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## *Developing a Library Value Indicator for a Disciplinary Population*

--Jeanne M. Brown  
--Library Assessment Conference  
--October 27, 2010

Developing a Library  
Value Indicator

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## Population

- Landscape architecture studio of ten 5<sup>th</sup> year students
- Use of physical library ranges from 1- 30 times/month
- Use of virtual library ranges from 2-30x/month
- Compared to others in School of Architecture use is moderate
- They self-rate as average or above average on library skills, compared to their peers

## Instruments / Indicators

1. Value (Importance) Survey
2. Contingent Valuation (version a)
3. Calculator
4. Contingent Valuation (version b)

## Value Survey Comments

- Liked best of the three, for format
- Liked the category “important to others” – gave a chance to weigh in even if don’t use something personally
- More honest on this one – it was the “safest” of the three

## Contingent Valuation (A) Comments

- Scary – afraid of another fee
- Putting value is hard, suggest phrasing as % of tuition
- Difficult to answer as do not know how much things cost. Might use a scale like \$5-20
- This might give the school the idea of charging!

## Calculator Comments

- Liked the number of uses per month in the chart – helpful in thinking about value
- Explanation of price helpful, and addressed the problem in the contingent valuation form
- Liked having the average costs for a baseline
- Prefer calculator to contingent valuation

## Observations from the Data – Quantitative

- Relation between amount willing to pay and importance
- Monetary value aligned with average costs more than with use

## Observations from the Data – Qualitative

- I would not be able to do my senior research paper without the help of the ASL
- If the ASL were closed I would be devastated.
- Not having the library would be detrimental to my education
- If the ASL closed it would make research much more time-consuming. Also it would lead to fewer students seeking scholarly data



## Follow-up Questions

1. What is the impact of knowing the cost of the library services per item (e.g. cost per book)
2. Would knowing how much it costs increase your use?
3. Would knowing how much it costs increase your appreciation for the service?

## Contingent Valuation (B)

Student fees context

\$1 recycling fee

\$50 parking

\$70 health fee

\$150 recreation center

Responses

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## Lessons Learned

Each instrument brought strengths

Triangulation

Unintended consequences

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## Additional Exploration Needed

- Might spending habits or income impact willingness to pay?
- Would students with a less personal ties to the library respond differently?
- How would we deal with results that might show students value place over high-priced librarian assistance?
- What elements in the student's experience of library result in placing higher value on the library?

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# Documenting the Value of the Academic Library!

Thank you for your attention.

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