DEVELOPING (GOOD) PRACTICES:

A Survey of the Library Assessment Programs in ARL Libraries
Why Study Assessment Committees

- Discussion sparked at 2013 Southeast Library Assessment Conference
- Observation that developing good or recommended practices would benefit the field as many libraries are developing assessment programs.

“Perhaps what is needed is standards by which individual institutions can evaluate their own performance in relation to the needs of their user population; that is, standards or guidelines are needed for conducting the type of evaluation studies discussed in this book.” – F. Wilfrid Lancaster, 1977, library educator.
Methodology: Survey

- Focus: Assessment Committees in Academic Libraries
  - Existence of committees
  - Committee charge and function
  - Committee membership
  - Web presence
  - Types of assessment activities
Methodology: Survey

- Qualtrics used to host and deploy survey.
- Individuals from ARL Academic Libraries received email invitation.
  - Individuals with Assessment in job title or administrators if no assessment position identified.
- 113 invitations sent.
Selected Survey Results

- 113 surveys sent
- 61 surveys started
- 49 surveys completed
- 43% response rate

Q2. Does your library have a position with assessment as a formal part of it?

- A. Yes, we have an assessment librarian or a position that is dedicated solely or primarily to assessment duties.
- B. Yes, we have a position where assessment is part of the job duties but it is not the sole focus of the job.
- C. No, we do not have a position where assessment is a formal part of the job duties.

Q3. Do you have an assessment committee, group, or task force?

- A. Yes, we have a formal standing committee
- B. Yes, we form an ad hoc committee or task force for assessment duties as needed.
- C. No, we do not have a formal committee or group.
Selected Results: Assessment Positions

When asked about assessment positions

- 56% have an Assessment Position
- 33% have a position with assessment as part of job duties
- 11% have no assessment position

Compared to 2007 ARL survey

- 2007 survey only 34% of respondents had an assessment position
- Considerable growth in number of assessment position
### Libraries with Assessment Positions and/or Assessment Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Libraries</th>
<th>Assessment position</th>
<th>Assessment part of duties</th>
<th>No assessment position</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal Standing Committee</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad hoc committee</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Results: Committee Composition

Committee Stats:
- Avg. 7.5 members
- Primarily formed by appointment or open call
- Term: 2 years, indefinite, or based on project

Makeup of Committee:
- Library faculty and staff: 14
- Library staff only: 3
- Library faculty only: 3
- Library faculty and/or staff, and administrators or department heads: 3
- Library faculty and graduate assistants: 1
- Library faculty, staff, and students: 1
Selected Results: Charge or Mission

- 80% respondents have charge or mission
- Several reported that creating a charge is the responsibility of committee
Selected Results: Committee Activities

Other:
- Consult with librarians developing assessment
- Assessment training
- Develop metrics to assess progress on strategic priorities
Some Initial Good Practices

Committee

- Develop a committee mission and guiding principles (values) to provide a framework for the committee.
- Goals should be flexible and tied to areas of emphasis or strategic priorities of the organization.
- Aim for low hanging fruit (easy wins) - small sustainable projects at first.
- Once group established, aim for multiyear projects with yearly outcomes and planned finality to project.
- Create a publically available website to share assessment information, while still maintaining data behind the scenes.

Members

- Personalize the recruitment to the committee, a general call or administrative appointments may not be as effective.
- Recruit members strategically based on organizational priorities or planned assessment activities.
- Share an agenda in advance of meetings and allow all committee members to set items for the agenda.
- Instill the attitude that assessment is ultimately about students, not about financial value but impact to help assessment committee members focus strategically.
Conversations like these today will help us further assessment in libraries and continue to demonstrate the value of libraries. Share your assessment efforts with your library, your community, and library assessment professionals.

Final Recommendation: SHARE YOUR RESULTS!