

MAKING LIBRARY ASSESSMENT WORK: PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Proposal for ARL Visiting Program Officers Steve Hiller and Jim Self

Appointment Period: September 1, 2004 through August 31, 2005

Background

ARL has a long tradition of describing the performance of research libraries and monitoring performance measures and trends in these institutions through its historical data collection activities. More recently, ARL has launched the New Measures Initiatives, a series of activities and services that have established new assessment tools. These new measures were created in response to the increasing demand for libraries to demonstrate outcomes/impacts in areas important to the institution, and the increasing pressure to maximize use of resources - benchmark best practices to save or reallocate resources.

The ARL New Measures Initiatives were launched five years ago as a collaborative activity between the ARL Statistics and Measurement program and the Office of Leadership and Management Services as an effort to move away from using inputs and outputs to judge service quality and instead develop ways to measure library outcomes and assess the value the library adds to the community. A recent review of New Measures (Blixrud, December 2003) reported on ARL activities in this area and discussed some ways in which new measures were applied in libraries.

ARL has made excellent progress in raising the visibility and importance of library assessment and in supporting the development of new measures. A sense of how individual libraries are faring with the application of LibQUAL+™ is evidenced through two collections of essays written by 2001 and 2002 LibQUAL+™ participants, respectively (Cook, 2002; Heath, Kyrillidou and Askew, 2004), as well as through conference presentations by participants, such as the highly successful LibQUAL+™ Share Fairs at ALA Mid-Winter and Annual meetings in 2004.

However, we don't have a good sense of how individual libraries are faring with their assessment efforts in general. There is growing evidence in the literature and from informal discussions that a sizeable number of libraries experience difficulty devising appropriate measures or methods, understanding and analyzing the data, using data to make changes, and building a sustainable assessment program. Now is an opportune time to assess the state of assessment efforts in individual research libraries, identify barriers to and facilitators of assessment, and devise pragmatic approaches to assessment that can flourish in different local environments. Our proposal is intended to provide libraries with the knowledge and understanding to make wise selections and applications of measurement techniques and wise use of assessment data in sound management practices. It will help libraries identify different approaches to support sustainable assessment and more effective use of data for decision-making.

Specifically, the goals of this project are to conduct an evaluation of assessment needs and efforts at 4-6 different ARL Libraries from February through June, 2005. Libraries would be selected based on expressed interest and a group composition that is representative of library size, type and geographic distribution within ARL.

The evaluation would center on a site visit to each library, which would include:

- Discussions of local issues with administrators, managers, and staff involved in assessment
- Review of current ARL assessment-related programs and opportunities
- Presentation on developing and employing appropriate assessment methods, data analysis, presentation and reporting, and using assessment data to improve libraries
- A succinct report identifying assessment-related issues and recommendations for action, to be delivered generally within 30 days of the visit.

Information and insight acquired during these site visits may be followed by visits to other libraries, as appropriate, to determine the extent of issues, practices, and needs.

The final project report will summarize the site visit results and other issues associated with library assessment. It will also recommend a range of options and practical approaches to data acquisition, analysis, reporting, and use that libraries can use to develop and support ongoing and sustainable assessment programs.

Libraries That Will Benefit from Participation (Target Libraries)

- Libraries starting assessment programs and efforts
- Libraries trying to understand assessment and usage data
- Libraries that want to turn data into action
- Libraries that want to establish benchmarks and performance standards
- Libraries interested in cost analysis
- Libraries that have participated (or will participate) in LibQUAL+™
- Libraries whose institutions will undergo regional accreditation within the next few years

VPO Experience and Qualifications

Steve Hiller (Library Assessment Coordinator, University of Washington Libraries) and Jim Self (Director, Management Information Services at the University of Virginia Library) have many years experience in library assessment and both have established model assessment programs at their institutions. They have published and presented widely on library assessment with an emphasis on practical approaches that can lead to libraries better supporting their communities. Their forthcoming paper, "From Measurement to Management: Using Statistics Wisely in Planning and Decision-Making," *Library Trends* (Special Issue on Organization Development in Libraries), 54 (1), Summer 2004, is especially germane to this issue. Short bios for Steve Hiller and Jim Self are included below.

Each man brings a different set of abilities and expertise to this project. Steve specializes in user needs assessment, qualitative assessment methods, cultures of assessment, large scale surveys, and outcomes based assessment. He also serves as an Evaluator for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, a regional accrediting agency. Jim brings strengths in surveying, sampling, data analysis, performance standards and measurement, usability testing, and the “balanced scorecard.” He has worked as a consultant with a number of libraries on these issues. Both have extensive library management experience and a broad perspective on libraries. Steve has served as Head of Science Libraries at the University of Washington since 1984 and Jim was Director, Clemons Library (Undergraduate) at the University of Virginia from 1982-2000.

More detailed information can be found on the attached resumes.

Expectations and Outcomes

ARL will:

- Designate Martha Kyrillidou, Director, ARL Statistics and Measurement Program as a contact person to work with Steve Hiller and Jim Self
- Market the availability of this service to member libraries (and potentially others)
- Bill each evaluated library for travel expenses and consulting fees
- Pay program-related travel expenses not related to site visits
- Provide material and information that describe ARL assessment tools
- Coordinate and/or participate in the site visits
- Advise on the project methodology
- Arrange for distribution of the final report and gather evaluative feedback from participating libraries

The University of Washington Libraries and University of Virginia Library will:

- Pay VPO’s salaries
- Provide release time to work on this project
- Provide office space and equipment that can be used for this project.

The participating libraries will:

- Identify a contact person to:
 - Assist with pre-site preparation
 - Assist in establishing goals, programs and outcomes for the site visit
 - Help identify local staff for the visiting team to speak with
 - Coordinate and announce a presentation to all library staff members.
- Contribute \$2,000 plus travel expenses to support the site visit
- Receive a succinct report of no more than five pages, generally within 30 days
- Learn about some next steps to take, as an institution, to support sustainable assessment, and how to better use data for decision-making
- Provide evaluation/feedback to ARL about the value of the process.

Steve Hiller and Jim Self will:

- Consult with and involve appropriate ARL staff in developing site evaluation plans
- Keep the ARL contact person informed about progress and site visits
- Prepare updates and interim reports as needed
- Provide each library evaluated with a report summarizing site visit observations and options for action
- Deliver a final report to ARL by September 15, 2005
- After the project concludes, Steve Hiller and Jim Self will be available to continue their work with ARL as consultants to interested libraries

Project Timeline – Development and Promotion Phase, August to November 2004

- Jim and Steve will produce expanded version of proposal, including preliminary timetable, work plan, site visit activities, final report and expected outcomes; send to Martha Kyriallidou by August 4 with conference call scheduled for August 10.
- Revise proposal as necessary for final submission and approval
- Complete publicity release and marketing strategy by mid-September
- Identify an alpha site for testing an initial design in November
- ARL announcement made September 20 with expression of interest due October 20
- Meet with ARL Statistics and Measurement and ARL Leadership and Management committee and potential interested libraries, Oct. 11-13 in Washington D.C.
- Participating libraries selected and notified by November 1
- Jim and Steve develop detailed site visit outline and materials September 20-November 1
- Pilot site visit to library in Washington D.C. area, November 5 or 6
- Revise plans as necessary

Project Timeline – Site Visits, November 2004 to June 2005

- Pre-site visit preparation (environmental scan, issues, discussion with each library), November-February
- Establish goals, program and outcomes for each site visit
- Site visits scheduled between February and mid-June 2005

Sample Site Visit Schedule

Each visit will consist of an open presentation on developing sustainable, effective library assessment and meetings with library administrators and staff.

Presentation on Developing Sustainable and Effective Library Assessment
Organizing for assessment, developing culture of assessment
Assessment methods
ARL assessment tools, programs and support
User needs assessment
Usability

Benchmarking and performance standards
E-Metrics and cost analysis
Data analysis (including LibQUAL+™)
Applying the results
Outcomes-based assessment

Meet with administrators, managers, assessment group, and library staff on issues including e-metrics, interpreting and using LibQUAL+™ results, information literacy, digital services, etc.

Wrap up at the end of the day

A succinct report of no more than five pages will be sent to the participating library and ARL, generally within 30 days of the site visit.

Final Report to be submitted by September 15, 2005

Summarize findings from site visits; identify facilitators and barriers to assessment; recommend strategies and options for sustaining effective assessment, including ARL programs and support.

Dissemination beyond ARL by publishing the results of the investigation in the professional literature

Steve Hiller

hiller@u.washington.edu

Current Positions:

Head, Science Libraries, University of Washington Libraries, 1985-
Library Assessment Coordinator, University of Washington Libraries, 1999-

Major Responsibilities:

Library Assessment Coordinator: Develop, implement and coordinate library assessment programs and activities, including large-scale surveys, focus groups, and other efforts. Provide support for other library assessment efforts. Analyze and report results. Chair the Library Assessment Group.

Head, Science Libraries: Manage department with 9 libraries, 17 librarians and 24 support staff that provides science-related information resources and services to the University of Washington community. Coordinate annual science collection development budget of \$3.3 million.

Selected Recent Publications Related to Assessment:

Hiller, S. and Self, J. (2004) "From Measurement to Management: Using Statistics Wisely in Planning and Decision-Making." *Library Trends* (Special Issue on Organization Development in Libraries), [Forthcoming] 54 (1), Summer 2004.

Ward, J. L. and Hiller, S. (2004) "Usability Testing, Interface Design and Portals." *Journal of Library Administration*, [Forthcoming] 2004.

Hiller, S. (2004) "Another Tool in the Assessment Toolbox: Integrating LibQUAL+ into the University of Washington Libraries Assessment Program." *Journal of Library Administration*, [Forthcoming] 2004.

Hiller, S. (2003). "Evaluating Bibliographic Database Use: Beyond the Numbers." *Against the Grain*, 15 (6)(December 2003-January 2004), 26-30.

Hiller, S. (2003). "But What Does It Mean?" Using Statistical Data for Decision Making in Academic Libraries." *Statistics in Practice – Measuring and Managing, Proceeding of the IFLA Satellite Conference, Loughborough (England), August 2002*. Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU) Occasional Paper No. 32, 10-23.

Hiller, S. (2002). "The Impact of Information Technology and Online Library Resources on Research, Teaching and Library Use at the University of Washington." *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, Volume 3, (2), 134-139.

Hiller, S. (2002). "How Different Are They? A Comparison by Academic Area of Library Use, Priorities, and Information Needs at the University of Washington." *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship*, 33, Winter 2002, Article 1. (<http://www.istl.org/02-winter/article1.html>)

Hiller, S. and Self, J. (2002). "A Decade of User Surveys: Utilizing a Standard Assessment Tool to Measure Library Performance at the University of Virginia and the University of Washington." *Proceedings of the 4th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services*, August 2001, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Association of Research Libraries, 253-262.

Hiller, S. (2001). "Assessing User Needs, Satisfaction and Library Performance at the University of Washington Libraries." *Library Trends*, 49 (4), 605-625.

Selected Assessment-Related Presentations (some publications above first presented at conferences)

"Community Assessment: An Essential Part of the Reference Librarian Toolkit," Reference Work Section program, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 2004. (With Jim Self and Jane Schillie).

"The Value of User Needs Assessment in Collection Management," ALCTS program, Best Practices: Collection Management and the Application of the New Measures for Library Assessment, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, June 2004

"Learning from Assessment: Making Our Libraries Better," 4th Reference Services Symposium sponsored by University of Minnesota Libraries and Minitex, May 2004, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Invited speaker.

"LibQUAL+™ in an Established Assessment Program: The University of Washington Libraries Experience," LibQUAL+™ ShareFair, American Library Association Mid-Winter, January 2004, San Diego, ALA Annual, Orlando June 2004

"Physical Libraries and Virtual Libraries: What's Important for Geoscientists," Geological Society of America Annual Meeting, Seattle, Washington, November 2003 [to be published in Conference Proceedings 2004]

"Measure by Measure: Assessing the Viability of the Physical Library," 5th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services, Durham, England, July 2003 [to be published in Conference Proceedings 2004]

"Evaluating Bibliographic Database Use," RUSA-CODES session on Evaluation of Electronic Resources, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, June 2003

"How Scientists and Engineers Find Information and Use Libraries," ACRL-STS program, Partners in Science: An Exploration of a Scientist-Librarian Relationship, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, June 2003

"Assessment Methods Used at the University of Washington Libraries," Joint meeting of the Oregon-Washington Chapters of ACRL, Menucha, Oregon 2002

"After the Radar Chart: Analyzing, Presenting and Using LibQUAL+ Results," (LibQUAL+ workshops September 21, 2001, Seattle, Washington and January 22, 2002, New Orleans, Louisiana)

"Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation: Keys to the User-Centered Library," Oregon Library Association Annual Meeting, April 2000, Portland, Oregon

"Assessing the Academic Networked Environment," Pre-Conference Workshop, ACRL 9th National Conference, 1999, Detroit, Michigan. (With Betsy Wilson, Nana Lowell, Charles McClure, and Joan Lippincott).

“Assessing the Academic Networked Environment,” CAUSE National Meeting, Seattle, Washington, December 1998 (With Joan Lippincott and Chris Peebles)

“Surveys, Communication and Action at The University Of Washington Libraries,” LAMA program - Beyond Bean Counting II, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, 1998, Washington D.C.

“Collection Development Needs Assessment Using Large Scale Surveys,” ALCTS Program, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, 1998, Washington, D.C.

“Assessing the Academic Networked Environment,” Coalition for Networked Information, Washington D.C., Spring 1998

“The User Centered Library and Library Community Analysis: Making It Happen,” ACRL 7th National Conference, 1995, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (With Betsy Wilson, Carla Rickerson and Nancy Huling).

Other Related Recent Assessment Activities

Evaluator for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, a regional accreditation agency

Conducted full-day library assessment workshops (including presentations) at Purdue University (2001) and Kansas University (2004).

Jim Self

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Current Positions:

Director, Management Information Services, University of Virginia, 2000-

Co-Chair, Collections Group, University of Virginia Library, 2002-

Major Responsibilities:

Director, Management Information Services: Develop, implement and coordinate library assessment programs and activities, including large-scale surveys, usability testing, focus groups, and other efforts. Oversee the compilation and reporting of library statistics. Prepare reports and provide data as needed for the administration of the library.

Co-Chair, Collections Group: Allocate and manage collections budget of the University Library (approximately \$6.5 million annually). Work with selectors and other staff to see the budget is spent in an appropriate and effective manner.

Recent Publications Related to Assessment:

Hiller, S. and Self, J. (2004) "From Measurement to Management: Using Statistics Wisely in Planning and Decision-Making." *Library Trends* (Special Issue on Organization Development in Libraries), [Forthcoming] 54 (1), Summer 2004.

Willis, A. (2004) "Using the Balanced Scorecard at the University of Virginia Library: An Interview with Jim Self and Lynda White." *Library Administration & Management*, 18 (1), 64-67.

Self, J. (2003). "From Values to Metrics: Implementation of the Balanced Scorecard in a University Library." *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, Volume 4, (1), 57-63.

Self, J. (2003), Using Data to Make Choices: The Balanced Scorecard at the University of Virginia Library. *ARL: A Bimonthly Report on Research Library Issues and Actions*, 230/231 (2003), 28-29.

Hiller, S. and Self, J. (2002). "A Decade of User Surveys: Utilizing a Standard Assessment Tool to Measure Library Performance at the University of Virginia and the University of Washington." *Proceedings of the 4th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services*, August 2001, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Association of Research Libraries, 253-262.

Presentations and Workshops (some publications above first presented at conferences)

"Community Assessment: An Essential Part of the Reference Librarian Toolkit," Reference Work Section program, International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) Meeting, Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 2004. (With Steve Hiller and Jane Schillie).

"The Balanced Scorecard and Collection Management," ALCTS program, Best Practices: Collection Management and the Application of the New Measures for Library Assessment. American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, June 2004.

“The New Metrics at U.Va.,” ARL Survey Coordinators Meeting, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, June 2004.

“Current Trends in Library Assessment,” Virginia Library Association, Academic Libraries Section, Spring Colloquium, Longwood University, Farmville, Virginia, April 2004.

“Making Numbers Work: Putting Statistics to Good Use.” Virginia Community College System, Peer Group Meeting, Virginia Beach, Virginia, October 2003.

“From Values to Metrics: Using the Balanced Scorecard to Develop a Culture of Assessment,” Conference on the Balanced Scorecard in Government, Arlington, Virginia, October 2003.

“Metrics and Management: Applying the Results of the Balanced Scorecard,” 5th Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services, Durham, England, July 2003. [to be published in Conference Proceedings 2004]

“Beyond Usability: Not Just a Pretty Interface,” Association of College and Research Librarians, National Conference, Charlotte, North Carolina, April 2003. (With Alva Hughes, Carol Hunter, and Nancy Newins.)

“The Balanced Scorecard: Using Data to Make Informed Choices,” Federal Library and Information Center Committee quarterly meeting, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. February 2003.

“The Balanced Scorecard at the University of Virginia Library,” Balanced Scorecard Interest Group monthly meeting, Washington, D.C. January 2003.

“The Balanced Scorecard and Collection Management,” ALCTS program, Collection Management and the New Measures, American Library Association, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, Georgia, June 2002.

“Numbers Are Our Friends: An Introduction to Statistics for VIVA Librarians.” Half day workshop sponsored by the VIVA (Virtual Virginia) consortium. Charlottesville, Virginia, May 2002.

“Assessment and Flexibility: Implementing the Balanced Scorecard, Reassigning Staff,” Living the Future Conference, Tucson, Arizona. April 2002. (With Gail Oltmanns.)

“Conducting User Surveys in Academic Libraries.” Full day workshop sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries. Tucson, Arizona. April 2002. (With Julia Blixrud and Dan Lee)

“Evaluating Digital Resources: The VIVA Consortium Assesses GaleNet,” The Virtual Reference Desk: 2nd Annual Digital Reference Conference. Seattle, Washington. October, 2000.

Consultations

Washington and Lee University Library, Summer 2003. Analysis of survey data.

University of Richmond Library, Summer 2003. Analysis of survey data.

University of Maryland Libraries, Spring 2003. The Balanced Scorecard.

James Madison University Library, Spring 2003. Usability testing.

Association of Research Libraries, Fall 2001. Sampling methodology.

Harvard College Library, Fall 2000. Sampling and surveying methodology.