Northern Illinois University

Division of Academic Affairs

University Libraries

Assessment Plan

October 2015

Submitted by:

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1. History and Context

The University Libraries have served Northern Illinois University since Jacob Haish, a DeKalb barbed wire manufacturer, donated $10,000 to the newly created Northern Illinois State Normal School to establish a library in 1899. The Haish Library occupied the center area of the second floor of Altgeld Hall for the next fifty years. Expansion during these years added stack storage and reading areas, but the post-World War II boom and the addition of graduate programs in 1951 necessitated the building of a new, larger library facility.

On December 10, 1952, Northern students and faculty moved the 85,000 volume collection into Swen Parson Library across from Altgeld Hall. Named in honor of a Northern mathematics professor, the new library was built to accommodate an enrollment of 2,500 students. By 1965, the book collection had grown to 225,000 volumes, three times what it had been fifteen years earlier. Further expansion of graduate programs, increased enrollments, and technological advances in the library field demanded a new physical plant, larger professional staff, and broader collection development. Built at a cost of twelve million dollars, the new Founders Memorial Library was dedicated April 20, 1979. It is named for the four DeKalb residents who brought the new Normal School to DeKalb in 1895: Jacob Haish, Joseph Farwell Glidden, Isaac Leonard Ellwood, and Clinton E. Rosette. Located in the middle of the campus, it serves at the heart of the University's teaching and research missions. Shortly after opening for public use, the University Libraries' collection reached one million volumes. In 2005, it reached two million volumes. In 2015, the collection is now an estimated 2.4 million volumes.

University Libraries have grown and developed organizationally as well as physically over the decades and now employs approximately twenty-five faculty and seventy-five operational and SPS staff and one hundred students and graduate assistants in Founders Memorial Library, the Music Library, and Faraday (Science) Library. University Libraries are organized into five divisions under Dean Patrick Dawson: Collections and Technical Services, including the Music Library and Faraday Library, under Associate Dean Chalermsee Olson; Technology Initiatives and Support Services under Associate Dean T. J. Lusher; Public Services under Associate Dean Rosanne Cordell; Regional History and University Archives under Director Cindy Ditzler; and Administration under Dean Dawson. The functions of these division are as follows:

- Collections and Technical Services select, acquire, receive, process, catalog, preserve, describe and manage print and electronic resources, and maintain the online catalog. Specialized collections such as those in Rare Books and Special Collections, Government Publications, the Southeast Asia Collection, the Music Library, and Faraday (Science) Library are also part of this division.
- Technology Initiatives and Support Services gather and digitize university intellectual property, promote and facilitate open access publishing by faculty, create digital collections, maintain the technology infrastructure of University Libraries, and provide technology support to faculty, staff, and students (in conjunction with DoIT).

- Public Services assist faculty, staff and community members with research, instruct students in research methods and information literacy concepts, circulate library materials, provide interlibrary loan services for those requested materials which University Libraries do not own, and support teaching faculty with print and electronic reserve services.
- Regional History and University Archives has a duel mandate to acquire, preserve, and make available to the public the most significant historical records of the eighteen northern counties of Illinois excluding Cook County, and to serve as the repository for all official records of the university that have permanent historical or administrative value.
- The Administration unit coordinates the activities of all University Libraries units, creates policies, and provides such centralized services as personnel and financial functions.

The availability of the public Internet in the 1990s had a transformative effect on library operations, including at NIU. Many of our basic tools were converted to online services (e.g. catalog and periodical indexes), standard sources were moved to the World Wide Web (e.g. statistical sources, government documents, journals, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and monographs), and a proliferation of web sites augmented or replaced print media. As interactive applications were created, library users demanded new modes of communication with library faculty and staff, and expected to be allowed to share their own created knowledge. The need for instruction in seeking, retrieving, evaluating, and ethically using scholarly sources became more critical as the world of knowledge transitioned from one of mediated knowledge to open access. These challenges have been met with increased library instruction services, the creation of a research course, expanded availability of research consultations, integration of new formats into the libraries' collections, support of faculty publication in open access sources, involvement in online or remote-site teaching, and greater reliance on consortial agreements and interlibrary loan plans.

Throughout the history of the University Libraries, library faculty, staff and administrators have continuously made decisions based on informal assessment of our collections, facilities and services. The University Libraries are and have been a rich data-based organization, and the examination of this data has been used to improve our function as a university support unit. Most of this data collection and analysis has been done in-house. Reports have been submitted to the Provost's Office when requested. However, the majority of such measures in the past have been "input" measures: the number of volumes added to the collection or cataloged, the number of interlibrary loan requests made and fulfilled, the number of individuals entering the University Libraries' buildings, the number of instructions sessions or workshops presented, etc.

In 2005, University Libraries participated in the LibQual user survey project, focusing on Affect of Service, Library as Place, and Information Control. We received results from 561 respondents, which were, overall, positive, with minimal gaps revealed. Since 2005, LibQual has become the most prominent academic library users' survey in the field. The University Libraries are considering participating in LibQual again, to update our 2005 data.

For many years, the Libraries have also participated in the university's Program Reviews, providing a report on the libraries' collections and services support -- such as library instruction, reference services and interlibrary loan -- to each program going through the process. These

reports also demonstrate the Libraries' compliance with professional certification requirements for teaching units. The Libraries produce descriptive and evaluative reports of our collections and services whenever a new academic program is created, indicating, among other things, the strength of the collections for that area and the resources needed. The Libraries also prepare an evaluative report for the university's accreditation cycle.

The University Libraries follow the requirements of the federal Government Printing Office and the State Records Act, as well as the professional guidelines for collections and services of the American Library Association, the Association for College & Research Libraries and its Rare Books & Manuscripts Section, the Reference & User Services Association, the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services, the Association of Research Libraries, the Music Library Association, and the Society of American Archivists, among others.

Strategic planning has also evolved in academic libraries and in the Northern Illinois University Libraries, in particular. In 1982, the University Libraries produced Goals and Objectives, which stated that "[t]he University Libraries aims to fulfill [its] mission by a. developing an organized collection of materials which best satisfies the present and future needs of the university's programs for teaching, research, and public services, and b. providing programs, services, and facilities designed to promote the use of information in the university community it serves." Our goals were expanded in 2002 to twenty goals in collections, public services, technical processing, staff, systems, and budgeting, reflecting the significant shift in academic libraries' role from collectors of research materials to providers of access to research materials and active partners in the academic missions of their institutions. When Dean Dawson arrived in 2008, we developed a new Strategic Plan, now replaced with an updated and expanded Strategic Plan covering all aspects of the Libraries, officially accepted in the Spring of 2015. This Strategic Plan is now the guiding document of the University Libraries and the basis for much of the Assessment Plan. It should be notes that both the Strategic and Assessment Plans are for all five divisions of University Libraries.

University Libraries have also developed internal documents guiding acquisition and collection development. Our original 1982 Collection Development Policy, updated regularly as needed, was an assessment-based analysis of current strengths and future needs. It continues to guide collection decisions. In the 1990s and 2000s, we have used the OCLC Collection Inventory program to compare our collections to similar institutions. Although this tool has become cost-prohibitive, more focused comparisons continue to be done in the context of Program Reviews.

Academic libraries have slowly adopted more output measures as appropriate assessments of their operations. The University Libraries are also making this transition from gauging "what we do" or "how much we do" to "how well we do." Some isolated assessments were already in place as part of a limited assessment program before the University Libraries were asked to submit an Assessment Plan. In other areas, little discussion has taken place within the profession on how to assess quality; we are developing assessments for these, and testing their efficacy. Alignment of the Strategic Plan and the Assessment Plan has developed a strong framework for decision–making and prioritization within the University Libraries, guiding us as we move forward to meet the challenges and opportunities of the mid-twenty-first century.

2. Mission, Goals and Objectives

Our Mission
The University Libraries are a dynamic partner with our users in the research, discovery, and creation of knowledge, where state-of-the-art technology and unique collections combine in an environment that welcomes and encourages free exploration. Whatever your quest, we are dedicated to your success.

Goals and Objectives
The following goals and objectives have been selected from the University Libraries Strategic Plan as appropriate for external reporting in the University Libraries Assessment Plan. The complete list of goals and objectives is included in an appendix to the Assessment Plan.

Goal 1: Build Robust, Responsive, and Sustainable Collections.
Acquire, preserve, and enhance access to the Libraries physical and electronic collections in keeping with the NIU Statement of Vision and Mission to be a "premier student-centered, research-focused public university, contributing to the advancement of knowledge for the benefit of the people of the region, the state, the nation, and the world." Explore sustainable methods of developing our collections to help us establish resiliency in the face of uncertain economic times.

> Objective D: Support research and scholarship.
> Objective F: Acquire and curate research materials to support teaching and learning.
> Objective H: Collect, preserve, and provide access to the University's digital and intellectual assets (e.g. theses, dissertations, published pre-prints and post-prints, and data sets) and ensure long-term access to unique collections.

Goal 4: Provide an Inviting Environment with Suitable Spaces for Study, Collaboration, Discovery, and Access.
As an intellectual commons for the University community, the University Libraries provide study and learning spaces for individuals and groups involved in projects and continuous learning, bringing students, academics, and the world together.

> Objective J: Update and maintain the physical environment of the Libraries in order to promote learning through effective usage of library materials and space.

Goal 5: Support Student and Faculty Success through Instructional Programs and Research Support.
Increase the reach of the Libraries' support of teaching and research in support of career and life-long learning goals, with the aim of helping students and faculty to achieve fulfilling careers and make meaningful contributions to our changing world.
> Objective C: Work with teaching faculty to integrate library instruction into regular class time and facilitate high-quality information literacy and bibliographic instruction session to NIU students.
> Objective D: Support research and scholarship.
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Assessment Methods-by-Outcomes Matrix

Assessment Method	Goal					
	Goal 1 Build Robust, Responsive, and Sustainable Collections	Goal 2 Develop and Strengthen Campus and Community Relations	Goal 3 Transparently and Ethically Administrate the University Libraries' Financial, Human, And Physical Resources	Goal 4 Provide an Inviting Environment with Suitable Spaces for Study, Collaboration, Discovery, and Access.	Goal 5 Support Student and Faculty Success through Instructional Programs and Research Support	Goal 6 Employ responsive, sustainable, and innovative uses of technology.
UNIV 105 pre- and post-Test					S, I	
Student surveys of FY Comp library sessions					S, I	
Reference transactions statistics		S, D			S, D	
Reference interaction survey	S, I	S, I			S, I	
Collection development analysis	S, D				S, D	
User satisfaction survey					S, I	
Missing items reports				S, I	S, I	
Faculty reserve satisfaction survey					S, I	
Note. F= formative assessment, S= summative assessment, D= direct assessment, and I= indirect assessment						

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Processing time for Interlibrary Loan requests					S, I	
Turnaround time analysis	S, I				S, I	
Metadata review	S, I	S, I			S, I	
Collections processing report	S, D	S, D			S, D	
Digitization statistics	S, D				S, D	
User surveys				S, I	S, I	
User testing				F, D	F,D	
Wayfinding user survey				S, I		
Website analytics		S, I		S, I	S, I	
Gate Count				S, D		
Library classroom usage study				S, I	S, I	
Note. F= formative assessment, S= summative assessment, D= direct assessment, and I= indirect assessment						

Explanation of Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
UNIV 105 pre- and post-test	This test measures student learning by comparing how information literate students were before UNIV 105 (pre-test) and after (post-test).	A 30% increase in learning from pre- to post-test.	Each semester with each running section of UNIV 105.	UNIV 105 instructor
Student surveys of FY comp library sessions	This survey measures how students perceive the effectiveness of the library instruction session.	At least 85% of students who complete the survey will strongly agree that the session helped them feel more comfortable using the library.	Every spring semester, during a random sample of ENG 104 sections.	Coordinator of Library Instruction
Reference transactions statistics	This statistics report measures the type and quantity of reference questions that take place at all the Reference Desks. It includes desks at the Special Collections and the Regional History Center and University Archives	Used to measure volume. A comparison of yearly data will also help to identify trends and can help inform decisions regarding promotion of services and scheduling.	Four times during the year for one week.	Head, Reference and Research
Reference interaction survey	This survey assesses patron satisfaction with reference help.	At least 85% of patrons who complete the survey will strongly agree that they were satisfied with the level of reference service.	Every other year for one semester.	Head, Reference and Research

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
Collection development analysis	The formula for the distribution of funds for monographs is subject to scrutiny to determine how effectively it is implemented	Variation between the ideal and the budgeted distribution would be no more or less than 5%, and no more or less than 7% compared to the expenditures occurred on any given line	Every two years	Associate Dean for Collections and Technical Services
User satisfaction survey	This survey measures the satisfaction level of user interactions at each of the Public Services desks or service points.	At least 85% of all users will report "strongly agree" or "agree" to satisfaction statements on the survey.	Every three years (2014, 2017, 2020, etc.)	Associate Dean for Public Services
Missing items reports	This Voyager catalog system report lists all items that have a "missing" status, indicating that they have been searched for and were not found.	The report will indicate a trend downward in the number of items listed as "missing" in the catalog.	Annually, during the summer.	Head of Access Services
Faculty reserve satisfaction survey	Faculty who have placed items on print or electronic reserve will be surveyed to determine their level of satisfaction with the service.	At least 90% of faculty who use reserve services will respond that they are satisfied or highly satisfied with the service	Annually, during the spring semester.	Head of User Services
Processing time for Interlibrary Loan requests	The average time between patron request submission and processing of the request in ILLIAD will be monitored.	The average time between request submission and processing will remain steady or decrease.	Annually, during the summer	Head of Information Delivery Services

Assessment Method	Explanation		
	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
Turnaround time analysis	This analysis will measure how long it takes to make new materials available to library users, from order to shelf-ready	To make new materials discoverable within 30 days of request	Every five years Aug.-Nov.	Head of Technical Services Dept.
Metadata review	This review will evaluate metadata in the digital repository for completeness, accuracy, conformance to expectations, and logical consistency	90% accuracy	Once a year in February	Head of Technical Services Dept.
Collections processing report	This report will evaluate the number of collections in the regional collections and university archives that have been processed and open to the public for use.	Used to measure volume. The statistics will help determine the rate of processing and may compare this to the rate of acquisition.	Annually, at end of fiscal year	Director of Regional History Center and the Head, Special Collections Dept.
Digitization statistics	These statistics demonstrate how both the digital collections repository and Huskie Commons institutional repository are growing over time.	Used to measure volume and growth of digital collections.	Annually	Digital Collections Curator
User surveys	Surveys can be devised that show how patrons are using websites and related digital resources.	At least 90% of those who use the sites will respond that they are satisfied or highly satisfied.	Annually	Digital Collections Curator
User testing	Tests can be devised to allow users to test the functionality/navigability of websites, and provide feedback on how we can improve the usability of these resources.	At least 90% of those who use the sites will respond that they are satisfied or highly satisfied.	Annually	Digital Collections Curator
Wayfinding user survey	Perform a survey of users accessing Library wayfinding tools (kiosks, maps on website) targeted at understanding their perception and usefulness	Receive a majority positive result	Quarterly	Operations Support Supervisor - Support Services

Assessment Method	Explanation			
	Description	Assessment-Level Target [a]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible
Website analytics	Web analytics tools will report the number of new and all visitors to the University Libraries webpage. These detailed statistics track the use of all websites managed by the department, and show which collections and items are being utilized the most.	An increase of 5% will be reported in 2016 over 2015, with a general upward trend afterwards.	Monthly cumulative Annually, in June	Associate Dean for Technology Initiatives and Support Services
Gate count	Count of individuals entering Founders Memorial Library	5% increase in 2016 over 2015, and a steady or upward trend thereafter.	Four times during the year.	Security/Facilities
Library classroom usage study	Track usage of Rooms 202, 293 and 297 by type of faculty (Library or Teaching) to ensure that University Libraries are providing adequate space for Information Literacy Instruction.	Maintain a majority of use by Library Faculty.	Annually.	Associate Dean for Public Services and the Coordinator for Library Instruction

APPENDIX A

University Libraries Strategic Plan Mission, Goals and Objectives

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Goals and Objectives

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>   Objective D: Support research and scholarship.
>   Objective E: Strengthen the Libraries' support of research and training by improving budget sustainability.
>   Objective F: Acquire and curate research materials to support teaching and learning.
>   Objective H: Collect, preserve, and provide access to the University's digital and intellectual assets (e.g. theses, dissertations, published pre-prints and post-prints, and data sets) and ensure long-term access to unique collections.

Goal 2: Develop and Strengthen Campus and Community Relations.
Develop comprehensive communication mechanisms that connect the Libraries to stakeholder groups across campus, the community, and the globe. Foster internal communication strategies that will enable the Libraries to flourish and become a thriving community at NIU.
>   Objective A: Improve marketing capabilities and efforts for University Libraries.
>   Objective B: Broaden outreach strategies across the NIU campus with specific emphasis on first and second year retention and the local community. Objective #2: Broaden outreach strategies across the NIU campus with specific emphasis on first and second year retention and the local community.
>   Objective H: Collect, preserve, and provide access to the University's digital and intellectual assets (e.g. theses, dissertations, published pre-prints and post-prints, and data sets) and ensure long-term access to unique collections.
>   Objective L: Govern all aspects of the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical and human resources.

Goal 3: Transparently and Ethically Administrate the University Libraries' Financial, Human, and Physical Resources.
The Dean and management team will proudly champion the NIU Core Value of ethically inspired leadership by effectively and transparently overseeing all aspects of the University Libraries.
>   Objective E: Strengthen the Libraries' support of research and training by improving budget sustainability.
>   Objective K: Promote an organizational environment that encourages leadership, participation in formal and informal learning opportunities and professional development.
>   Objective L: Govern all aspects of the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical and human resources.

Goal 4: Provide an Inviting Environment with Suitable Spaces for Study, Collaboration, Discovery, and Access.

As an intellectual commons for the University community, the University Libraries provide study and learning spaces for individuals and groups involved in projects and continuous learning, bringing students, academics, and the world together.

> Objective G: Standardize and simplify web page access and the organization of online resources.
> Objective H: Collect, preserve, and provide access to the University's digital and intellectual assets (e.g. theses, dissertations, published pre-prints and post-prints, and data sets) and ensure long-term access to unique collections.
> Objective J: Update and maintain the physical environment of the Libraries in order to promote learning through effective usage of library materials and space.
> Objective L: Govern all aspects of the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical and human resources.

Goal 5: Support Student and Faculty Success through Instructional Programs and Research Support.
Increase the reach of the Libraries' support of teaching and research in support of career and life-long learning goals, with the aim of helping students and faculty to achieve fulfilling careers and make meaningful contributions to our changing world.

> Objective C: Work with teaching faculty to integrate library instruction into regular class time and facilitate high-quality information literacy and bibliographic instruction session to NIU students.
> Objective D: Support research and scholarship.
> Objective E: Strengthen the Libraries' support of research and training by improving budget sustainability.
> Objective F: Acquire and curate research materials to support teaching and learning.
> Objective G: Standardize and simplify webpage access and the organization of online resources.
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> Objective J: Update and maintain the physical environment of the Libraries in order to promote learning through effective usage of library materials and space.
> Objective L: Govern all aspects of the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical and human resources.

Goal 6: Employ responsive, sustainable, and innovative uses of technology.
The University Libraries create and maintain access to a variety of digital services and resources in support of teaching and research that depend on a reliable, secure, and forward-looking technological infrastructure.

> Objective I: Maintain and enhance a sustainable technological infrastructure responsive to the Libraries' user communities.
> Objective J: Update and maintain the physical environment of the Libraries in order to promote learning through effective usage of library materials and space.
> Objective L: Govern all aspects of the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical and human resources.

2015 Strategic Plan Objectives

Objective A:
Improve marketing capabilities and efforts for University Libraries.

Objective B:
Broaden outreach strategies across the NIU campus with specific emphasis on first and second year retention and the local community.

Objective C:
Strengthen collaborations with teaching faculty to integrate library instruction into regular class time and facilitate high-quality information literacy and bibliographic instruction sessions to NIU students.

Objective D:
Continue to support research and scholarship by expanding access to collections and services.

Objective E:
Strengthen the long-term financial sustainability of the University Libraries.

Objective F:
Acquire and curate research materials that continue to align with curricular foci and institutional strengths.

Objective G:
Standardize and simplify the access and organization of online resources.

Objective H:
Increase efforts to collect, preserve, and provide access to the University's digital and intellectual assets (e.g. theses, dissertations, published pre-prints and post-prints, and data sets) and ensure long-term access to unique collections.

Objective I:
Maintain and enhance a sustainable technological infrastructure responsive to the Libraries' user communities.

Objective J:
Update and maintain the physical environment of the Libraries in order to promote learning through effective usage of library materials and space.

Objective K:
Promote an organizational environment that encourages leadership, participation in formal and informal learning opportunities, and professional development.

Objective L:
Govern the Libraries efficiently and transparently to maximize the effective use of financial, physical, and human resources.