College Library Statistics:
Under Review
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Purposes
- Preparing reports to administration
- Identifying areas for process improvements
- Analyzing trends for strategic planning
- Documenting changes in staff and work flows

Do librarians collect the appropriate statistics?
- accurate?
- comparable among similar libraries?
- asking valid questions?

“...above all, do we know how to manipulate and interpret statistical information?”

College Students’ Perceptions
- 72 percent of college students begin their research with a search engine
- 2 percent of college students begin their search on the library website
- Survey sample: 396 students aged 15 to 57

Statistics collected
- Budgets
- Collections
- Services
- Staffing

Budgets
- 1986 ACRL Standards
  6% of the institutional education and general budget should be assigned to the library*
- 2004 ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

Current ACRL standards

Suggested Points of Comparison: Input Measures

- Ratio of volumes to student & faculty FTE
- Ratio of volumes added per year to S&F FTE
- Ratio of material/information resource expenditure to S&F FTE
- % of total budget spent on: materials, staff, and all other operating expenses

Inputs continued

- Ratio of students attending library instructional sessions to total number of students in targeted groups

ACRL Standards, continued

Output Measures

- Ratio of circulation to S&F FTE
- Ratio of ILL requests to S&F FTE
- Ratio of ILL lending to borrowing
- ILL/document delivery and lending turnaround time, fill rate, and unit cost
- Ratio of reference questions to S&F FTE

ACRL Standards as a tool

- Establishing individual goals within the context of their institutional goals
- Documenting the library’s contributions to institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes
- Suggested points of comparison for peer and longitudinal comparison, and encourage the development of other measures [emphasis mine]

Collections

- Print books vs ebooks
  - Purchase or leasing
  - Ebooks – count in ratio of volumes added per year?

- Curriculum support
  - Size of collection vs. collection that supports current curriculum

Electronic Journals

- Multiple formats, multiple counts?
- Aggregators
  - Bundled subscriptions instead of single title purchases
  - Usage statistics – institutional needs not for national reporting
Libraries as publishers

Current counts in ALS:
- Books, serial backfiles and other paper materials
- E-Books
- Microforms
- Audiovisual materials
- Current serial subscriptions
- Electronic reference sources and aggregation services

Services

Defining reference transactions
ALS: “an information contact that involves the knowledge, use, recommendation, interpretation, or instruction of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff” and includes transactions “in person, by phone, by e-mail, by the Web”

ALS Survey on Information Literacy

Does your institution have the following or has it done the following?
- A definition of information literacy or of an information literate student
- Incorporate information literacy in the institution’s mission
- Incorporated information literacy in the institution’s strategic plan
- An institution-wide committee to implement the strategic plan for information literacy
- The strategic plan formally recognizes the library’s role in information literacy instruction

More on services

- Interlibrary loan – patron initiated
- ILL processing time versus time to process a book for the collection
- Impacts on staffing

Staffing

- Count staff positions, but not staffing changes
- New services versus demands - where do we put our energies?
- Example: Web sites
  - 2 percent of students start at the library web site
  - 48 percent end up at a library web site via a search engine
  - 10 percent felt library collection fulfilled their information needs*

*“College Students’ Perceptions (OCLC, 2005)

Inputs versus Outcomes

“the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs.”

Purposes

- Process improvements?
- Strategic planning?
- Annual reports?
- Staffing adjustments?

Encouraged to develop new measures

Ultimate Question

“Would you recommend us to a friend?”*

Tom Storey, “Are you asking the ultimate question?” NextSpace (December 2006): 6-11.

Conclusion

We’re encouraged to develop new measures...let’s do it.

Thank you!