From the 131st ARL Membership Meeting

AGENDA
ARL Committee on Statistics and Measurement
Wednesday, October 15, 1997
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Logan Salon, Washington Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC

Note: The parenthetical times shown are estimates only. If an issue warrants, we will take as much time as necessary.

1. Introductions and Overview: (5 minutes)

2. Approval of Minutes and Feedback on the 1997 ARL Activities Report: (10 minutes)
Attachment 2a: Minutes of the Meeting of the ARL Statistics and Measurement Committee, May 14, 1997
Attachment 2b: ARL Statistics and Measurement Program summary from the 1997 ARL Activities Report
Outcome: Approval of minutes; feedback on 1997 priorities

3. The Character and Nature of Research Library Investment in Electronic Resources: (30 minutes)
The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) awarded ARL $11,800 to address how to calculate the investments libraries are making in electronic resources. Tim Jewell, ARL Visiting Program Officer, will update his findings.
Attachment 3a: Draft 1996-97 ARL Supplementary Statistics Questionnaire
Outcome: Understanding of changes

4. Annual Projects Update and Discussion: (20 minutes)
Status reports on the annual surveys and opportunity for discussion.
   (a) ARL Statistics; Academic Law and Medical Library Statistics
   (b) ARL Annual Salary Survey
   (c) ARL Preservation Statistics: A revision has been developed for this survey, which reduces the categories of information collected on conservation treatment and adds two questions for collection of information on digitization for preservation purposes.
Attachment 4a: Draft ARL Preservation Statistics 1996-97 Questionnaire
Outcome: Concurrence on changes to the survey
   (d) ARL Supplementary Statistics: Discussion of this publication and any action items are subsumed in agenda item 3, the report of the CLR study.
   (e) Library Expenditures as a Percent of E&G University Expenditures
   (f) Survey on Innovative Services in Research Libraries
   (g) Developing Indicators for Academic Library Performance, Ratios: Discussion of this item will be included in agenda item 9.
   (h) WWW data entry for ARL Statistics: Templates to collect ARL data via the WWW have been created for the main, law, and medical library statistics. The templates for other surveys are in production.
5. Workshops and Seminars: (5 minutes)

(a) Electronic Publishing of Datasets on the WWW

Another of these popular workshops is being scheduled for January 5-7 at the University of Virginia.

(b) Performance Measures/Assessment Conference: Planning is beginning for a 1998 conference on performance measures. Suggestions for venue and content are welcome.

6. Report of Relations with External Constituencies: (5 minutes)

(a) IPEDS Academic Libraries Advisory Committee: This committee is also addressing the issue of how best to collect data about electronic resources and has revised the questionnaire for the 1998 survey.

Attachment 6a: Draft article text on 1998 IPEDS Academic Libraries survey

(b) Library Cooperative Working Group

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) are undertaking a national Survey of Library Cooperatives. One objective of the survey is to supplement the Federal-State Cooperative System (FSCS) annual Public Library Survey and the annual State Library Agency Survey so that there is more complete information on information services. The Working Group met in September to review the results of a survey pretest and to recommend changes to the survey for dissemination in early 1998.

*** Break 9:15 - 9:30 ***

7. Wisconsin-Ohio Reference Evaluation Program: (30 minutes)

Short discussions were held regarding the Reference Evaluation instrument at the October 1996 and May 1997 meetings. Marjorie Murfin, Assistant Director, and Michael Havener, Director, Wisconsin-Ohio Reference Evaluation Program, will present information about the program and discuss with the Committee if and how this tool can be used within the ARL community.

Attachment 7a: Letter from and information on Reference Evaluation Program

Attachment 7b: Reviews

Outcome: Recommendation for action

8. Consortia: (25 minutes)

The ARL Board has asked that this committee address the impact of consortial activities on measures for and characterizations of research libraries. Building on the previous meeting discussions, what strategies should be developed to respond to the Board's request?

9. Output Measures: (25 minutes)

(a) Developing Indicators: Ratios from the 1994/95 and 1995/96 ARL Statistics

This is the third year of publishing the ratios document. Several organizations have asked for custom reports based on the ratios. Are there data in this publication that could be considered for further refinement and subsequently issued within the context of the main ARL statistical reports?

Attachment 9a: Table of Contents and selected tables from Developing Indicators

(b) IFLA

The IFLA Section of University Libraries and other General Research Libraries also has an interest in performance measures. Are there recommendations for data ARL should gather or produce based on IFLA's work?

Attachment 10a: Table of Contents and pages from the Introduction of Measuring Quality (KG Saur, 1996)

Attachment 10b: Performance Assessment Survey instrument

10. Information Items: (10 minutes)

(a) ARL survey coordinators meetings: The next meeting for ARL survey coordinators is

(b) ALA Survey of Librarian's Salaries: ALA's Office of Research asked ARL libraries for permission to release ARL salary data for inclusion in the survey. A lower than average positive response was received.

(c) American Association of Law Libraries: ARL is providing oversight and analysis for the AALL Biennial Salary Survey 1997.

(d) ARL Statistics on the Web: The interactive web site for ARL statistical information is undergoing a revision by the University of Virginia to provide more capability for individual libraries to generate their own statistical reports.
Minutes of the

ARL COMMITTEE ON STATISTICS AND MEASUREMENT

Wednesday, May 14, 1997

8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Echantment Ballroom B, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Albuquerque, NM

Present: Martha Alexander
William Crowe
Ronald Dow
William Potter
Carolynne Presser
Don Tolliver
Gordon Fretwell, Consultant Emeritus
Tim Jewel, Visiting Program Officer
Paul Kobulnicky, Leadership and Management Committee
Cathy Larson (substituting for Carla Stoffle)
Kendon Stubbs, Consultant
Francis O'Brien, Guest
Frank Rodgers, Guest
William Studer, Chair
Julia Blixrud, ARL Senior Program Officer
Martha Kyrillidou, ARL Senior Program Officer

William Studer convened the meeting and welcomed committee members and guests. The minutes of the October 16, 1996 meeting were approved. Committee members were asked for feedback on the ARL Program Plan, which includes a full section on the Statistics and Measurement Program. Directors have found the plan useful for justifying their institutional participation in ARL and some have found it helpful in when talking with senior staff about the major issues facing research libraries.

Tim Jewell, Visiting Program Officer and principle investigator for the project to define the character and nature of research library investment in electronic resources, provided the committee with a summary of his analysis and findings to date. He noted that a recent Yahoo survey asked colleges and universities how many ports were available on campus (i.e., to determine ports/student), whether the library catalog was online, if students received email accounts automatically upon enrollment, and how many students had Web pages. Detailed reporting was available on the Yahoo homepage. At Mr. Jewell's institution, the University of Washington, a student called a Vice President asking why their institution wasn't in the top 100. This is one example of gathering useful data on technology and electronic resources, but should encourage our community to develop our own questions before other groups decide them for us.

Mr. Jewell discussed the ARL supplementary survey data for 1995-96 with the committee. He observed that the variability evident in the data is because of our inability to have uniform interpretations for the questions and proposed some changes. He noted that the question on the number of databases may not hold up as a concept and suggested that we should stop asking that question. The unit of measure for information is changing in the electronic environment and we are still counting titles, but how far down the road are we to defining new concepts? In answer to what would be substituted for titles of databases, Mr. Jewell recommended deriving a set of questions based on interviews with a sample of librarians and talk with them about what kinds of items are included in the budgeted figures.

The discussion then turned to expenditures, committee members were asked if there are object codes in internal accounting systems that could track categories?

Mr. Jewell proposed that a set of categories of expenditures would be more useful:

1. reference tools
A template of expenditure categories, including more detailed explanations of what was included in each category, may help those completing the survey. Committee members asked if and how databases should be counted when the expenditure is not part of the library budget (e.g., the funds may come from consortia or other departmental budgets). In these cases, the percent of the library's budget that goes to electronic resources does not match the number of electronic resources they make available. Some consortia operate by taxing the library (the money would be part of the library's budget if the consortia did not exist) while other consortia operate by receiving funds that would not have gone directly to the library. How much of the actual library budget goes to electronic resources should be a separate question from how much external funding helps the transformation. There is a difference between what you are spending and what you are providing.

ARL's Office of Scholarly Communication, in a collaborative project with CNI and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, are preparing a web survey to collect information on consortia. ARL hopes to gather information on the various consortia to which its member libraries belong. That information can perhaps inform the statistics surveys, in particular by noting the differences between consortia that have large external funding and consortia with no external funding.

One question to be answered is: How are libraries shifting their expenses from print to electronic. Looking at purchasing strategies may be something that we can track (links to Dialog, FirstSearch, contracts, etc.), but we have not determined how to track what is being replaced. Are we shifting from one form of electronic access (FirstSearch tickets, Dialog access) to another (licensed files linked to OPAC)? We continue to fall back to expenditures as the best means to include the external funding. The committee supported Mr. Jewell's proposal that he may find some answers or at least be able to categorize library spending strategies by conducting some more in-depth interviews with a set of libraries.

The discussion turned to expenditures for electronic serials and how many electronic journals libraries are buying. How to count subscriptions is problematic, especially since the products are not all the same and may differ from vendor to vendor. Should we count individual titles or the aggregated service? Perhaps ARL should develop an inventory of products and institutions that could be checked off.

At the October 1996 meeting of this committee, there had been interest in determining infrastructure expenditures telecommunications costs, such as wiring hubs, routers, etc., that are not part of the library budget. Unfortunately many libraries are not provided with this information. This may also be something to add to a more intensive survey.

In general, the questions being asked in this area are: how much are research libraries spending on electronic resources?, what are they getting for these expenditures?, am I spending what I should be spending? ARL's surveys need to try to help its members answer those questions. Although these are complicated and difficult questions, we must continue our investigations and deliberations because there are other groups with an interest in electronic resources who might begin developing instruments that will not meet our needs.

Responding to questions about outcomes of this investigation, there was a consensus that we may not be able to do everything in this area through the annual surveys. However, an informed probing of some of the issues may be helpful. Committee members should look at Mr. Jewell's documents and think about their own situation, perhaps consulting with their own situation, perhaps consulting with their survey coordinators, to consider what were their premises and assumptions for reporting data. The survey coordinators also meet on a regular basis and the topic of electronic resources has been on their agenda as well. Regarding the variability of reported data, the committee recommended that directors be sure to review the data submitted by their institution. Mr. Studer thanked Mr. Jewell on behalf of the committee for his thorough report.

Since the SERVQUAL project did not receive funding from the Council on Library Resources, the committee recommended that ARL issue an invitation to institutions to participate in a self-funded activity since it would be more effective to have a group of institutions working on this at the same time. Staff will prepare the necessary materials and will continue to investigate alternative funding resources.

The Wisconsin-Ohio Reference Evaluation Tool assists reference librarians and managers in evaluating the success in answering reference questions. It is a two-page instrument (one for the patron and one for the librarian) and costs about $350. Over 105 libraries have used it and the committee is being asked by the program's administrators to consider putting it in the ARL portfolio. As an instrument to be used by ARL libraries. The tool is especially useful if repeated; there are normative data. The data are collected and sent in for processing. A standardized interpretive report is returned. Libraries that have completed the instrument more recently show that scores are improving because of the use of technology and new tools. An invitation will be extended to Marjorie Murfin and Michael Havener to attend the October meeting for a full
discussion.

Job titles appear to be changing dramatically and the salary survey will be used to assess information about new positions. Positions that so not fit the current scheme will be identified and categorized. There is also some interest in collecting some information on personnel costs associated with electronic resources, but that probably cannot be determined from the salary survey. (It might make a useful SPEC publication). Unfortunately current job titles often use idiosyncratic terminology and do not accurately describe what people do. It may be possible to survey individuals to determine what percent of their time is spent on electronic tasks, with a brief descriptive phrase to characterize the work. However, using the example, "Head of Access Services" it was noted that all of the people that used the term defined it quite differently so they were not comparable across institutions. We may move to some common understanding of what access services mean-what functions are being done by whom and what title should be used-and at that point it may be necessary to revise the job categories.

Regarding the collection of information on faculty status, the committee recommended no action since there is too much variation in terminology and meaning.

There has been some concern about the cost of producing the Preservation Statistics. As a former chair of the Preservation Committee, Mr. Studer noted that there would not be significant savings to making radical changes in the survey unless the preservationists determine otherwise. We do know that a large portions of the membership do not have data for quite a few questions of the survey. Jan Merrill-Oldham, in her role as consultant to ARL's Preservation Committee, will be examining the survey this summer.

The committee was alerted by ARL staff that there will be changes to the Library Expenditures as a percent of E&G because of the way the accounting standards board is now defining restricted money. The changes will begin to be reflected in the IPEDS data and the transition may take four to five years because they are phasing in the private and public institutional surveys.

Data collection and verification is nearly complete for the innovative services survey and the data will be posted for ftp retrieval by survey coordinators.

The Ratios report will again be issued in the early fall. Is there anything in there that is a quality indicator that we should incorporate into the statistics regularly highlighted by the association? Committee members were asked to take a more careful look at the publication and we will include the item on the agenda for October. The orginal caveat remains: they are not indicators of quality-careful if we change that.

Evaluations from the users survey workshops indicated that the topic needed more time than the one day program allowed. Perhaps the topic could be divided into a one day overview followed by separate events: a) focus groups or b) data analysis. The workshops were very well received and the instructors are willing to do more. Since we know who attended the workshops, it may also be valuable to contact the institutions to see if they have done surveys and collected comparable data. Mr. Studer noted that they modeled their survey on the one developed by the University of Virginia. Within the surveys are some good quality indicators, possibly useful within the understanding of institutional context. Sharing data is helpful. The University of Arizona keeps its data up on a web site. ARL might act as a clearinghouse for completed survey instruments and an article on user surveys is also recommended.

Martha Kyrlidou and William Crowe noted that their program on performance measures at the recent ACRL national conference was well attended and generated a lively discussion. Committee members discussed whether the ARL Statistics and Measurement Program should sponsor a conference on this topic, both to respond to an increased interest in the academic community regarding performance measures and to emphasize the program's interest in the topic. A conference could be structured around some major plenary speakers and break out sessions (which could cover topics such as SERVQUAL, the Wisconsin-Ohio evaluation tool, user surveys, etc.). Suggestions for time, location, and speakers are welcome. Staff will investigate.

Encouraged by the ARL Board, the committee began a discussion on the effect of consortia on the data collection and reporting done by ARL for its members. Several issues were raised, many of which followed on the earlier meeting discussion about electronic resources. Some of the issues include definitional problems, data collection difficulties, incompatibilities for aggregate time series data compilations, and the effect on membership criteria. This discussion will continue in subsequent meetings.

The meeting concluded with an invitation to the joint meeting of the ARL Access and Management committees as they discussed the results of the ILL/DD Performance Measures Study.