Charge for Assessment and Communication

Mission

Using words, numbers, and imagery, the Assessment and Communication Department (A&C) helps users, staff, and stakeholders to understand the Library and its 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 its collections, programs, services, and expert staff to multiple audiences both on- and off-campus.

Organization

Assessment and Communication is part of Central Library Operations and reports to the Associate University Librarian for Central Library Operations, Xin Li. It also receives directional guidance from the University Librarian and the Library Executive Group and collaborates broadly with groups and individuals within and outside of the Library and the University. It is composed of highly skilled and specialized assessment and communication professionals organized into sub-groups: Research and Assessment (RAU) and Library Communication (LC).

Guiding Principles

Assessment and Communication

- Strives to stay objective, impartial, and grounded in research and analysis.
- Focuses on the usefulness and impact of library services on users and recommends library process changes based on its expertise and findings.
- Produces and promotes innovative, creative, user-friendly, trustworthy, and timely products.
- Repurposes assessment data to support the ongoing review of library operations and tell the Library's story.
- Helps all CUL units tell their stories and promote their services. Finds and presents relevant data in the most valid and effective ways.
- Advances library communication and evidence-based librarianship by sharing and promoting its work with the CUL community as well as in professional circles.

Roles and scope of work

A&C sees itself as an extension of any CUL unit. As such, it utilizes assessment and communication expertise to support CUL units and project teams as:

- a) an "**intelligence unit**" that conducts assessment projects about users, environment, media outlets, etc, spots patterns and trends, and suggests innovative changes;
- b) a "**consultant**" that helps devise or improve assessment and communication plans, recommends strategies and tactics, and participates in assessment instrument design, administration, analysis, and produces reports or promotional products customized to specific projects;
- c) a **"promoter"** that translates complex activities, ideas and data into meaningful and memorable forms to enhance the Library's visibility among a variety of audiences both at Cornell and beyond; and
- d) a "**collaborator**" that works closely with unit or project teams' experts, crafting strategies and practices to define and achieve their assessment and promotional goals. Partners include all library units and departments, CUL central administration, Library Alumni Affairs and Development, as well as central CU and college peers.

Assessment

1. RAU works with library units and CUL Administration to assemble, organize, analyze, and report key library performance data to support reporting requirements, process improvement, and decision making. It responds to data requests by internal and external entities. It maintains expert knowledge of national trends about library measures. With broad input it keeps the centrally collected set of measures up-to-date and descriptive. It is responsible for secure storage of the data, and for helping CUL staff to prepare customized reports. It produces library trend reports and redeploys data in support of CUL activities, funding, and public relations.

2. RAU queries and analyzes data from Voyager, Web Logs, CountIt, and other major local data sources that are descriptive of library operations and usage. It also maintains expertise in using national library data sets for benchmarking purposes.

3. RAU conducts and consults on research and assessment projects to support evidence-based decision making. Such projects employ a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods and include:

- Evaluation of services
- User research to uncover user needs, awareness of library services, satisfaction, and the Library's impact
- Assessing library staff satisfaction
- Advising and assisting instruction librarians with learning outcomes assessment
- Assessing partnerships and keeping and improving the CUL partnership assessment tools

RAU strives to share and store qualitative data over its useful lifetime while maintaining compliance with IRB standards and policies.

4. Works with and serves as CUL's communication conduit to the University's central services relating to assessment, institutional research, human subject studies, etc.

5. Devise or recommends measures, tools, systems to CUL administration that will enhance CUL's ability to conduct assessment.

Communication

1. Tells the Library's story through traditional and innovative ways. Explains the Library's value and impact to a variety of audiences both at Cornell and beyond. It advocates for the Library, seeking to increase awareness, use, recognition, and support.

2. Develops and uses a set of core messages to undergird the unit's activities, so that over time, the messages strengthen each other and increase their cumulative effect.

3. Develops agile, effective communications strategies and creates high-impact publications and products employing a deep knowledge of the Library.

4. Maintains strong expertise in graphic design, writing, editing, photography, social media, online content development, and marketing.

5. Promotes specific collections, services, and programs to Cornell students and faculty (or specific segments thereof).

6. Supports CUL's fundraising efforts.

7. Proposes and/or promotes library events that showcase the Library in a way that is compatible with the core messages.

8. Although business-related staff communication within CUL is not part of the unit's scope, it is happy to consult on communication strategies and tactics to support managers and project leads in this area.

9. Collaborates with and serves as CUL's official representative to the University's central communication staff and services as well as to the communication staff of the colleges and schools.