Report: Assessment Plan Environmental Scan

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Objective: To conduct an environmental scan of available library assessment plans in order to recommend a structure for an assessment plan for the WSU Libraries.

Approach: The project-team reviewed academic library assessment plans available on the open web. Each team member reviewed five to seven assessment plans. In all, assessment offerings of 22 institutions were investigated (see appendix B for list of institutions).

Findings: Assessment plans ranged from straight list formats, similar to previous efforts of the Libraries, to full-scale assessment plans documenting every aspect of an assessment program complete with SWOT analyses. Areas of focus for many of the reviewed plans were in the areas of learning outcomes, collections, and library as place. Other areas included, library services, culture of assessment, information transparency, and data driven decision making. Supporting documents play key roles in terms of defining basic assessment terminology, and in outlining available methodologies for conducting assessment. The project-team preferred those that were outcomes based, with a focus on meeting the needs of the communities served.

Recommendation: A culture of assessment implies that assessment is a consideration for all library employees. The successful adoption of an assessment plan for the Libraries necessitates the cooperation of all Library departments, teams, working groups, etc. As such, the project-team recommends that the Assessment Team provide the structure for an assessment plan, and synthesize findings from measures assessed, to report on progress made towards each outcome in an annual report. Determination of appropriate measures, and assessing of each, is the responsibility of the logical departments, teams, working groups, etc. Representatives from areas of the library with the primary responsibility for each measure are necessary to incorporate stakeholders and further vest the libraries in assessment.

The project-team recommends a plan situated in the goals of the University and the Libraries. An outcomes based document concentrated on assessing the identified areas, will maintain a focus on meeting the needs of the communities we serve. Multiple measures should be in place to measure progress towards each outcome. Each measure included does not need to assess an outcome in its entirety, and can be used in combination with additional measures to develop a more comprehensive view of progress towards the outcome. Accountability should be built into the plan in multiple ways. The individual or group responsible for advancing measures for each outcome should be identified in addition to when the measure will be assessed and reported. To “close the loop,” an approximate time of year of the reporting of each measure should be included as well as a timeframe for implementing change. See appendix A “Draft Components of an Assessment Plan” for more detail.
Appendix A: Draft Components of an Assessment Plan with Examples:

Overview:

The WSU Libraries Assessment Plan focuses on assessing the libraries ability to meet the needs of the communities we serve, focused in the areas of collections, services provided, and student learning. To that end, the Assessment Team strives to support the work of addressing the assessment plan by developing an infrastructure to promote a culture of assessment, data driven decision making, and information transparency.

University Goals:

1. Achieve national and international preeminence in innovation, discovery, and creativity
2. Provide a premier education and transformative experience that prepares students to excel in a global society
3. Lead in relevant local, national, and global outreach and engagement
4. Embrace an environment of diversity, integrity and transparency

WSU Libraries Strategic Goals:

1. Provide excellent resources and services tailored to support the research and outreach efforts and the teaching and learning activities of WSU
2. Develop the digital and physical environments of the Libraries to enhance the mission of WSU
3. Collaborate with departments, programs and consortia around the campus, state and world to improve access to, interaction with, and understanding of the changing global information environment
4. Develop the Libraries’ infrastructure and employee foundation

Description of Users:

The students, faculty, and staff and their research partners are the primary clientele of the Libraries. Additional users include consortial partner institutions, and citizens of Washington State.
Outcomes statements:

1. Students demonstrate improved skills in locating, analyzing, synthesizing, and using information as a result of the Libraries’ resources, services, and partnerships
2. Faculty, researchers, and students, report that they collection offers what they need and that they have efficient access to library collections
3. Students and faculty report that the Library facilities meet their learning and research needs

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<td><strong>Outcome 2:</strong> Faculty, researchers, and students, report that the collection offers what they need and that they have efficient access to library collections</td>
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**Supporting Documents:**

- **Glossary of Key Terms:**
  A document located on the Assessment website linked to the Assessment plan defining basic assessment terminology

- **Assessment Methods:**
  A document located on the Assessment website linked to the assessment plan that defines in detail the measures included in the plan. Documentation of additional assessment methods not part of the assessment plan will also be included.
Appendix B: Institutions Reviewed for Assessment Plans:

Boston University
Cal State Northridge
Chicago
Colorado State University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Emory University
Howard University
Indiana State University
Keene State college
New Mexico State University

NCSU
Paradise Valley Community College
Texas Austin University
University of Chicago
University of Minnesota
University of Oregon
University of Richmond
University of Tennessee
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin
Western Ontario University