Finance as data points
- Case statements and supporting stories for fundraising (impact)
- Promotion of the library
- Assessment of partnerships
- Data on user trends, needs, satisfaction for priority setting
- Annual updates for Cornell senior leadership

Colleges and faculty need:

- Updates from the Library – new and relevant information on how CUL improves faculty and student lives, usage patterns, impact on college/department, partnerships, etc.

Deans, Provost, President, Alumni Affairs and Development, Office of Research, Trustees need:

- Main national and international library trends
- Library rankings
- Information for faculty recruitment and orientation
- Library information for new trustee briefing book
- Evidence of the Library's impact on Cornellians (current as well as alumni)
- Major input/output data
- To know that we assess learning outcomes of library instruction per Middle States reaccreditation criteria

National associations and agencies need:

- Input and output measures

THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM: A BALANCE OF CYCLICAL AND ONE-TIME ACTIVITIES

Ongoing and repeat needs of our stakeholders are best satisfied through ongoing and repeat assessment activities on a proactive basis. E.g.: cyclical surveying of library users and library staff, the annual data collection, and working with Cornell's Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) to fold our questions into the cyclic university-wide surveys. This document mostly addresses this cyclical segment of our work.

Assessment, however, cannot be complete without one-time projects to inform decision-makers as they confront specific questions. It is appropriate to allot some time for ad hoc, non-cyclical projects, to be nimble and responsive to the specific and often changing needs of different units and working teams and the library as a whole. Examples include probing specific aspects of user needs or space use with the use of various methodologies best suited for the current research questions and service development efforts.

CUL periodically conducts strategic planning which will require both data from the on-going assessment program and one-time, needs-based data collection and analysis.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

1. Broad-based library-focused user surveys to fill the need for data on user needs, user satisfaction, library impact, user awareness of specific services, and perceived level of library performance

TARGET DATE: Spring 2016 for graduate students, Fall 2017 for undergraduate students (timing coordinated with Graduate School for grad survey and IRP for undergrad survey)

DELIVERABLE: report of findings

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2. Continue our work with partners such as Cornell's Institutional Research and Planning and the Graduate School, as well as the Consortium of Financing Higher Education, to leverage their survey efforts for library-related data that reflect the Library's current nature and needs.

TARGET DATE: ongoing

DELIVERABLE: updated library questions on instruments produced by these entities when possible.

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3. Third CUL ClimateQual to assess changes in staff culture, climate and satisfaction

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TARGET DATE: 2018

DELIVERABLE: report of findings

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4. Increase ease of data utilization CUL-wide

With the constant evolution of available tools new capabilities often present themselves. Assessment staff stay abreast of these options and use them creatively for the purposes of presenting data in an increasingly easy-to-use way.

TARGET DATE: ongoing

DELIVERABLE: interactive presentation of data whenever applicable by using Tableau and/or other software solutions to present survey results and provide curated dashboards for relevant data; also

working with CULIT and Metadata Services to make assessment results wiki more user-friendly. Provide user training to CUL staff on the data dissemination tools we use to more easily utilize available data.

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5. Contribute to the work of the LMS implementation team to optimize data collection from new library management system

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TARGET DATE: 2017

DELIVERABLE: Understand available data in and gather collection use metrics from OLE

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6. Continue outreach efforts within CUL to publicize A&C assessment activities and our availability to help with unit- and committee-based assessment needs.

TARGET DATE: ongoing

DELIVERABLE: 3-4 ACE sessions a year, periodic CU-Lib posts, visits to committees, periodically inviting relevant unit library staff to assessment meetings

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7. Revisit the problem of adding demographics to online resource use data

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TARGET DATE: 2018 or earlier, as relevant systems change

DELIVERABLE: investigation of what segment of online resource use can be assigned to different demographic groups such as colleges.

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8. Continue to work with the Instruction Committee on learning outcomes assessment and other ways to support instruction efforts

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TARGET DATE: 2016/2017

DELIVERABLE: assessment of engineering video instruction project, evaluation of Classroom Assessment Technique project

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9. Work with University Librarian and relevant AULs on appropriate academic stature indicators for the Library's annual report

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TARGET DATE: annually

DELIVERABLE: metrics to use in CUL's annual report to the Provost

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10. Assist CUL's Strategic Planning data needs

TARGET DATE: 2017/18

DELIVERABLE: metrics as needed

A&C has no plan to conduct correlation studies between library use and academic success.