# DISTRIBUTED ASSESSMENT IN AN EVOLVING ORGANIZATION

## 1998–2011: MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SERVICES (MIS)

**PEOPLE**
3 FTE: Director, Associate Director, and Programmer.

**PRIMARY AUDIENCE**
Library leadership.

As the need for assessment of the UVA Library's activities outgrew its previous committee structure, MIS, the first Library department devoted to assessment, was established. MIS was designed to provide data to guide Library leadership's decision-making responsibilities. Focusing on standardization, accountability, and building a culture of assessment, MIS explored multiple techniques and models used primarily in the business world.

**DEFINING FEATURES**
- Internally focused; researcher approach; experimented with various assessment modalities; standardized and centralized data collection and dissemination.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
- Established the basic assessment tools, infrastructure, and principal output still in use today. Demonstrated the usefulness of assessment in decision-making, and established a culture of assessment in the Library.

**DRIVERS FOR CHANGE TO SAS**
As assessment began to take on a more prominent role within the University, it was clear that Library assessment needed to become more strategically focused. The MIS model, focused on formal assessment instruments and reports that emphasized traditional Library metrics, needed to be replaced with a model more accommodating to changing strategic needs in both the Library and the University as a whole.

## 2011–2015: STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT SERVICES (SAS)

**PEOPLE**
3.5 FTE: .5 Library Strategist, Programmer, User Experience Librarian, and Assessment Librarian.

**PRIMARY AUDIENCE**
Library leadership and University administrators.

Evolved to anchor organizational assessment more directly in strategic goals of Library and University mission. Library strategist was a member of senior leadership. Less focus on rating library services; more focus on user needs and library impact.

**DEFINING FEATURES**
- Strategically focused: more responsive to leadership concerns. Designed to be more about on-going, continuous assessment. Less library jargon.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
- Embraced UX research. Linked assessment data to budget priorities. Moved results to online format.

**DRIVERS FOR CHANGE TO XAS**
The UVA Library was reorganized into functional units to be more efficient and responsive to the University's research and teaching goals. Opportunity to embed assessment in the new structure and create powerful assessment advocates in each functional area.

## 2015–PRESENT: CROSS AREA ASSESSMENT (XAS)

**PEOPLE**
3.75 FTE: FT or PT assessment staff embedded in Library's major areas (3 FTE), UX Director, Communications staff, and Administration and Planning Director (.75 FTE).

**PRIMARY AUDIENCE**
Audience extended to include not only Library leadership and University admins, but also units throughout the University and user community.

Organizational change prompted a structure with embedded staff with direct ties to the newly formed areas of the Library dedicated to the efforts, results, and implementation of assessment. Staff also provide, promote, and utilize analytic tools to meet the unique needs of each area.

**DEFINING FEATURES**
- There is no central assessment unit, but embedded assessment staff incorporated into each area enables cross-area collaboration. The structure allows for more flexibility and easier access to area-specific expertise (i.e., knowledge of instruction, collections, etc).

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**
- Broadening of expertise throughout the organization, implementation of new tools for teaching and learning analytics.

**LOOKING FORWARD**
Assessment efforts continue to evolve to overcome challenges in workflows, staff investment in an assessment culture, and engagement with the broader University community. Continued adjustments are anticipated as decision making in the University and Library become more metric-driven and evidence-based, and a new University financial model requires new methods of data collection and reporting.