The ABCs of Strategic Assessment
Building Blocks for Creating a New Plan in Challenging Times

BACKGROUND

Environment:
The University of Maryland Libraries have experienced growth in new services, spaces, equipment and technology, and community engagement in support of campus initiatives and the university’s mission. With tightening budgets came increased expectation to show impact on teaching, learning, and research.

A coordinated approach to library assessment had stalled as key people left. The Libraries’ Dean was soon to retire which complicated current and future strategy. Using a bottom-up approach, staff initiated conversations across the Libraries to kick start assessment again and work with management to use it strategically.

Need:
The Libraries needed a structure to coordinate assessment activities, including a group or person to coordinate requests and responses to data inquiries from internal and external stakeholders. A sustained assessment structure would better coordinate assessment plans and projects responsive to the organizations strategic priorities.

Recommendations:
1. Coordinate assessment
2. Develop staff and support with resources
3. Foster a culture of learning and collaboration
4. Facilitate data transparency and ease of access
5. Use assessment to inform strategic planning

BUILD

ASSESS

Formed a diverse task force

Recommended new assessment structure with coordinator and group

Interviewed stakeholders on campus and across library divisions

Established assessment best practices everyone will use

Performed SWOT Analysis

Assessment Best Practices
- Coordinate assessment systematically
- Everyday assessment every day
- Central locations for reporting, requests, and data
- Be transparent
- Maintain and teach current standards and practices

Assessment Development Plan
- Assess: Investigate our ability to evaluate and learn
- Build: Coordinate assessment through collaboration and skill development
- Cultivate: Share our learned outcomes and use them in strategic decision-making

CULTIVATE

Promoted importance and value of assessment with library staff

Recommended new assessment structure with coordinator and group

Worked with library management to understand their strategic needs

Communicated report and began conversation of next steps

Strategic Assessment Plan
- Link to strategic priorities
- Use performance indicators and outcomes

Future Plans:
- Work with new Dean of Libraries and library leadership to move forward with the task force’s recommendations
- Use Assessment Best Practices and Development Plan to build a culture of strategic assessment
- Develop Strategic Assessment Plan based on aligned library and university priorities

TIMELINE

2014
01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 01 02 03 04

2015

Poster presented at the 2015 ALA Annual Conference

Read the full report: [http://www.lib.umd.edu/tl/2015assessmentreport]

Contact us for more information: lib-assessment@umd.edu

View the entire assessment report: