

University of Alabama Libraries Assessment Plan 2017-2020

Mission

(Approved 10/01/2018)

The Department of Assessment & Government Information supports the mission of the University of Alabama (UA) Libraries:

“Support the University’s mission, vision, and goals by anticipating library information, technology, and service requirements; by providing timely access to needed resources; by responding to changing user needs; and by promoting effective use of information by students, faculty, and staff. The University Libraries strive for excellence in service, instruction, and building collections. We seek new and better ways of serving the academic community.”

The Department of Assessment & Government Information also supports the goals set out in the UA Libraries Strategic Plan for 2017-2020.

The primary goal of library assessment is to ensure that the facilities, collections, and services of UA Libraries support teaching, research, and outreach at the University of Alabama. To this end, trends in library inputs and outputs will be tracked over time and contextualized in relation to environmental conditions, such as current trends in technology and higher education. Peer comparison will provide additional context for key organizational performance indicators, such as expenditures and facilities/collections usage. Assessment findings will be reported by various means appropriate to those stakeholders with an interest in operational outcomes.

Stakeholders

The Department of Assessment & Government Information reports library assessment findings to internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the UA Libraries Administration, as well as various library departments, for whom assessment can inform their decision-making process. The assessment department will also conduct ongoing assessment reporting to agencies such as ARL (Association of Research Libraries), ASERL (Association of Southeastern Research Libraries), and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

A Culture of Assessment

“A culture of Assessment exists in organizations where staff care to know what results they produce and how those results relate to customers’ expectations¹.” Therefore, cooperation of the UA Libraries faculty and staff across all departments is integral to the establishment and ongoing effectiveness of a high quality, holistic assessment program. Statistics gathering must be done consistently with an eye toward accuracy to ensure that findings are meaningful. To facilitate the participation of UA Libraries personnel, the Assessment & Government Information Department

¹ [Lakos, A. & Phipps, S. E. \(2004\). Creating a Culture of Assessment: A Catalyst for Organizational Change. portal: Libraries and the Academy 4\(3\), 345-361. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved September 26, 2017, from Project MUSE database.](#)

will work with these stakeholders to conduct frequent assessment audits that ensure only needed data are collected, as well as select/design/implement data collection tools that fulfill areas' functional needs and are simple to use.

Role of Assessment & Government Information Department

The Department of Assessment & Government Information works with UA Libraries Administration and stakeholders to:

- Coordinate/support/oversee library assessment
- Develop consistent assessment practices and terminologies
- Maintain centralized storage/access for assessment data
- Provide technical support for departmental and library-wide assessment projects
- Review and revise assessment program goals as needed

Strategic Assessment Initiatives for 2018

UA Libraries Strategic Plan

In 2017, UA Libraries published its strategic plan for 2017-2020. To assist UA Libraries Administration with tracking progress toward meeting organizational benchmarks outlined within the strategic plan, quarterly updates will be solicited from all library departments. These updates will then be compiled within a master report to be used by UA Libraries Administration and shared with various stakeholders.

Document Delivery

A new service is being offered to deliver tangible library materials direct to faculty offices. Use of this new service will be tracked to provide an understanding of the level of use this service receives. Stakeholders may also find these data interesting, as they can see how many materials are now being transported for the convenience of faculty who need them.

Ongoing Assessment Initiatives and Plans

Collections

Part of the UA Libraries mission is to provide print and electronic resources to support the university's research, teaching, and outreach activities.

Collection size and use is tracked through the Voyager Integrated Library System (ILS), various reports accessible through the EBSCOAdmin interface, and Google Analytics. Statistics are entered into LibPAS for data archiving purposes, and to facilitate efficient cross-sectional and longitudinal trend analyses. A relatively level, or increasing amount of print circulation and/or online downloads help to indicate collection currency, relevance, and utility. However, print circulation statistics must be contextualized with the knowledge that print circulation has been dropping steadily for years across ARL libraries.

Research Support

Students

UA Libraries provides research support to students via course-specific information literacy instruction sessions, one-on-one reference/research consultations, and asynchronous digital content. This support aims to teach students how to effectively utilize library tools, collections, and services.

Basic assessment data related to course-specific instructional sessions are collected/tracked through LibInsight. Learning outcomes for students enrolled in First Year Writing are evaluated by a pre and post-test administered to students who receive instruction. Student engagement is measured through surveys. Feedback from course instructors, as well as self and peer teaching evaluations, provide data about the effectiveness of library instruction.

Instructional offerings for students also includes the creation of asynchronous content (e.g., research guides and tutorials), as well as one-on-one instruction facilitated via basic reference interactions and more in-depth research consultations. Data related to these activities are collected/tracked in LibInsight. Occasional feedback surveys are also conducted. The use of asynchronous instructional content, such as video tutorials and online research guides, is tracked through the various systems hosting these resources (e.g., LibGuides, YouTube, etc.).

Faculty

UA Libraries provides similar support to faculty. Faculty reference and research consultations are gathered/tracked in LibInsight. Occasional feedback surveys are also conducted. Further, UA Libraries aims to facilitate scholarship by hosting research presentations and workshops, as well as through the provision of institutional repository services. Attendance at research workshops and use of institutional repository services indicate the level and success of ongoing support for research.

Library Infrastructure

UA Libraries aims to provide physical and virtual facilities conducive to work. A steady number of visitors to the library facilities and webpages will indicate the facilities are a welcoming and valuable space for patrons to work. The physical library space is particularly important to students who have limited options in the way of meeting/study spaces.

Use of the physical library spaces is tracked through gate counts. Gate counts are reported monthly into LibPAS. Use of the digital library spaces is tracked via Google Analytics.

Knowledge Production

UA Libraries will engage in scholarship to maintain an awareness of, and advance, local knowledge of library services and best practices within the profession. The approval of peer reviews for library publications indicates its utility to the field. Publications and conference presentations from the librarians show their engagement with the evolving body of scholarly knowledge on librarianship.

Promotion

UA Libraries market library services to ensure patron awareness of all that we offer. Events and services are advertised through flyers and social media marketing. Steady statistics in other measures such as gate counts, institutional repository uploads, and website pageviews are an indicator of effective promotion of the library's services.

Diversity

UA Libraries supports diversity and equity within the campus community and will pursue demographic information in assessment to ensure that library services are meeting the needs of a variety of patron populations.

Methods

Monthly Reporting

To support ongoing assessment efforts, each month assessment coordinators throughout UA Libraries report aggregate data into the LibPAS assessment management system. These data are then compiled by the Assessment Librarian and reported to UA Libraries Administration.

Participant Research

A patron survey to discover perceptions of the UA Libraries and awareness of its services will guide decision making and marketing efforts. This survey will be repeated every three years to track progress toward ongoing and strategic goals, as well as gauge user perceptions in regard to library offerings and evolving user needs. This survey will include demographic information to ensure patrons across a variety of populations are reached. These populations include faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, international students, transfer students, on and off-campus students, patrons across disciplines, and patrons with assistive needs. Survey questions will address patron satisfaction relative to service, including availability, quality, and preferred mode. There will also be questions regarding the library buildings to ensure they continue to serve the evolving needs of library patrons.

Non-Participant Research

Relevant data from the library's Integrated Library System, Voyager, as well as LibInsight, Google Analytics, LibPAS, and other data systems is collected and stored within a master assessment database that facilitates sustainable and efficient internal assessment reporting. Through such reporting, the library can illustrate how service efforts support research, teaching, and learning across the campus community.

Access to Assessment Data

Assessment data can be accessed by UA Libraries personnel via: LibPAS, LibInsight, Google Analytics, and TaskStream. In addition, a web-accessible assessment dashboard is available to UA Libraries Administration.