

Le Moyne College Assessment Report

Project completed as a requirement of IST 600 Academic Libraries: Value, Impact, & ROI

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Executive Summary

As institutions of higher education are increasingly called upon to prove their value, so are academic libraries. Libraries must be able to show that they contribute to the overall institutional goals and outcomes at all levels. Thus, libraries are moving away from measuring library-centric inputs, moving toward proving

“Impact: the difference or change in an individual or group resulting from the contact with library services.”

- Poll, 2012

their value by aligning themselves with user and institutional outcomes, and assessing their impact in these areas. Assessment allows the library to examine what students are and are not learning, reexamine how it teaches students and contributes to their learning, and demonstrates where the library is making an impact. The library functions as an educational unit on campus, and should be assessed as all other educational units are. It not only serves as a support function to various departments on campus, but also

plays an active part in the teaching, research, and learning activities of students and faculty. Assessment gathers evidence of the difference the library makes in these and other areas, and communicates this evidence to the world.

This report is a result of work completed for Syracuse University’s School of Information Studies course IST 600: Academic Libraries: Value, Impact, & ROI taught by Dr. Megan Oakleaf in the spring of 2014. The author worked alongside Kelly Delevan, the Instruction Services/CORE librarian, to examine the current state of the Noreen Reale Falcone Library’s value and impact at Le Moyne College. With the generous help of Ms. Delevan, the author completed activities and assignments in *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit* written by Dr. Oakleaf. These activities, research, and other coursework form the basis of this report and recommendations for the future.

This study investigated the current state of library services, expertise, resources, and assessment at the Noreen Reale Falcone Library. The results indicate that the Library is currently experiencing a growth in such programs as instruction and reference. Current assessment methods include collecting quantitative data on use, but this data does not accurately describe the impact of the Library on the institutional mission and goals. Data is communicated through several reports distributed to library and institutional administrators, but is not well communicated to other stakeholders.

A number of recommendations have been derived from the findings:

- It is recommended that the Library better align itself with institutional goals and outcomes, and engage in radical collaboration with other campus units, faculty, and staff members in order to improve its services and assessment activities.
- This study concludes that using such methods as triangulating data or mixed-methods assessment techniques will have a greater effect on communicating the value and impact of library services, expertise, and resources. The report recommends that librarians continue to collect current data, but supplement it by collecting qualitative and anecdotal evidence.
- The library should create an aggressive communications and marketing campaign to communicate assessment results to its stakeholders. This includes developing stakeholder profiles with targeted messaging, timing communication campaigns, and developing a shared advocacy vocabulary.
- Finally, the report recommends that the library explore its involvement with higher education initiatives in order to further communicate library impact, especially on institutional brand.

Course Information

IST 600: *Academic Libraries: Value, Impact, & ROI*

Course Description

This course focuses on the issue of academic library value in the context of institutional or organizational mission. Although “value” can be defined in a variety of ways, course content will emphasize impact and return-on-investment perspectives. Learning activities will be “hands on”; students will identify partner librarians and apply course concepts to a specific academic library environment in order to explore value in a real world setting.

Student Learning Outcomes

In collaboration with partner librarians at a selected library site, students will:

- Rethink, refine, or redefine the value of a library within its institutional environment
- Identify and listen to institutional stakeholders
- Organize and manage new approaches to addressing library value
- Take action to assess, expand, and communicate library value in order to position a library as an increasingly valuable asset to its overarching institution

For questions about course content, please contact Dr. Megan Oakleaf at moakleaf@syr.edu

Current Situation

This section discusses the current make up of institutional and library focus in terms of stakeholders; institutional focus areas; services, resources, and expertise; assessment; and communication priorities. Current Library annual and strategic report documentation indicates the Library is experiencing growth, and has an especially strong instructional services component, made stronger by the implementation of the CORE curriculum in 2012. The Library collaborates with faculty members and campus units to provide this and other services to the campus community.

According to the Library's strategic plan in 2012, the Library has begun to develop a plan for assessment. Currently, assessment data is collected for various services, expertise, and resources, and is reported out through the annual SLA report. The data is comprised of quantitative and some qualitative evidence. According to the Instructional Services/CORE librarian, the Library is not prompted to submit statistics for program review, but it has collected and submitted data for the past two years. Library news is communicated through the Alphabytes Newsletter, which is distributed through a LibGuide and the College's news site.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the heart of the institution, and the groups on which the Library should focus its services, expertise and resources. Stakeholders have expectations that the Library as a campus institution will address their concerns and meet their needs on campus. Le Moyne College's main stakeholders are:

1. Students
2. Faculty
3. Student affairs
4. Institutional affairs
5. Administration

Within these five groups, five subgroups are identified in which the Library centers its attentions. The Library's services, expertise, and resources are geared toward helping these groups succeed. These directly relate to the Institutional Focus Areas mentioned in the next section. The five subgroups are:

1. First-year students
2. Tenured/tenure track faculty
3. Tutorial services
4. Educational assessment
5. Presidents/chancellors/provosts

Institutional Focus Areas

Institutional Focus Areas (IFAs) are the needs, goals and outcomes that are most important to the institution. These areas are highly relevant to the Library. If the Library more strategically emphasizes its contribution to these areas, it can better demonstrate its value and impact to the overall institution. The five most important IFAs for Le Moyne College are:

1. Student retention, completion, & graduation

2. Student learning outcomes
3. Faculty teaching
4. Institutional efficiencies
5. Institutional brand

Impactful services, expertise areas, & resources (SERs)

According to the 2012/2013 Library Strategic Plan, the Library is focused on creating the most impactful SERs within the collection, the library as space, reference and instruction services, and library equipment. The Annual Report highlights the library’s growth both physically and virtually over the past eight years. It has seen a 47% increase in students receiving information literacy instruction, and services such as interlibrary loan have also increased exponentially within the past six years.

Activities completed in *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit* highlight several other SERs that are making the most impact in the Library. For example, examining Library institutional documents indicate that the Personal Librarian Program has been an impactful resource for students. This activity enhances student-to-library relationships, effects students’ coursework, and allows librarians to deliver personalized services.

The CORE curriculum is another area where the library is succeeding in making an impact throughout the entire institution. An analysis of the CORE IV Curriculum Proposal and the OneLeMoyne strategic plan indicate an alignment between library information literacy services and institutional learning outcomes. Despite the fact that institutional learning outcomes do not yet exist, there is still a strong correlation between library information literacy outcomes and the language used in the aforementioned documents.

Le Moyne’s Learning Goals/ACRL Information Literacy Outcomes	Institutionally Relevant Learning Outcomes (Institutional Language)
Define an information need	Vigorously pursue academic excellence across all programs
Locate information	Support student research, develop relevant research skills, find evidence to support arguments
Evaluate information	Find evidence to support arguments; incorporate text into understanding of topic; understanding types of knowing hat are scientific/quantitative; analyze essays/articles
Use information	Develop communication skills including writing/oral expression; develop coherent argument; incorporate text into understanding of topic; creating artistic performance/work
Use information ethically and responsibly	

Table 1 Impact of Library’s Information Literacy Outcomes^{1,2}

¹ [CORE IV Proposal and Resolution](#)

² [OneLeMoyne](#)

Activity six in *The Impact Starter Kit* involved conducting a stakeholder help study with students in the library to determine what students thought were the most impactful SERs to them. The study took place in the library on a weeknight, and a survey was created in Google Docs. Responses were recorded in a separate [Google Doc](#). Students were asked to do three things:

- Remember the last time the library or a librarian helped you.
- What help did you get?
- What did that help enable you to do?

Ten students participated, and the responses identified the most frequently used SERs, and what students were able to do as a result of using the library. Students most frequently discussed reference transactions

“I couldn’t find an article on one website, and I was able to find it on a different site with the help of a librarian. This helped me to successfully write my paper.” – A sophomore biology student

in which they were taught how to use library online resources to find a database or specific article. Students received assistance locating books in the catalog, and using the library-created research guides. As a result, students were able to achieve various goals and outcomes including completing class research projects,

writing papers, using LibGuides created specifically for their course, and successfully learning skills such as searching library databases for their research.

Finally, Activity 26 in *The Impact Starter Kit* breaks down library SERs into an itemized and detailed list, and aligns them with IFAs. The author completed this chart with the Instructional Services/CORE Librarian. The task was to work through the impact map, decide which Library SERs coincide with Le Moyne’s IFAs, and determine if there is an impact relationship. The chart below is the work compiled for this activity. It indicates where the Library believes it is making an impact despite lack of evidence or assessment in this area. It also shows where the Library believes it is making an impact with evidence and communication of this impact. This chart can be used in further discussion of SERs, and how the library should proceed in collecting assessment data to demonstrate impact and value to the College and stakeholders.