University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries Assessment Plan 2021-2024

This document outlines the goals and methods of the Assessment team, the Assessment and Planning Librarian and the Data Analyst. The Assessment team is aided in their work by personnel across the libraries who gather data and set organizational goals. This document also contains broad outlines of the plan for assessment activities over the next three years. The plan lists and describes projects briefly rather than providing full details for each one.

Overview of Assessment Team

Mission

The Assessment team supports the mission of the University of Massachusetts Amherst "The University's mission is to provide an affordable and accessible education of high quality and to conduct programs of research and public service that advance knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world."

The Assessment team also supports the mission of the UMass Amherst Libraries: “As a key partner in teaching, learning, and research at UMass Amherst and beyond, the Libraries foster a diverse, inclusive, and user-centered environment in which to engage with ideas and acquire the skills necessary for independent learning and critical thinking.”

The primary goal of library assessment is to ensure that the collections, services, and facilities of UMass Libraries support teaching, research, and outreach at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. To this end, trends in library inputs and outputs are tracked over time and contextualized in relation to environmental conditions, such as current trends in technology and higher education. Peer comparison will provide additional context for key organizational performance indicators, such as expenditures and collections/facilities usage. Assessment findings will be reported to stakeholders.

Stakeholders

The Assessment Team reports library assessment findings to internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the UMass Libraries Administration, as well as various library departments, for whom assessment can inform their decision-making process. The assessment team will also conduct ongoing assessment reporting to agencies such as ARL (Association of Research Libraries), ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries), and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Role of Assessment Team

The Assessment team works with UMass Libraries Administration and stakeholders to:
- Coordinate/support/oversee library assessment
- Develop consistent assessment practices and terminologies
- Maintain centralized storage/access for assessment data
- Provide technical support for departmental and library-wide assessment projects
- Review and revise assessment program goals as needed

The Assessment team will work with these stakeholders to conduct frequent assessment audits that ensure only needed data are collected, as well as select/design/implement data collection tools that fulfill areas’ functional needs and are simple to use.

Assessment Methods

Operational Data

Relevant data from the library’s Integrated Library System, Aleph, as well as Google Forms, Google Analytics, BePress, and other data systems is collected to facilitate the recognition of longitudinal trends and comparison with peer libraries.

Participant Research

A patron survey to discover perceptions of the UMass Libraries and awareness of its services can guide decision making and marketing efforts. This survey can be repeated every three years to track progress toward ongoing and strategic goals, as well as gauge user perceptions in regard to library offerings and evolving user needs. This survey can include demographic information to ensure patrons across a variety of populations are reached. These populations include faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, international students, transfer students, on and off-campus students, patrons across disciplines, and patrons with assistive needs. Survey questions can address patron satisfaction relative to service, including availability, quality, and preferred mode. There will also be questions regarding the library buildings to ensure they continue to serve the evolving needs of library patrons. Connecting with patrons can allow the libraries to identify gaps in our services.

Access to Assessment Data

Assessment data can be accessed by UMass Libraries personnel via: the library assessment website, the UMass Tableau Data Pond, and LibWire.

Strategic and Ongoing Assessment Initiatives

Strategic Assessment Initiatives for 2024

UMass Libraries Strategic Plan

In 2021, one strategic plan will have concluded and a refreshed plan will be introduced. To assist UMass Libraries Administration with tracking progress toward meeting organizational benchmarks outlined within the strategic plan, quarterly updates will be solicited from all library
departments. These updates will then be compiled within a master report to be used by UMass Libraries Administration and shared with various stakeholders.

**Curriculum Mapping Project**

The assessment team will work with the liaison librarians to conduct a review of syllabi from across university departments to identify courses where information literacy learning outcomes are or should be incorporated. Liaison librarians will reach out to instructors for those courses to coordinate instruction for those courses.

**Ongoing Assessment Initiatives and Plans**

**Collections**

Part of the UMass Libraries mission is to acquire and provide access to scholarly resources that support the university’s research, teaching, and outreach activities. The assessment team will work in collaboration with the Collections Analysis Librarian who will track the growth and usage of the collections.

Responsible collection stewardship includes regular assessment of collection resources. This assessment should include data from academics & enrollment, Fit, circulation, interlibrary loan, and usage statistics. Collections-related data are currently collected in the UMass Amherst Libraries through various avenues and made available through Tableau software and other sources.

Circulation data is used in combination with e-reserves, interlibrary loan and open-education resource data to determine which subject areas (call number ranges) are most frequently used. These can inform the relevant selector(s) about the areas of more active student and faculty inquiry.

Acquisitions purchasing data is used in combination with cataloging data and 5 Colleges overlap analysis to see which subject areas are being added to the collections both in our library and in other 5 Colleges libraries to assess how often newly acquired materials are being used. This data can be used to adjust spending to target areas that need more focus than others as well as areas that show changes in usage, allowing collections funds to be spent in a more mindful way.

Collection use, and demographic data are used to develop a deeper understanding of the users and non-users of library collections. This includes relevant analysis of user status, affiliation, purpose of use and format/type of resource.

Subject areas are reviewed for content being added to ScholarWorks and tie Open Access initiatives and e-reserves data into collection assessment activities.
E-resource usage data is available from varied sources including vendor usage statistics and proxy server data. This information is used for subscription review and to identify areas of overlap and areas that are underrepresented in the collection.

**Research Support**

Students

UMass Libraries provide research support to students via course-specific information literacy instruction sessions, one-on-one reference/research consultations, and asynchronous digital content. This support aims to teach students how to effectively utilize library tools, collections, and services.

The assessment team tracks instruction, students reached through instruction. They should also track instructional quality.

Data related to course-specific instructional sessions are collected/tracked through Google Forms. These data are linked to student success measures via the Portfolio project. Learning outcomes for students enrolled in First Year Writing can be evaluated by a pre and post-test administered to students who receive instruction. Student engagement can be measured through surveys. Feedback from course instructors, as well as self and peer teaching evaluations, can provide data about the effectiveness of library instruction.

Instructional offerings for students also includes the creation of asynchronous content (e.g., research guides and tutorials), as well as one-on-one instruction facilitated via basic reference interactions and more in-depth research consultations. Data related to these activities are collected/tracked through Google Forms. Occasional feedback surveys can also be conducted. The use of asynchronous instructional content, such as video tutorials and online research guides, is tracked through the various systems hosting these resources (e.g., LibGuides, YouTube, etc.).

Faculty

UMass Libraries also provide teaching and research support to faculty.

The assessment team tracks reference questions and research consultations.

Faculty reference and research consultations are gathered/tracked in Google Forms. Occasional feedback surveys can also conducted. Further, UMass Libraries aims to facilitate scholarship by hosting research presentations and workshops, as well as through the provision of institutional repository services. Attendance at research workshops and use of institutional repository services indicate the level and success of ongoing support for research. IR uploads and usage are tracked through BePress.

**Library Infrastructure**
Library Infrastructure refers to the physical and virtual facilities offered in and by the UMass Libraries. The Libraries aim to provide infrastructure that is welcoming and valuable to patrons. It includes the physical library spaces and the website.

Research questions:
- Are the libraries providing physical and virtual facilities that are meet patron needs?
- Are the physical facilities accessible to all students?

Research Methods:
- Quantitative: Analyze library data including Gate Counts, LibCal bookings, Google Analytics
- Qualitative: Conduct ethnographic observations of library spaces.

Knowledge Production

UMass librarians engage in scholarship to maintain an awareness of, and advance, local knowledge of library services and best practices within the profession.

Publications and conference presentations from the librarians show their engagement with the evolving body of scholarly knowledge on librarianship. The assessment team engages in scholarly activity and tracks the scholarly activity of librarians. UMass libraries have a variety of values regarding the quality of scholarly output. Scholarly work may be assessed as to how widely it is used by various communities. The libraries are also committed to encouraging affordability of access for scholarly outputs from our organization.

Promotion

UMass Libraries market library services to ensure patron awareness of all that we offer. Events and services are advertised through flyers and social media marketing.

Steady statistics in other measures such as gate counts, institutional repository uploads, and website pageviews are an indicator of effective promotion of the library’s services.

Diversity and equity

UMass Libraries supports diversity and equity within the campus community and will pursue demographic information in assessment to ensure that library services are meeting the needs of a variety of patron populations.