2018-2019 Public Services Committee:
Annual Report of Activities and Annual Project

Members:

Rachel Bicicchi, 2018-2019, Millikin University
Marissa Ellermann, 2016-2019, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Aaron Harwig, 2017-2020, College of DuPage, Co-chair
Chad Kahl, 2018-2021, Illinois State University
Joanna Kolendo, 2016-2019, Chicago State University, Co-chair
Nestor Osorio, 2017-2020, Northern Illinois University
Katherine Sleyko, 2018-2021, Prairie State College
Reina Williams, 2018-2021, Rush University

       Mid-Year Committee Change:
              Nancy Weichert, 2018-2019, University of Illinois at Springfield

CARLI Staff Liaisons:
Elizabeth Clarage
Denise Green

Meetings:
The Public Services Committee held one in-person meeting and met nine times by conference call.

Activities:

- **Change Is Good: You Go First! Leading Others To and Through Change** – Developed a panel presentation, "The Impact on Public Services During and After Implementing a New Catalog" for the Change Management Program.

- **Annual Project**: Assessment of Public Services in Academic Libraries

  URL: https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/pub-serv/assessment-public-services-academic-libraries

Respectfully submitted,
Members of the 2018-2019 Public Services Committee

Assessment of Public Services in Academic Libraries

Assessment in academic libraries usually conforms to the mission of the institution and the strategic plan (goals and objectives) of the library. Before starting an assessment project, librarians and library staff should have a clear understanding of both the institutional mission and their own strategic plan. Assessment of a library service or collection (also called evaluation) may have many different purposes; for example, an overall assessment of the library may be done to respond to campus programs reviews with specific guidelines put in place by the university's central administration. Internal evaluation of a service in the library may be done to determine its quality, efficiency, needed changes, resources, and/or personnel needs; in this case the assessment is done with guidelines created by the library itself. In addition, assessment may be done in connection with external entities for institutional accreditations, degree program accreditations, institutional internal program reviews, etc.

These are just a few of the possible instances when an assessment may be needed. Therefore, it is important to define the purpose of the assessment and the audience or to whom it is going to be directed.

In practice and from an assessment perspective, some routine data collected in public services are not considered assessment methods because the results are not totally in control of the Library and therefore it is difficult to propose a goal for the outcomes. The number of reference transactions and gate counts are examples of this type of data; however, raw data collected as the two cases in this example can be coupled with user surveys. Thus, reference data supported with a satisfaction users survey can provide evidence of the quality of the service; similarly, in addition to collecting gate counts a survey about how the space of the library is used will also give evidence of both quantitative and qualitative value. In many cases, it tells a story and is an effective way of presenting results.

We are proposing in this project, simple assessment methods that would not require a lot of technical expertise and at low cost. This method can also be adapted with higher technology devices, apps or software packages when they are available. The major areas typically included in a public services unit of an academic library are : reference, circulation, document delivery, reserve, and space usage. Twenty-three assessment methods are presented; an assessment project can be time-demanding, and staff needs to be trained and supervised, also each assessment method requires a schedule (when it will be done), the unit responsible and the staff involved. A staggered schedule that would span for three or four years is recommended; therefore, not every method is done every year. Finally, the most appropriate staff members are expected to summarize and analyze the results as well as to propose changes or improvements. In this way the assessment cycle is concluded.

In this project, the CARLI Public Services Committee presents a number of ideas, tools, and examples for the assessment of the units of a typical public services division of an academic library. This project includes the following sections:

- Standards for Public Services developed by library associations.
- Articles, book chapters, and web pages presenting practical and successful evaluation practices.
- Recently published books on assessment, focused on those which take a practical approach. The table of contents of each item is included to facilitate a quick understanding of their content coverage.
- Assessment methods, including a number of assessments for public services units that can be adapted and modified to specific library's environment.

This set of ideas, tools and recommendations are geared towards academic libraries with limited time and resources needed to start an assessment project.

We would like to recognize the following entities from which permissions to use materials were obtained:
American Library Association; Columbia University Libraries; Council on Library and Information Resources, CLIR; Junior Tidal, New York City College of Technology Library; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University Libraries; Nestor L. Osorio; Northern Illinois University Libraries; and University of Oklahoma University Libraries.

▶ **Assessment Methods**

▶ **Library Professional Standards**

▶ **Resource List**

▶ **Index of Assessment Tools**