

Partnering with Librarians: Collaborating as MLIS Students

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After completing this course, we have identified FOUR essential questions to ask in order to discover the VALUE, IMPACT and ROI of a library:

Who counts at your institution?

To understand library impact at your institution, identify institutional and library stakeholders.

Do you know what they want?

Identify Institutional Focus Areas relevant to the institution that your library supports. This redefines library value in the context of institutional needs, goals, and outcomes.

What data will you gather?

Perform mixed-methods assessment, or triangulate data with quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal data.

What will you do with your findings?

Communicating and implementing your findings are essential pieces of the process.

One instructor and 13 students participated in this online class through Syracuse University.

Host librarians were approached by students, and participating librarians agreed to devote 1-3 hours/week with students.

Exercises in *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit* by Megan Oakleaf, and weekly discussions between students composed the bulk of the content.

Although each student was partnered with a different library, discussions between students enabled each of us to think more deeply about Value, Impact and ROI.

As an outsider to the library, we brought fresh perspectives, ideas and insights that insiders may not have realized.

If you recruit an intern or a student, consider a 2-semester (or 2-phase) internship or course.

While we were able to make recommendations, most of us did not have an opportunity to implement our recommendations. This would be the ultimate experience for students, and would hopefully bring great things to the host library as well!

We enrolled in a course titled "Academic Libraries: Value, Impact and ROI" taught by Megan Oakleaf through Syracuse University.

Students partnered with librarians at a local college or university to tackle issues relating to the Value, Impact and Return on Investment (ROI) of the specific libraries that we were paired with.

Students collaborated with each other and partner librarians to explore and understand the issues around Value, Impact and ROI.

Students ended the semester with recommendations to their host librarian for addressing Value, Impact and ROI via a presentation and written report.

Although not an internship, the student-librarian relationship mirrored that of an internship for some.

Strong connections were made via collaborations with host librarians and fellow students.

Methods

Value, Impact, & ROI:
Our Perspective

Background

Outcomes

Gather Needed Tools

Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit by Megan Oakleaf is an excellent tool for organizing the process. Using this book can be especially beneficial by being honest and upfront.

Organize yourself: What are your skills? Identify your strengths. Engage yourself in professional development and/or recruit others to fill in where you need help.

Identify Stakeholders & Institutional Goals

Take your time to understand your stakeholders.

Make sure you are in constant communication with your stakeholders -- from beginning to end.

Start thinking about how what you are already doing aligns with your institution's mission, then show and tell!

Collaborate

Drum up groups of people at other institutions to do this with, form discussion groups.

Recruit an intern or volunteer who doesn't already work at your library.

If bringing in an outsider, commit when you have enough time, otherwise it won't work out as well.

Start collaborating, no matter how informal - start having those value discussions.

Remember it's a Process

Set aside specific time for the topic and DO IT.

Examine current data, collect qualitative and anecdotal data to back it up.

Be sure to build in breaks when you're NOT thinking about Value, Impact, & ROI.

This will not happen overnight - assessment, communicating library value, relationship building - everything takes time. Be patient!

Communicate Your Results

Triangulate quantitative data with qualitative and anecdotal data.

Engage stakeholders, build relationships via targeted messaging

Last piece of the assessment puzzle -- don't forget to communicate!

**What
is the value
of your
library?**

**Where do you
start in defining
what is
important
to your
community...**

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**...and what
data should
you gather
to show
your value?**

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