A Survey of the Library Assessment Programs at ARL Libraries

Selected Good Practices:
1. Develop clear goals for the group and have a stated charge or mission for the group. Making sure that all members understand the shared goals may be the most important and oft-cited factor of success for any group.

2. Put together a team that is representative and inclusive. Anecdotal evidence suggests between 6 and 8 members.

3. Set regular meeting times and share the group’s agenda and minutes. Consider a public website that details the goals, activities, and successes of the group, as well as contact information, members, charge, and other organizational information.

4. Team member roles should be explicit, agreed upon, and understood by all members of the group, and all members should understand how the team will work through problems and give feedback, in short how the group will function in a practical way.

5. Make sure tasks assigned to members are meaningful and tangible, as opposed to “busywork.”

6. When creating goals, aim for small sustainable projects with easily measurable impacts. If the group decides on a larger scale project, aim for a multi-year plan, where each year has a measurable impact.

7. Communicate results. Ensure that the group’s agenda and minutes are freely accessible to the library as a whole. Present important findings to different groups within the library, ideally tailored to their interests. Repeated communication through multiple channels is the best way to engage your audience and ensure that assessment actually has an impact.

Selected Bibliography


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

why study assessment committees?
Discussion sparked at 2013 Southeast Library Assessment Conference & Observation of the need for best practices in developing assessment programs.
"Professional library organizations need to determine and disseminate best practices assessment practices."
—Lewin and Passonneau, 2012

Committee Mission or Charge
80% reporting have mission or charge
Committee Stats:
- Avg. 7.5 members
- Primarily formed by appointment or open call
- Mix of librarians and staff
- Term: 2 years, indefinite, or based on project

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Article Forthcoming: