Introduction

This document is an initial formal Assessment Plan for the University Libraries at the University of South Carolina establishing methods and procedures for information and data collection, and statistical analysis and reporting. These assessment processes are designed to inform evidence-based decision making and to assist the University Libraries in developing outcome measures and indicators for strategic planning.

The scope of this plan provides the foundation for furthering assessment initiatives and strengthening a sustained culture of assessment at the University Libraries. This framework is built on clear goals and objectives with the expectation that specific criteria and directives for individual assessment activities will evolve. Moreover, the recommendations in this plan are intended to position the University Libraries’ personnel to more fully and skillfully participate in the University’s SACS reaffirmation process in 2011.

Contents

I. Mission Statement
II. Goals
III. Objectives
IV. Measures and Processes

I. Mission Statement

The University Libraries’ mission is to support, enhance, and collaborate in the instructional, research, and service activities of the faculty, students, and staff by collecting, organizing, preserving, communicating, and sharing information resources.

_The University Libraries envision the Library as a destination, both physical and virtual. The Mission of the Library is to provide access and instruction to utilize the library’s resources and facilities._

The Assessment Information Management (AIM) team advises and assists the University Libraries with assessment initiatives by:

- reviewing, analyzing and discussing data collected
- examining ways in which this data can be better communicated internally and externally
- exploring technologies for clearinghouse models to centralize library assessment
- developing a process that incorporates assessment activities with the strategic plan

October 9, 2008
II. Goals

1. Collections

Assess the University Libraries’ collections and evaluate ways to strengthen, build, and expand collections in support of the University community’s teaching and learning goals, research interests, and information needs.

2. Spaces

Evaluate the University Libraries’ physical and virtual spaces for ways to provide flexible, functional, inviting, safe, and technology-equipped environments that support evolving learning and research behaviors.

3. Services

Identify information resources, systems and services that are highly valued by our users and directly contribute to the success of our students and our research faculty. Evaluate programs and services that promote innovation, collaboration, communication, learning and research within the University community.

III. Objectives

1. Collections

   a. Acquire products and/or develop in house tools that will help analyze the library’s print and electronic collections to strengthen and build our collections.

2. Spaces

   a. Assess space utilization and user needs to inform the redesign of the University Libraries’ physical spaces towards a more flexible, collaborative, technology-equipped environment.

   b. Evaluate resources to enhance the University Libraries’ virtual spaces that assist the University Community with collaboration, information seeking, and other user centered activities.

3. Services

   a. Identify information services and programs that are highly valued by our users and directly contribute to the success of the University’s students and faculty.

   b. Evaluate the impact of the library’s instructional services on student learning and information literacy. Define a standard set of student competencies and learning outcomes based on commonly held University-wide benchmarks.
IV. Measures and Processes

1. Collections

a. Acquire products and/or develop in house tools that will help analyze the library’s print and electronic collections.
   1) Define the criteria and measures that will be used to evaluate the print and electronic collections.
   2) Develop a collection analysis plan, with a timeline, that is organized by subject/academic discipline.
   3) Using either acquired products (i.e. WorldCat Collection Analysis) or in-house tools to begin analyzing a particular area of the collection.

2. Spaces

a. Assess space utilization and user needs to inform the redesign of the University Libraries’ physical spaces towards a more flexible, collaborative, technology-equipped environment.
   1) Examine building and technology usage patterns, collaborative learning behaviors; gather user centered in-library preferences.
   2) Design and administer short in-library survey; analyze and compile historical data for usage trends.
   3) Train library staff and/or collaborate with experts on survey design, data analysis and trend reporting.

b. Evaluate resources to enhance the University Libraries’ virtual spaces that assist the University Community with collaboration, information seeking, and other user centered activities.
   1) Investigate user needs and expectations for online resources and information seeking behavior to continually assess the University Libraries’ web presence.
   2) Conduct targeted focus groups and interviews; develop usability testing protocols.
   3) Train library staff and/or collaborate with experts on conducting focus groups, performing structured interviews, and designing usability testing processes.

3. Services

a. Develop assessment processes to help identify information services and programs that are valued by our users and that directly contribute to the success of our students and faculty.
   1) Investigate methods for gathering feedback regarding the efficacy of library instruction, with an initial focus on first year students.

b. Evaluate the impact of the University Libraries’ instructional, reference, and other public services on student learning and information literacy.
   1) In collaboration with other University Libraries’ services groups, establish a set of standard student learning outcomes.
   2) Define the measures and the criteria that indicate achievements in information literacy and learning outcomes tied to library services.