

## Background

This paper outlines key elements of the University Library assessment program. This program was established within the context of the University Library Strategic Plan and the Library's commitment to evidence-based decision making.

The assessment program is also linked to the University's Framework for Assessment which has 3 broad purposes: *quality improvement* to bring performance and goals into closer alignment; *quality assurance* to periodically test performance against expectations; and *accountability* to ensure the regular communication of outcomes, desired outcomes, successes and failures.

Since 2011, the University Library has made significant progress in the development of an assessment program. On May 11, 2011, an Assessment Analyst joined the library to assist with the development and implementation of a library-wide program of assessment.

## Organizational Structure

The Dean oversees the University Library assessment program, including operational activities undertaken as part of the program, which is managed through the Dean's Office. All major assessment projects require approval from the Dean.

The Assessment Analyst provides expertise and assistance in collecting, analyzing, and managing operational statistical data, developing assessment instruments, conducting ad-hoc studies and assisting in assessing the quality and effectiveness of library operations. The Assessment Analyst plays a key role in validating statistics to ensure that data requests are responded to in an accurate and consistent manner. The Assessment Analyst also provides analyses on various library statistics to help inform evidence-based decision making.

To date the program of assessment can be divided into the following elements: library data and statistics; library surveys; key performance indicators and benchmarking; and other assessment related activities.

## Library Data and Statistics

Part of the assessment program at the University Library requires annual coordination and systematic reporting of library statistics for key external bodies both nationally (e.g. Canadian Association of Research Libraries – CARL) and internationally (e.g. Association of Research Libraries - ARL). Data submitted relating to collections and collections expenditures, salary expenditures, overall expenditures, and personnel and public services, is made available in the public domain.

The Assessment Analyst coordinates the library statistics required for each submission on an annual basis. The emphasis is to ensure that all statistics provided follow specified definitions as closely as possible with any significant changes, from year to year, explained in footnotes.

## Statistics Submissions

- **Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Annual Statistics**
  - Data submitted for the overall library in the following areas: collections; expenditures; fringe benefits; expenditures from external sources; personnel; instruction; reference; circulation; use of electronic resources; interlibrary loans; annual gate count; doctor's degrees and faculty; enrollment; salary statistics
  - Data also submitted for University Archives & Special Collections in the following areas: expenditures; personnel; instruction
- **Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) Annual Statistics**
  - Data submitted for the overall library in the following areas: expenditures, establishment and collections; personnel; local characteristics; use, facilities, service; emerging trends; salary statistics
- **Association of College & Research Libraries – (ACRL) Annual Statistics**
  - Data submitted for the overall library in the following areas: staffing; expenses (exclude staff); total expenses; library collections; institutional repositories; library services; other; trends
- **ARL Facilities Inventory (due every 3 years)**
  - Data submitted for assignable square footage of library space, physical locations, funds spent on renovations projects, and images demonstrating new and effective ways of using library spaces as a way of enhancing learning, teaching and research
- **Saskatchewan Universities Funding Mechanism (SUFM) Annual Submission**
  - Data provided to the Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPA) for the University's SUFM submission to the provincial government
  - Requires library holdings item counts and equivalent volume totals for the overall library and for the Health Sciences and Veterinary Medicine libraries
- **American Appraisal Canada Ltd. Annual Submission**
  - Data provided regarding dollar value changes for Library Collections in three categories: print journals, print monographs, and aggregate total for microforms
  - Includes additions and deletions to collections and transfers in and out of new or existing collections

## Library Surveys

Effective planning and coordination of library surveys is another element of the assessment program. This involves careful design and administration of surveys, appropriate analysis and interpretation of results, identification of recommendations and actions to be taken for quality improvement, and communication back to stakeholders. The Assessment Analyst is responsible for coordination, administration, and/or reporting out on the results of library surveys.

Library surveys are divided into the following categories: major library surveys administered by the Dean's Office that occur on a cyclical basis and involve a significant portion of the library user population (students, faculty, and staff); secondary library surveys that are cyclical or one-off in nature and typically involve a smaller portion of the library user population (including surveys administered by the Dean's Office or by library faculty/staff in consultation with the Assessment Analyst); surveys received from external organizations requiring an official response from the University Library. See examples of these surveys in the next section.

## Major Library Surveys

- Ithaka S+R Library Survey – plan to participate in next administration along with CARL institutions
- Library Employee Opinion Survey (LEOS) (conducted every year since 2006 with the exception of 2007)
- LibQUAL+ (conducted in 2007, 2010, and 2013)
  - All institutions participating in LibQUAL+ receive their institutional data as well as access to the final reports from all other participating institutions
  - At the U of S, data from U15 peer institutions is pulled from these final reports and compared to individual institutional data

## Secondary Library Surveys

- AskUs Survey (Jan. 2016)
- Library Management and Supervisory Development Program (LMSDP) Survey (Jan. 2016)
- Library Orientation Survey (ongoing administration 2-3 times per year)
- Indigenous Voices Needs Assessment Survey (Oct. 2014)
- Librarians as Educators Survey (Jul. 2014)
- Safe Study Survey (Dec. 2013, Apr. 2014)
- Library Leadership Development Program Surveys (2009-2011, 2013, 2014)

## External Surveys

- Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Trends Questionnaire (Apr. 2016)
- SPEC Surveys (optional surveys scheduled annually)
- ARL Budget Survey (Nov. 2014)
- Primary Research Group Inc. Survey on Academic Library Inter-Library Loan Practices (Nov. 2013)

## Performance Indicators and Benchmarking

In order to gauge progress toward the University Library's strategic goals, a significant element of the assessment program is the development of performance indicators to track progress over time and to benchmark progress against peer institutions (e.g. U15 group of Canadian research universities). The University Library has access to a wealth of data compared to our U15 peer institutions through our membership and participation in leading professional associations and consortia (e.g. ARL and CARL). Data is also available through independent public reports such as *Maclean's* annual rankings of Canadian universities.

## ARL Data

- All library data submitted to ARL is compiled into comprehensive annual statistics reports available to all member institutions. These reports include statistics for several indicators, percentages and ratios providing years of statistics to determine trends overtime and benchmark to other ARL institutions.
- ARL also publishes the Library Investment Index Rankings (a summary measure of relative size among the university members in ARL). The index is based on calculations using 4 variables in the annual statistics report. Each institution has a unique result and place in the rank order.
- Using the annual statistics available from ARL, the University Library (since 2013-14) undertakes a comprehensive analysis summarizing the U of S results versus our U15 peers for all ARL indicators, percentages, ratios, and the library investment index. This summary includes comparisons to the U15 average as well as our ranking among individual U15 institutions for all ARL statistics.

### CARL Data

- All library data submitted to CARL is made available to all member institutions allowing for statistics to be summarized to determine trends overtime and to benchmark to other CARL institutions
- The Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL) also publishes a report using CARL statistics providing data for all COPPUL institutions

### Employee Engagement / Job Satisfaction

- The University Library monitors results from two major employee surveys: University Employee Opinion Survey (UEOS) and Library Employee Opinion Survey (LEOS)
- Employee engagement results from UEOS forms part of our key performance indicators and our dashboard scorecard which is tracked annually for the University Library and the U of S overall. Values results derived from UEOS are also tracked internally to determine how well we are living our values within the library and compared to the U of S overall.
- Results from LEOS provides the library with valuable information on 11 job satisfaction dimensions that informs our planning and our approach to transformative change. LEOS is also identified as one of our key performance indicators for employee engagement in the University Library Strategic Plan.

### Achievement Record / Supplement

- The Library Achievement Record is a means of reporting to the University community on key performance indicators in the University Library Strategic Plan in order to measure performance towards the University Library's vision, mission, and core strategies
- A full Achievement Record is released in even-numbered years with an Achievement Record Supplement (brief version) released in odd-numbered years
- Several ARL statistics comparing the U of S to our U15 peers (as noted under ARL data) are included as key performance indicators in the Achievement Record to help measure our progress

### Maclean's Rankings

- *Maclean's* magazine releases its annual rankings of Canadian universities where the U of S is ranked in a group of 15 medical doctoral institutions defined as offering a broad range of PhD programs and research with all having medical schools (similar to the U15 group). Maclean's data is drawn from publically available information and collated by the magazine.
- The rankings include 2 library indicators: library expenses measuring the percentage of the university's budget dedicated to library funding overall and library acquisitions measuring the proportion of the library's budget allocated to the acquisition of new material. The results for the U of S versus U15 institutions make up one of the key performance indicators in the Achievement Record.

### Other Assessment Related Activities

The University Library also undertakes other assessment related activities including peer and student evaluation of teaching, periodic reviews, and provision of data to colleges who have accreditation requirements with external accrediting agencies.

### **Evaluation of Teaching**

- At the University Library, there is a systematic program of peer and student evaluation of librarian teaching which forms an essential component of tenure and promotion considerations for librarians for whom teaching is assigned

### **Periodic Reviews**

- Periodically, the University Library undertakes reviews of branches, units, and functional areas as commissioned by the Dean. These reviews help to gauge quality and ensure alignment with University Library strategic goals.

### **Accreditation Processes**

- Several of the professional colleges are accredited by external professional bodies and/or accrediting agencies and as required the University Library supports accreditation processes by providing data and statistics on library usage and collections to colleges for inclusion in their accreditation documentation
- Any data and statistics supplied is generally coordinated and validated through the Assessment Analyst to help ensure a consistent and defined approach

### **Summary**

The University Library assessment program is necessary to assess the quality and effectiveness of library operations and programs tied to quality improvement, quality assurance, and accountability. The assessment program is under ongoing development and it will continue to develop and evolve over time. A chart illustrating the University Library Assessment Program follows.

**University of Saskatchewan  
Framework for Assessment**  
(comprehensive assessment strategy)

**University Library Assessment Program**  
(continuous improvement; evidence-based decision making)

**Quality Improvement**  
(aligning goals  
and performance)

**Accountability**  
(communicating outcomes,  
successes and failures)

**Quality Assurance**  
(testing performance  
against expectations)

**Activities**

**Library Surveys**

- *Major Library Surveys* (e.g. Library Employee Opinion Survey, LibQUAL+)
- *Secondary Library Surveys* (e.g. AskUs Survey, Library Management and Supervisory Development Program Survey, Library Orientation Survey, Indigenous Voices Needs Assessment Survey, Safe Study Survey, Library Leadership Development Program Surveys)
- *External Surveys* (e.g. Association of College & Research Libraries Trends Questionnaire, SPEC Surveys, ARL Budget Survey, Primary Research Group Inc. Survey on Academic Library Inter-Library Loan Practices)

**Performance Indicators**

- Achievement Record and Supplement
- Analysis of ARL Statistics (U of S vs. U15)

**Evaluation of Teaching**

- Student and Peer Evaluation of Teaching

**Activities**

**Library Statistics Submissions**

- ARL, CARL, and ACRL Annual Statistics
- ARL Facilities Inventory
- SUFM Annual Submission
- American Appraisal Canada Ltd. Annual Submission

**External Publications**

- ARL statistics publications including Library Investment Index Rankings
- CARL and COPPUL (using CARL stats) Publications
- *Macleans* Annual University Rankings (including 2 library indicators)
- University Employee Opinion Survey

**Internal Publications**

- Achievement Record and Supplement
- Analysis of ARL Statistics (U of S vs. U15)
- Survey results (LibQUAL+, LEOS, etc.)

**Activities**

**Periodic Reviews** (branch, unit, and functional area reviews)

- University Library External Review
- External Review of Technical Services Activities in Services to Libraries
- Law Library Review
- Liaison Librarian Program Review
- Organizational Review of University Archives and Special Collections
- External Review of Saskatchewan Health Information Resources Program (SHIRP)