From the 126th ARL Membership Meeting

ARL Committee On Statistics and Measurement

Agenda

Wednesday, May 17, 1995
8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Committee Meeting
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Open Session: Performance indicators
Cambridge Room, Boston Park Plaza Hotel, Boston MA

Note: The parenthetical times shown are estimates only to aid in moving the meeting along. If an issue warrants, we will take as much time as necessary.

1. Overview and Introductions (5 minutes).

Morning meeting from 8:30 to 12:00 and organized open session in the afternoon from 2:30pm to 3:30pm.

2. Feedback on approval of minutes over the Internet (5 minutes).

3. ARL Statistics and Measurement three to five year plan and its relation to Board priorities. All ARL programs are called to define their priorities within the wider framework of the developmental priorities articulated by the Board. (45 minutes)

   • (Attachment 3) ARL Mission and Objectives
   • ARL Developmental Priorities
   • Statistics and Measurement Plan
   • (Outcome expected.) Agreement on Statistics and Measurement proposed projects and relation to Board priorities.
   • Decision on presentation of draft plan to Board.

4. Indicators describing research library conditions. Discuss the relation between these indicators and library effectiveness. Preparation for open afternoon session. (30 minutes)

   • (Attachment 4) Report on selected indicators and key questions
   • (Outcome expected.) Establish shared understanding of the value of these indicators

5. Access Inventory: discuss changes, propose additional revisions and refinements, and approve timeline for the distribution of survey. Given the operational priorities of other ARL annual surveys, there are two possibilities for distribution of the Access Inventory: (a) between June and December 1995 or (b) January and June 1996. (30 minutes)

   • (Attachment 5) Revised Access Inventory
   • (Outcome expected.) Decide on the distribution of the revised survey.

6. Discuss changes to ARL Statistics (15 minutes).

   • (Attachment 6) ARL Statistics proposed revisions
   • (Outcome expected.) Decide on changes

7. Discuss changes to ARL Salary Survey (15 minutes).

   • (Attachment 7) ARL Salary Survey proposed revisions
   • (Outcome expected.) Decide on changes

8. ARL Law and Medical Statistics (5 minutes).
• (Attachment 8) Law and Medical Library Surveys
• (Outcome expected.) Decide on distribution

9. Revision of definitions in Supplementary Statistics (15 minutes).
• (Attachment 9) Supplementary Statistics proposed changes
• (Outcome expected.) Decide on changes

10. Annual surveys response pattern (15 minutes).
• (Attachment 10) Report on response patterns and delays
• (Outcome expected.) Recommendations for action

11. Demographic study of librarians in ARL libraries. Stanley's project brings into focus some very interesting patterns. During the week he spent in Washington, D.C., we analyzed "years of professional experience" and "years of experience in a library." Among other findings, it appears that a large number of librarians remain in one ARL library throughout their professional lives. The additional variables are providing interesting results and the committee may want to examine the benefits of collecting them annually. (15 minutes)
• (Attachment 11) Status report by Stanley Wilder
• (Outcome expected.) Inform members on the current status of the project. Feedback on possible annual collection of the following variables: age, years of experience in library, years of professional experience.

12. Status of pending projects: preservation statistics, e&g report, and supplementary statistics (5 minutes)

13. Other items (10 minutes).

a. SUNY-Albany/CLR/ARL conference on economics of information is scheduled on 18-19 September 1995.

b. The Board-appointed Ohio University Special Committee has prepared a final report recommending the establishment of a visiting committee to examine ARL membership for Ohio U.

c. ILL performance study by Mary Jackson has been submitted for funding to The Andrew W. Mellon foundation.

d. The Statistics and Measurement Program is working with OCLC to receive ILL statistics from the OCLC ILL subsystem used by ARL libraries. We are in the process of verifying with ARL institutions their ILL codes.

e. The Statistics and Measurement Program is coding data from LC and OCLC on foreign acquisitions and rates of cataloging for 1992 to 1994. Jutta-Reed Scott will be using the data to help track trends in foreign acquisitions.

f. Martha Kyrillidou attended a workshop on Customer Satisfaction offered by the American Society for Quality Control (ASQC). The Statistics and Measurement Program is discussing with OMS the possibility of offering a workshop on this topic.

g. ARL Statistics on the WWW has been rejected for funding by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Other funding sources are being considered.

h. The meeting of the ARL survey coordinators during the ALA in Chicago has been scheduled at the Walton Room of the Drake Hotel on Friday, June 23, from 4:00 to 6:30pm.

i. Price increases for the ARL Statistics and the ARL Annual Salary Survey publications are being considered to take effect during 1995. During informal discussions the proposed price increases ranged from $5 to $10 per copy.

j. The IPEDS data on Academic Libraries: 1992 was published by NCES last fall. NCES is currently collecting data for 1994.

k. ACRL is planning to repeat the biannual survey for the Research I, II, Doctoral I and II institutions that are not ARL members for the 1994-95 FY. They use the ARL instrument and they also requested copies of the Supplementary Survey, which they may also use and publish. There are discussions that they may expand their universe to include additional Carnegie classes.
Mary Jo Lynch is working on a technology in libraries' survey which will be sponsored by Ameritech and will be distributed to a random sample of academic libraries.

The final report on *The Cost and Value of Library Services* by Paul B. Kantor, Tefko Saracevic, and Joann D'Esposito-Wachtmann is available. Paper copies can be requested from Lori Reba at the Alexandria Project Laboratory for $35.00 per copy. (lreba@scils.rutgers.edu).

Martha Kyrillidou will be serving as a project consultant and coordinator to the American Association of Law Librarians (AALL) Salary Survey which is planned to take place from May to December 1995.
ARL Committee on Statistics and Measurement

Minutes

Wednesday, October 19, 1994

Present: William Highfill; Graham Hill; Edward Johnson; Sue Martin; Frank Rodgers; Carla Stoffle; William Studer; Gordon Fretwell, Consultant; Kendon Stubbs, Consultant; William Crowe, Chair; Maureen Sullivan, Facilitator; Kaylyn Hipps, Research Assistant; Martha Kyrillidou, Program Officer

Absent: Ellen Hoffman; Peter Lyman

At the Chair's request, Maureen Sullivan facilitated part of the discussion during the morning session. Kaylyn Hipps, Research Assistant to the program, was introduced to the committee and attended the afternoon session.

William Crowe reminded the committee of the program that the Statistics and Measurement Committee coordinated with the Access Committee for the following day.

The minutes of the May meeting in Austin were approved, and there were no comments on the activity report for the program.

1. Programmatic directions and priorities

An extensive discussion about future directions for the program was conducted. Maureen Sullivan, who facilitated the discussion, was asked to communicate the sense of the discussion to the Management Committee.

The committee reviewed a draft strategy document, prepared by Martha Kyrillidou with advice from the Chair, that identified two major areas of potential interest: (a) describing aspects of emerging library models and (b) measuring library effectiveness, that is, inputs, processes, outputs, usage, and outcomes.

A. Describing emerging library models:

The discussion on emerging library models was related to a white paper prepared by Kendon Stubbs for the Task Force on Association Membership Issues, which highlighted its perception of the need to develop "access measures." Stubbs' paper cautioned us not to expect stable and precise measures of access in the near future. As there is a great deal of flux among members on issues related to access, it is apparent that we cannot draw conclusions and assign values based on technological characteristics; measurement possibilities may be premature. By the time we define an instrument intended to achieve such a goal, it would have become obsolete.

At the same time, the committee has a responsibility to find measures to describe the changes that are taking place in research libraries and to try to understand how these changes affect ARL libraries. In what ways are ARL libraries different, in how they adopt new roles, and what are these roles? The ARL index that is a factor in assessing membership qualifications defines areas of commonality among ARL institutions, but we need also to describe the "uniqueness," the contribution that libraries make both in the local communities and in the wider national, North American, and global context.

We need to identify how research libraries complement each other. Research libraries have traditionally had the responsibility to collect information resources for a university community, as well as for the scholarly community at large. Are research libraries going to have broader responsibilities in the future? Is our responsibility to think more broadly than the success of our individual institutions? Does such a perspective increase our ability to be effective?

The committee reaffirmed that we must continue to collect traditional statistics. It was suggested that scholars will most likely "rank" libraries in some way akin to the ARL index if they are asked to rank institutions and their libraries in terms of quality.

There were different perspectives offered on how close we are to a "digital library model" and how such changes are affecting ARL institutions. On the one hand, the changes in research
libraries may be characterized as evolutionary, i.e. another set of activities added to libraries which still must support the traditional archival model, as many scholars' behaviors and expectations are not changing so drastically. The view that we need to be skeptical of terms like "emerging library models" and "digital libraries" was expressed, as using this kind of terminology may suggest wrongly to presidents and provosts that, say, in ten years "everything will be digital." It is important to realize that even in 2020 the research library will still have a lot of books, and it may be several generations before the "new models" are realized.

On the other hand, changes may be characterized as revolutionary although we need not emphasize the digital aspects, ARL libraries should describe and define the transformations that take place in our institutions. It was pointed out that changes in some areas can be drastic as libraries outsource more traditional operations. The need to monitor more closely the cost of providing information as we enter into a more "competitive" era was emphasized. Research libraries need to define their new roles in the new environment. What is the business we are in, and whether are we major players in the information provision and knowledge management "business?"

Other members of the committee emphasized the need to balance the importance of traditional forms of information with non-traditional, electronic forms.

The committee acknowledged that ARL statistics have been used as a double-edged sword to make arguments for, as well as against support for libraries; and that we need to be reassured that new measures will not be any more subject to misuse.

Crowe indicated that although the statistics have been used as a factor in assessing membership, we should not be defensive about them. We should be involved in using existing and future quantitative and qualitative information to increase our understanding of what is happening in our institutions. We need to identify ways in which research libraries will be different from, say, community college libraries in the electronic environment, i.e. once materials are available in a digital form how are ARL libraries different from other libraries? One answer of course is that it is the scale of research libraries, in terms of all resources that makes them different from community college and other libraries.

The committee concluded that it is premature to become involved in a laborious effort to describe rigorously "emerging library models," but that we can make some progress by revising and extending the access inventory that was used three years ago. More information on resource sharing/consortia involvement needs to be added to the access inventory. For example, a possibility is to construct a "map," a typology of consortial relationships of certain kinds. Such a list needs to be further refined and tested. It may be of interest to identify to what extent ARL libraries are involved in consortial relations with other ARL libraries vs. with non-ARL libraries. The committee members offered to identify in each of their institutions the different consortial/resource sharing programs in which they participate and use that as a basis to develop a typology or a list.

The question was posed whether we should include the 1996 IPEDS "electronic access typology" section in the access inventory. In this way ARL libraries would have a chance to test these items before IPEDS asks for them in 1996. A concern was raised that this information will be outdated by the time it is published.

B. Measuring library effectiveness

Kendon Stubbs pointed out that in the end we need to find ways to determine if users of electronic information are better researchers, or teachers, or students, and in this way examine whether the "transformations" that technologies bring are increasing the quality of our "output." On the other hand, it was pointed out that sometimes even faculty themselves cannot tell how much a student's performance will be affected by the presence or absence of a library or other variable factors, much less of the use of other information sources, and it may be that the impact of library use cannot be described in solely quantitative terms.

Other members of the committee emphasized that we need to concentrate our efforts in measuring library effectiveness and staff utilization. In the years of transition we need to demonstrate the value of libraries in the research process, so we should place more emphasis on measuring library effectiveness. Discussion followed on whether and how we can proceed to study deployment of staff in ARL libraries. The committee pointed out that it will be very difficult to do a complete staff utilization and functional analysis and it may be that we need to rely on volunteer libraries to collect data initially. The definitional problems will be major and we need to explore, among many areas, the possibility of examining the job title information from the salary survey. A summary table on professional staff allocation prepared by Martha Kyrillidou was commented upon as being useful and the need to further explore existing data to describe libraries was seen as an important direction for the program. We need to further analyze and use existing data to learning more about each other and to report our activities to external bodies. At the same time it was recognized that although we can use existing data to describe research libraries in new ways and increase our understanding, existing data are based on inputs and are not sufficient indicators to suggest measures of effectiveness.
The question of what the roles of research libraries are and how different institutions define effectiveness, was raised. There is a need to identify what being an effective library means at different institutions, what aspects of a library's operation are currently being measured as indicators of effectiveness at the local level. It is of interest to identify what other libraries do. The committee suggested that we should conduct a survey asking members what is their definition of an effective library and what does each library do to measure effectiveness. There is a need to collect more information, as we do not know much about each other, i.e., what data may be important for each institution, much less how each library defines success.

Also, the committee suggested that we should examine user surveys more closely. User surveys are important in the current environment, and there are both cultural and practical values that can be derived by having ARL suggest a few "standard" questions which will need to be enhanced at the local level. The possibility of developing a framework for user surveys and/or focus groups and identifying key questions to be asked was seen as potentially very useful. The development of an "audit questionnaire" was seen as a possibility; a user survey that can be repeated again and again and which could be enhanced with questions at the local level. It is important to get a fix on how to identify how important the library is and to measure user satisfaction in a reliable way. Maureen Sullivan suggested that we should look into the public services studies that were done about 10 years ago. In the long run, if we can successfully develop indicators for access, it may be possible that we could explore the relation between user satisfaction and access indicators.

Crowe suggested that a small group of libraries should test such a survey. Martin supported the idea of having a standard instrument. The ARL office can certainly provide consultation and service on the administration of user surveys and the selection of samples. Stoffle indicated that in the short term such an approach is useful, but in the long term we need to invest more on user assessment. The need to provide guidance in conducting focus groups was also emphasized. Stubbs related the experience of UVA in systematic surveying and use of focus groups, after a one-day workshop with Susan Jurrow from OMS. He indicated that they found out that most people ranked high those services that involved personal interaction. A policy statement on the do's and don'ts of user surveys and focus groups was seen as potentially useful.

The committee decided that usage information from circulation data would not be useful to study at this stage.

The committee expressed a strong interest in studying outcomes and building on the proposal which Sarah Pritchard drafted two years ago. But the Committee also recognized that such an effort should be done in collaboration with the Management Committee and other external bodies (AAU, ACLS, NRC, etc.) and after the Board approves such a project. Given all the other activities of the Statistics and Measurement program, a study on research library outcomes could impede with other projects.

The Committee set the following priorities for the Program:

a. Timeliness and quality of ongoing projects. Further analyses of existing data collected by ARL, or data that can be easily assembled from other sources about ARL libraries (i.e. OCLC, RLG, etc.). Further developing and refining the electronic publication of the ARL statistics on the Web by seeking external funding for this project.

b. Survey member libraries to inform the committee on how ARL libraries define success and how they measure library effectiveness at the local level.

c. Revise and readminister the access inventory; collect additional information on consortial arrangements.

d. Study deployment of staff; identify whether and how the salary survey model can be used to describe support staff activities; develop a survey to describe the employment framework within an institution; possibly seeking partners like CUPA for such a project.

e. Explore the possibility of developing and testing a user survey/focus group, or a framework for conducting one.

f. Seek the Board's approval to identify strategic partners in a study of research library outcomes.

2. Ongoing Projects

Status report on Salary survey:

All but seven institutions had not returned the salary survey; the committee advised the program to publish preliminary tables so that libraries that have not responded yet will be reminded indirectly that they need to respond.

Gordon Fretwell walked the committee through reading a table with confidential information on minority and gender information that was prepared for Kriza Jennings and the Minority
Recruitment capability.

Main statistics:

Only 1/3 of the surveys are back, but this is a common pattern in the statistics survey cycle.

Martha had received a lot of questions on "electronic serials" and whether they should be counted as part of serials subscriptions. The committee recommended that we should advise libraries to count electronic serials if they are cataloged.

Proposals to include fringe benefits and building maintenance expenditure variables in the statistics survey were rejected, as the committee believes that most libraries would have a difficult time reporting these data consistently.

The committee decided not to transfer any questions to the main statistics questionnaire from the supplementary statistics questionnaire at this time.

The committee decided to collect discrete statistics on law and medical libraries whenever possible. Some institutions will not be able to report separate statistics for law and medical libraries. However, for those institutions that can do so, it is worthwhile for ARL to collect the data rather than rely on other data compilations (i.e., AAHSL and ABA).

3. Presence at the national level

The committee indicated that our role in advising IPEDS/NCES should continue in the same way as it has in the past. We should not reallocate resources from a consultancy role to IPEDS/NCES to a more active role of collecting library statistics for non-ARL libraries. The committee feels that we have a rich and challenging agenda and we should concentrate on making progress on it.

4. Survey contacts from ARL libraries

There was a survey distributed to the contact persons for the ARL surveys asking them whether they would like to see a meeting of the contact persons organized in conjunction to an ALA meeting and about 50 people responded that they would like to come to such a meeting. The Committee thought that such an event would be useful and we will try to organize one as soon as possible, if possible at the Midwinter ALA Meeting in Philadelphia.

5. ARL Statistics on the Web

Kendon Stubbs presented a walk-through the electronic publication of the ARL statistics. This presentation was attended by several directors, in respect to the committee's invitation. The electronic publication of the ARL statistics on the Web was greatly appreciated as an effort that will make the data available not only on a timely basis, but in an interactive way, that may reduce the effort ARL library personnel must make in preparing special reports. It was suggested that we should draft a "minimum requirements information sheet," listing what the hardware and software requirements are for a library to provide access to such a publication. The possibility of a subscription model to this publication was mentioned as a way to cover some development and maintenance costs in the future. Currently, ARL and the University of Virginia are working on drafting a statement of interest for a grant proposal that will allow us to build an analytical interface for data manipulation for ARL libraries.