

The Benefits of a Library Summit

- **Goodwill.** An organization that makes its weaknesses public and asks for advice and help gains positive regard. Participants and library staff also appreciate having their opinions taken seriously.
- **“Closing the Loop”.** Library plans based on LibQUAL+™ survey results and Summit discussions provide good structure for showcasing positive outcomes in assessment.
- **Personal investment.** Participants tend to take ownership of their ideas and may stay more involved and connected with the library to see if their suggestions are implemented.
- **Outreach.** Everyone involved in a Library Summit learns something about library resources and services.
- **Original ideas.** Library “outsiders” provide fresh interpretations and insights that might not be generated internally.
- **More data.** Input from Library Summit participants provides richer and more detailed data for LibQUAL+™ survey items.
- **Buy-in.** The Summit process is inclusive, so it reduces internal and external disagreements about priorities and decisions.
- **Climate change.** Administrative, faculty, staff, and student endorsement of a Summit sets the tone for campus-wide collaboration in library success.

Planning a Summit for your Library

Clemson University and the University of Texas at Austin are working with ARL to help other academic libraries put together their own Library Summits. Contact ARL or any team member to discuss how a Summit could benefit your organization.



LibQUAL+™ and Decision-Making: The Library Summit

Now that you have LibQUAL+™ survey data, what will you do with it?

The glossy LibQUAL+™ notebook, full of feedback about service quality, is an ideal catalyst for constructive dialogue on your campus about where your library should focus its energy and financial resources.

A Library Summit gathers people together who have a stake in the library’s future. These individuals spend a full or half day together in facilitated small-group discussions about the LibQUAL+™ results, adding depth and context to the survey numbers, and generating fresh solutions and suggestions for service improvements.

Clemson University Library Summits I, II, and III

May-June 2000:

President James Barker and Dean of Libraries Joseph Boykin convened Library Summit I, a full-day discussion about library issues with participants from the University community, including administrators and trustees, students, faculty, and librarians (who facilitated group roundtables). A month later, Summit II brought the staff of the Clemson Libraries together to respond to the set of tasks and challenges resulting from the first Summit. The main themes from the Summits were used as the basis for the Libraries strategic and business plans for 2001-2003:

- Shift print collections to electronic access wherever appropriate, eliminating duplication.
- Re-imagine the library as a “meeting house, not a warehouse”.
- Refocus assessment on goals related to the mission of the University rather than traditional peer benchmarks.

September 2003:

LibQUAL+™ results provided the structure for discussing service priorities with Clemson faculty, staff, and students in Summit III. Town meetings with library staff turned Summit comments and ideas into new assessment and planning tools for the Libraries.



Clemson's Summit Team:

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University of Texas at Austin Library Summit I

March 2004:

The University of Texas at Austin Libraries held a very successful Library Summit based on the Clemson model, with participants offering fresh perspectives on library issues. The qualitative data gathered at the Summit are being used in the Libraries strategic planning process and to better allocate scarce funds and staff. Major ideas gathered at the Summit include creating a library web site that functions more like Amazon.com™ with personalization, seamless linking and alert services; a proactive library staff that “roams” the library looking for opportunities to help users; and better marketing of library services to the University community.

The Summit generated increased support and a better understanding of library issues across the University community. Maintaining continued goodwill depends upon continued responsiveness, so a list of measurable objectives and a timetable for meeting them will be posted online to allow all library constituents to track progress.

University of Texas at Austin's Summit Team:

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