Assessment Work Team Essence Notes

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Dean Mitchell turned over coordination of the Assessment Work Team to Associate Dean Clement Lau, now that he has assumed responsibility for overseeing the Library’s various formal effectiveness assessment efforts. Clement explained that the purpose of today’s meeting was to present a couple of recently employed assessment methodologies. What was learned, and what might be done differently when the assessments are carried out in the future? He encouraged attendees to integrate assessment into their programs and services. Today’s two presentations showcased their assessment work.

Chelsea Faircloth described the planning of the spring and fall 2016 Open House events, which were aimed at raising student awareness of library resources and services available to them. Chelsea shared the feedback forms that Open House participants were asked to complete. It is clear the 11-2 time period is more convenient for students than 12-3. Student comments were very positive overall. It was interesting to see what students felt were the most beneficial things they learned in the Open Houses, and what services or resources they thought they would be most likely to use in the future.

After the presentation, attendees discussed the following topics from survey questionnaires design, survey format, data collection and analysis, and administrative procedure issues, such as time and workload. Suggestions for future Open House assessments included:

- Avoiding biasing or priming the questions by phrasing them in a way that forces positive answers;
- Asking how the students learned the Open House was taking place;
- Asking how often the students use the Library;
- Asking what more they would have liked to learn about the Library.

Kay Coates shared her assessment practices including the form she uses to assess the effectiveness of the presentations she gives to classes. She asks students to indicate what they learned from the class presentation, what they found interesting in the class presentation, and what library questions they still have. This simple questionnaire has provided her a lot of valuable information from freshman students, but she is working on a different feedback form for more advanced students. Kay’s questionnaire is reminiscent of the instruction assessment approach that ISD librarians used to employ after a workshop conducted by Debra Gilchrist, a nationally renowned library instruction authority. ISD librarians thought the method was quite useful, but they moved away from it when the University adopted the WEAVE assessment platform and we were asked to provide more quantitative information about learning outcomes. Since WEAVE has been abandoned, ISD might consider returning to a methodology similar to the Gilchrist and Coates models.

Lisa and Ruth also spoke about the background of ISD’s assessment progress in recent years. Clement indicated we may continue to share assessment initiative reports at future team meetings, to stimulate suggestions for improving our effectiveness measures and to create a culture of assessment in order to better inform our efforts to achieve our goals.

Clement concluded the meeting with an overview of the annual Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) data collection. The library statistics gathered from participating academic libraries can be very useful for conducting
benchmark comparison studies among peer institutions. The deadline for reporting our FY16 statistics to the ACRL survey is in February of 2017. Clement outlined the timeframe and process for collecting the data. He also showed the data collection worksheet and ACRL’s data submission website. He indicated that because ACRL survey questions are now aligned with IPEDS Academic Libraries questions, some of the statistics collected for ACRL would be used for IPEDS survey which is due in April 2017. Clement also suggested that library statistics would be used to measure the ROI (Rate On Investment) of library services.

Subsequent team meetings will be at 3pm on the second Tuesday of each month.