Introduction

This document is an Assessment Plan for the University Libraries at the University of South Carolina establishing methods and procedures for information and data collection, and statistical analysis and reporting. Assessment initiatives are directed by the Libraries’ organizational strategies and institutional vision. This Plan provides the foundation for furthering these assessment initiatives and strengthening a sustained culture of assessment at the University Libraries.

The Assessment Plan is guided by the goals and objectives of the University’s administration and is influenced by the principles of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ 2011 Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.¹

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I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Assessment unit is to manage the University Libraries’ assessment initiatives in support of evidence-based decision making and strategic planning.

II. Goals

In collaboration with other Library units and University departments, the Assessment unit recommends protocols, establishes methodologies, gathers and analyzes data, and communicates results to stakeholders.

The Assessment Librarian consults with the Assessment Information Management (AIM) Team to advise and assist the University Libraries towards achieving the following assessment goals:

A. Collect, organize, and communicate a body of evidence for strategic planning and for purposes of continuous improvement

B. Coordinate and standardize best practices for assessment across Library units

C. Demonstrate the Libraries’ impact on academic success and highlight its value to the University community

III. Objectives

A. Collections

Evaluate best practices for managing the University Libraries’ collections in support of the University community’s teaching and learning goals, research interests, and information needs.

1. Evaluate user needs and preferences for the print and electronic collections
2. Develop a collection analysis plan organized by subject/academic discipline
3. Explore products or develop in-house tools to help analyze the collection

B. Spaces

Continually assess the University Libraries’ physical and virtual spaces for ways to provide flexible, inviting, and technology-equipped environments that support evolving learning and research behaviors.

1. Monitor building and technology usage patterns to best accommodate individual and collaborative learning behaviors
2. Gather and maintain data on user-focused library preferences
3. Develop usability testing hypotheses applicable to any virtual or online platform

C. Services

Evaluate Library programs and services for the highest value and impact for our researchers and learners.

1. Determine information services and programs valued by our faculty, staff, students
2. Establish impact factors for the University Libraries’ instructional, reference, and other public services on student learning and academic success
3. Evaluate cost benefit of extension and reach of services for scholars and researchers near and far

IV. Indicators

A. Collections Indicators

1. Users value library resources as indicated by surveys, circulation data, and other usage statistics
2. University administration demonstrates support for resource and materials allocation
3. Measures focused on access vs. ownership

B. Spaces Indicators

1. Facilities management and improvements are based on consistent, automated door counts and other usage observations
2. IT infrastructure supports physical and virtual needs for study and research
3. Library users indicate satisfaction with library spaces, technology and virtual environments
C. Services Indicators

1. Faculty value librarian input on teaching and learning techniques as indicated by feedback and usage of instructional services
2. Students demonstrate improvements in information literacy skills and abilities (OR Students improve their academic performance through their contact with the library)
3. Library users indicate satisfaction with services via suggestions, surveys and usage of services