Communicating Library Impact Beyond Library Walls: Findings from an Action-oriented Research Agenda
A Collaborative Effort

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INTRODUCTION
The Value of Academic Libraries

- **ACRL Goal-area committee**
  - Part of Plan for Excellence
- **Goal:** Academic libraries demonstrate alignment with and impact on institutional outcomes
  - Promote impact & value of libraries to higher ed. community

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Action-oriented Research Agenda


Project page: [http://www.oclc.org/research/themes/user-studies/acrl-agenda.html](http://www.oclc.org/research/themes/user-studies/acrl-agenda.html)
Data Collection

- Three data sources
  - Iterative process
    - Advisory group
    - Literature review
    - Provost interviews

• Selected Literature
• Focus Group Interview & Feedback from Advisory Group
• Individual Interviews with Provosts
FINDINGS: TERMINOLOGY
Collaboration
Learning in college
Space
Teaching support
Success in college
Research support
Institutional planning
Communication
Collection
Provision of tech
Inclusivity/Diversity
Service
Value of Academic Libraries
Service

“The way many of our faculty and students research now, it’s less about going to a physical space but accessing information in their offices….I think that that is one of the challenges of changing the paradigm.”

(Provost Interviewee PP13, Research University, Non-Secular, Private)
Privacy

“...we have to be willing to do types of data collection that libraries have shied away from in the past....I think that we have to be able to be willing to have conversations on campus about tracking user behavior in ways that libraries just haven't done.” (Advisory Group Member LM14, Research University, Secular, Public)
Communication

“….it needs to be sort of multi-level communication from the provost to those relationships you have with other units like the centers for teaching and learning to the academic units to the individual relationships that, that librarians and staff have with faculty and students.”

(Advisory Group Member LM03, Research University, Secular, Public)
Communication

“[Librarians] have to be able to sell to the deans that this is something valuable that the deans want to be a part of, and the deans are going to be impacted by their faculty feeling like that this is a worthy thing because if we use money for one thing, we can’t use if for something else. I think customer service…becomes really important in this kind of environment.

(Provost Interviewee PP07, Research University, Secular, Public)
FINDINGS: INFORMED CITIZENRY
“...the whole kind of conversation around fake news is this really important example of how important it is in our daily life and civic health in order to bring critical skills to bear on understanding information and being able to critically evaluate the source of that.”

(Advisory Member LM03, Research University, Secular, Private)
“The drive to knowing more about what students get from a college education is not going to go away. We are going to have to continually look at, quality….This drive towards knowing what students get from their college education, is going to continue to be important. I can't imagine that part of it would go away with the Trump Administration.”

(Provost Interviewee PP06, Research University, Secular, Public)
“I see that [libraries] play a role as a partner, facilitating both learning and doing in new and different ways, both helping all of us to embrace information in critical and yet meaningful ways.”

(Provost Interviewee PP03, Research University, Secular, Private)
“It is the place where the whole community comes together to, acquire and use information in intelligent and responsible ways. The library is incredibly well-positioned to support these interdisciplinary efforts, it is incredibly well-positioned to help the institution be nimble. The challenge that the library faces is being able to do that and not, falling into the trap of defending current practice or defending the library per se.”

(Provost Interviewee PP01, College, Secular, Private)
“In some sense, I also want a community that is really deeply engaged with the world. From the perspective of the library, I cannot think of a place that's better positioned to be able to navigate this.”

(Provost Interviewee PP01, College, Secular, Private)
“I think information literacy is very important. What information, is trustworthy? What information is not? How do you delve into a subject and really understand what the facts are? How do you think about different resources? I think that is going to be really important for libraries. I think it is going be something that is important for everybody, from scientists to humanists.”

(Provost Interviewee PP06, Research University, Secular, Public)
“I do not think the learning stops after [students graduate]. How do we set our students up for success? How do they reach the outcomes that we want for them? How do we have them thinking about, and in particular for libraries, how do they think about that down the road as, using public libraries and the resources we have there as well?”

(Provost Interviewee PP06, Research University, Secular, Public)
“We should be helping people learn how to think, learn how to be skeptical, learn how to use critical thinking skills, learn how to be self-reflective. I think because those things are so much harder to assess and to demonstrate we have not done as good a job telling that story.”

(Provost Interviewee PP10, College, Non-secular, Private)
“People [are] talking about the problems of educating people to be citizens more, with this election being indicative of that but, undoubtedly, it is true. This is a hard thing to confront right now because we are going to have an administration that does not think that is important at all. You know?”

(Provost Interviewee PP02, Research University, Non-Secular, Private)
“The biggest changes [for higher education] are trying to rethink the learning environment. How to utilize the technology that is available now, not just hearing information but thinking about that information and how to apply it and what does that mean?”

(Provost Interviewee PP14, Research University, Secular, Public)
“We do not know what is going to happen. It is really up in the air right now. I think the drive [is] knowing more about what students get from a college.”

(Provost Interviewee PP06, Research University, Secular, Public)
RECOMMENDATIONS
Recommendation

• Use more direct terminology, such as programs and events, to describe activities
  – Use similar terminology as others within the academic institution
  – Determine terminology used by provosts and adopt this terminology in subsequent communications
• Become familiar with the higher education publications that these provosts and similar administrators read
• Consider publishing in higher education publications since they provide a direct line of communication to these provosts and similar administrators (Advisory Group Member LM14)
Recommendation

Identify & articulate both learning & success outcomes

• Engage students in redesigning library space to demonstrate library’s impact for learning outcome

• Library resource or service usage & its relationship to student retention exemplifies the effect of library’s service, collection, &/or space for success outcome

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Recommendation

Focus less on service & more on sharing space & collaborative programming with groups both on & off campus

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Bolster collaboration with other campus units or external partners, including consortia, on assessment-based efforts.
Recommendation

Communicate how library offerings, programs, collections, and spaces address the larger mission of the institution by becoming better at marketing & customer service.
Recommendation

Study the assessment & student-centered outcomes of diverse populations across various institutions using multiple methods
Recommendation

Develop relationships within different academic service areas, such as teaching & learning, at various levels throughout institution

Image: https://www.flickr.com/photos/medialab-prado/19385141206/ by Medialab Prado / CC BY-SA 2.0
Recommendation

Continue to develop & foster relationships and engagement with academic administrators & other service providers, such as student services, offices of sponsored programs, teaching & learning, etc.
Recommendation

Represent data in different contexts & visualizations to make case with diverse groups of academic administrators.

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Recommendation

Help students develop critical thinking and analysis skills
Recommendation

Directly connect to the mission and strategy of the institution
QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
1. How can library administrators and staff more effectively communicate their contributions to the institution’s mission and goals to institutional stakeholders (e.g., administrators) and the broader community (constituents, including both library users and potential users; other community, government, or academic departments or divisions)?

2. How can academic, public, national, and school libraries work together to create, offer, and assess informal and formal learning opportunities for developing an informed citizenry?

3. How can the impact of the library on the development of an informed citizenry be communicated to stakeholders (e.g., institution’s administration)?
References


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ACRL Board
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Discussion & Questions

Value of Academic Libraries

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