

**Living the Future: Organizational Performance Assessment**

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**ABSTRACT.** *Organizational performance assessment is a practice-based framework that builds on the synergy between planning and assessment, and results in the discernment of impact and value. It promotes a set of practices that enable the library to effectively integrate planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development in order to advance the parent institution's mission. This paper discusses some foundations of organizational performance assessment, useful practices, and examples from libraries that are "living the future."*

**KEYWORDS** *organizational performance, strategy, planning, assessment, metrics, outcomes, value*

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## LIVING THE FUTURE

In 1996, a brochure announcing a very different kind of library conference made its way to desks throughout research libraries. “Living the Future: Process Improvement & Organizational Change at The University of Arizona Library” was the most intriguing conference title in ages. Approximately 130 librarians attended presentations given by more than 60 Arizona staff and consultants who had been responding to this challenge from Dean of Libraries Carla Stoffle: “If we were creating an academic library today, knowing what we know now, how would we organize ourselves and our work activities to ensure that the library is actively contributing to the achievement of institutional goals?” (Stoffle, Renaud, & Veldorf, 1996, p. 219). Stoffle and colleagues advocated that:

Libraries must ... build into their organizational structures and their approaches to work, the ability to identify, anticipate, and quickly respond to constantly changing customer needs ... they must be ready to abandon formerly successful approaches to work, strategies, processing systems, services, and products that do not continually prove their value to customers. ... A basic rethinking of the mission, values, and assumptions under which library personnel work and plan is necessary. (Stoffle et al., 1996, pp. 213–214)

Thus began a series of biennial Living the Future (LTF) conferences, which provided an opportunity to learn from Arizona’s experience and also from an increasing number of staff at other academic libraries that were deeply involved in creating team-based, user-centered, flattened hierarchical structures and other organizational change initiatives. The seeds of various

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components of organizational performance assessment can be found in a variety of LTF conference presentations over the years, such as:

- Data-based approach to strategic long-range planning;
- Meeting the university mission;
- Mission-driven strategies;
- Strategic business management;
- Assessment of customer satisfaction;
- Surveying library users;
- Performance measurement and evaluation;
- Using the Malcolm Baldrige criteria; and
- The Balanced Scorecard. (University of Arizona Libraries, n.d.)

Among the presentations with the strongest impact was “Building a Culture of Assessment in Academic Libraries,” which underscored the critical importance of establishing the link between assessment and organizational development. This theory was reinforced in a workshop developed by Amos Lakos and Shelley Phipps and in their subsequent research, defining a culture of assessment as “an organizational environment in which decisions are based on facts, research, and analysis, and where services are planned and delivered in ways that maximize positive outcomes and impacts for customers and stakeholders” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004, p. 352).

These leaders maintained:

In order to survive and succeed in the present environment the following need to be embedded in library cultures: a belief in the need for continuous learning, an assumption that all decision-making needs to be strategic, a commitment to the

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necessity of prioritization of the allocation of scarce resources, and a demonstration of the value of public organizational and individual accountability. Libraries have to be engaged in strategic planning. ... Assessment cannot be seen as a separate 'management activity' but must be appreciated and valued by all members of the culture and assumed to be part of their regular work. (Lakos & Phipps, 2004, p. 351)

The series of Living the Future conferences revealed the links between planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development.

Over the 15 years that Living the Future evolved as a succession of conferences, academic and research libraries were increasing their attention to planning and assessment practices. An Association of Research Libraries (ARL) SPEC Kit issued in 1995 indicated that 40% of ARL libraries (47 out of the then 119 members) had produced a written strategic plan within the past five years (Clement, 1995, flyer). By 2010, a study of planning documents publicly shared by ARL university libraries found that 92% (104 out of the then 113 ARL university libraries) had strategic plan elements (e.g., mission, vision, values) and/or strategic directions and goals (e.g., complete strategic plans) publicly available; only nine ARL university libraries did not appear to have a current plan or did not make any of the products of their planning processes publicly accessible (Bowlby, 2010, n.p.). The development of library assessment initiatives over this time period is especially notable.

Another ARL survey, conducted in May 2007, found that of the 73 responding libraries (60% of ARL members) "only one library indicated that it did not engage in any assessment activities beyond collecting annual data for the ARL statistics ... [whereas] the 'typical' library

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assessment programs began in the 1990s and engage in various assessment activities” (Wright & White, 2007, p. 14). Despite the growth in both planning and assessment efforts in all types of academic and research libraries, these have, for the most part, been independent and uncoordinated efforts; the 2010 study of ARL libraries indicates that only 20% of university member libraries (23 libraries) link assessment with planning (Bowlby, 2010, n.p.).

Organizational performance assessment represents a progression from independent and often-uncoordinated efforts in library assessment and strategic planning to the development of integrated organizational performance practices that can better align and focus planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development within academic and research libraries. Even more than in the mid-1990s, there is a recognition that academic institutions and their libraries will have to make difficult choices during the next decade due to challenging financial conditions; rapid changes in educational, informational, and technological methods and resources; and the continual development of new approaches for teaching, learning, research, and clinical care. All of these factors directly impact the library environment. Stakeholders also have become more insistent on greater accountability in higher education and want evidence of efficiency and effectiveness. As noted by Dugan, Hernon, and Nitecki (2009), “To stakeholders wanting greater accountability, assessment and evaluation measure how the institution, college or school, program, or course adds value to the education and experience that students receive and prepares them for future careers” (p. 46). These authors go on to state:

Assessment is a process of measuring efficiency, effectiveness, and performance to learn if an institution achieves its stated mission and goals. . . . Relevant information is gathered, and the interpretation and analysis of evidence provide insights into the congruence between the institution’s stated mission, purposes,

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and objectives, and the actual outcomes expounded by institutional programs and activities. Assessment findings inform decision making and guide strategic planning. . . . As an ongoing process, assessment activities are applied to measure progress, guarantee that progress is sustained, and ensure that the changes and improvements implemented are effective. Findings are conveyed to the various stakeholders. (Dugan, Herson, & Nitecki, 2009, p. 48)

Ultimately, then, within this context, libraries must be able to report—with quantitative measures and qualitative assessment—that they make a critical contribution to the institution’s core mission. This is the work of organizational performance assessment. Like any other assessment, it is not an end in itself, but rather a means; that is, a means to effective organizational performance. Organizational performance assessment focuses on the system or set of practices that will guide organizations in “living the future” within an environment of constant change and uncertainty. The key to these practices is integration and alignment—of the library with the parent institution, of planning with strategy, of assessment with planning, and of organizational development with assessment.

### FOUNDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The foundations for organizational performance assessment in academic libraries can be found in multiple initiatives that developed during the same time frame as the Living the Future conferences. Indeed, there is a progression of efforts from the 1990s to today that laid the groundwork for organizational performance assessment; these efforts provide useful resources

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that can be drawn upon by individual academic and research libraries as they evaluate organizational performance. Two prominent library associations were partners with the University of Arizona Libraries in sponsoring the series of LTF conferences and each of these contributed substantially to the evolution of organizational performance assessment. Indeed, multiple national and international library associations have developed standards, metrics, and guidelines to assist organizations in this transition. The overall trends in planning, strategy, assessment, and organizational development reflect a shift from an internal focus on the library to an outcomes-based focus on the library's impact on faculty and students and the library's value to the core mission of the parent institution.

### **The Association of College and Research Libraries**

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has been a leader in the movement toward organizational performance assessment. ACRL has long played a role in collecting and disseminating comparative library statistical information for institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada. Recently, the association has sponsored the development of *ACRLMetrics*, a new online service providing access to annual ACRL survey data, as well as the biennial *National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Academic Library Survey* data, in one convenient location. This tool “facilitates performance analysis and decision-making with peer benchmarking and customized reports” (Free, 2011, para. 2); it “supports strategic planning and advocacy efforts, complements budget presentations and grant applications, enables peer benchmarking, delivers multi-year trend analysis” (ACRL, 2011b, para. 3). ACRL's products are a resource in the academic library toolbox for performance measurement and assessment.

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Going beyond the collection and dissemination of statistics, by the time of the first LTF conference in 1996, ACRL recognized that a focus on input and output data was insufficient to measure performance. The association shifted its work to outcomes assessment, noting that:

Outcomes assessment is an integral part of the institutional effectiveness cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement of the plan. While libraries have traditionally maintained myriad output data (e.g., number of books circulated, number of items cataloged, number of reference questions answered), these data alone do not demonstrate whether the library's mission is being accomplished, and with what degree of quality. The purpose of outcomes assessment of academic libraries is to measure their quality and effectiveness, focusing on an organizational analysis of the library as a whole, and of its constituent activities and services, and the contributions they make to accomplishing the purposes of the university or college of which it is a part. It follows from this purpose that outcomes assessment must begin with an analysis of the parent organization's mission, goals, and objectives, and an identification of the elements of them that the library supports. Assessments should include all such elements: learning/teaching, research, service, administrative processes, and whatever other purposes the institution pursues. (ACRL, 1998, sec. III, para. 1)

This emphasis on institutional outcomes has been the topic of additional activity by the association. Recently, ACRL produced two significant contributions to the foundation of organizational performance assessment. The highly influential *Value of Academic Libraries* report (2010) issues a challenge that promises to change the way that libraries think about

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assessment. Report author Megan Oakleaf states that the report “emphasizes library value *within the context of overarching institutions*. ... It strives to help librarians understand, based on professional literature, the current answer to the question, ‘How does the library advance the missions of the institution?’ ” (ACRL, 2010, p. 11). Oakleaf urges libraries to “to link academic library outcomes to institutional outcomes related to the following areas: student enrollment, student retention and graduation rates, student success, student achievement, student learning, student engagement, faculty research productivity, faculty teaching, service, and overarching institutional quality” (ACRL, 2010, p. 12). Though daunting in its reach, by reframing the issues to transition libraries from being centered on the library to being centered on the institution’s mission and the desired outcomes for students and faculty, ACRL has helped shape an essential piece of the organizational performance assessment agenda.

ACRL reinforces Oakleaf’s call for change in academic and research library practices with a second recent initiative that supports organizational performance assessment—the 2011 draft of the *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*. As stated in the document’s introduction, the standards “are designed to guide academic libraries in advancing and sustaining their roles as partners in educating students, achieving their institutions’ missions, and positioning libraries as leaders in assessment and continuous improvement on their campuses. Libraries must demonstrate their value and document their contributions to overall institutional effectiveness and be prepared to address changes in higher education” (ACRL, 2011a, p. 1). Notably, the first principle, or standard, demonstrates the importance of the library’s integration and alignment with the parent institution and its core purpose: “Libraries define, develop, and measure outcomes that contribute to institutional effectiveness and apply findings for purposes of continuous improvement” (ACRL, 2011a, p. 5). This principle includes the following guidelines:

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- 1.1 Libraries define and measure outcomes in the context of institutional mission.
- 1.2 Libraries map outcomes to institutional, departmental, and student affairs outcomes.
- 1.3 Libraries develop outcomes that are aligned with accreditation guidelines for the institution.
- 1.4 Libraries develop a body of evidence that demonstrate its impact in convincing ways.
- 1.5 Libraries articulate how they contribute to student learning, collect evidence, document successes, share results, and make improvements.
- 1.6 Libraries contribute to student retention and academic success.
- 1.7 The library communicates with the campus community to highlight its value in the educational mission and in institutional effectiveness. (ACRL, 2011a, pp. 5–6)

Alignment with this first principle is a useful starting point for academic libraries committed to organizational performance assessment; all such libraries will find the new ACRL Standards a useful tool for examining the overall effectiveness of their performance.

### **The Association of Research Libraries**

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) has been another significant leader in the progress toward integrating planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development. Undoubtedly, ARL has a distinguished reputation for its work in collecting statistical data about its approximately 125 member libraries. Collected annually since the early 1960s, with the data from 1908 to 1962 now called the Gerould Statistics, this data set “represents the oldest and most comprehensive continuing library statistical series in North America” (Kyrillidou & Cook, 2008, p. 892). Yet, as noted by Hiller and Self (2004), “While these early statistics provide an

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invaluable record documenting the historical development of American academic research libraries, there is little evidence on how they were actually used to improve library management and decision-making” (p. 131). ARL has been responsive to the changing context of research libraries and the data collected have undergone changes over the years. Concurrent with the first Living the Future conference in 1996, ARL adopted a strategic objective to describe and measure “the performance of research libraries and their contributions to teaching, research, scholarship and community service” and “to expand beyond measures of ‘input’ (such as collection size, number of staff, expenditures, etc.) and to search for new kinds of measures of library performance and impact” (Kyrillidou & Crowe, 1998, p. 8).

ARL embarked on the New Measures Initiative promoting practices that would enable academic and research libraries “to develop measures that would better demonstrate libraries’ institutional value” (Blixrud, 2003, p. 1). ARL’s New Measures projects, resulting from a collaboration between the association, led by Duane Webster and Martha Kyrillidou, and member libraries, resulted in the StatsQUAL® gateway. This set of tools now includes ARL Statistics®; LibQUAL+®, a total market service quality assessment tool; DigiQUAL®, for assessment of services provided by digital libraries; MINES for Libraries®, for collection of data on the purpose of use of electronic resources and the demographics of users; and ClimateQUAL®, for assessing library staff perceptions concerning their library’s commitment to the principles of diversity, organizational policies and procedures, and staff attitudes (Franklin & Plum, 2004, 2006; Kyrillidou & Cook, 2008; Lowry & Hanges, 2008). The recently funded Values, Outcomes, and Return on Investment of Academic Libraries (“Lib-Value”) project, supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), partners ARL with the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and

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Syracuse University. The goal is to develop models and tools for calculating value and return on investment (ROI) in academic libraries, enabling libraries to demonstrate impact in financial terms that are often of interest to institutional stakeholders (Center for Information and Communication Studies, n.d.).

While each of these projects is notable, LibQUAL+® unarguably has had the greatest influence in moving academic libraries along a continuum from a focus on input and output statistics to a focus on performance. From the original leadership and research provided by Fred Heath, Colleen Cook, Bruce Thompson, and others at Texas A&M University (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2002)—eventually in partnership with ARL—LibQUAL+® has developed into a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users’ opinions of service quality. LibQUAL+® measures users’ perceptions and identifies gaps between minimum and desired expectations and the perceived performance provided by a given library, plus users submit valuable open-ended comments. LibQUAL+® has now been used by more than 1,200 libraries in 24 countries (David Green, personal communication, April 11, 2011). LibQUAL+®’s broad goals integrate both assessment and organizational development perspectives:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library service;
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality;
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time;
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions;
- Identify best practices in library service; and
- Enhance library staff members’ analytical skills for interpreting and acting on data.

(Kyrillidou, 2009, pp. 1–2)

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With an understanding of the importance of linking assessment and organizational development efforts, ARL's LibQUAL+® program includes training that helps academic librarians assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library. ARL also offers a five-day Service Quality Evaluation Academy program to “enhance the pool of librarians with advanced assessment skills by teaching quantitative and qualitative methods for assessing and improving outcomes and service quality” (Association of Research Libraries [ARL], n.d., para. 2). Libraries also can obtain assistance from ARL in understanding, mining, and utilizing the library's own LibQUAL+® survey results and incorporating the assessment with the library's other planning and organizational development practices.

ARL's organizational development efforts that are aligned with and complement the assessment initiatives have had a notable impact on academic libraries. Beginning in 2005, ARL launched a program that was eventually known as “Effective, Sustainable, and Practical Assessment,” which catapulted the establishment of coordinated assessment activities in academic libraries. Steve Hiller and Jim Self, working with Martha Kyrillidou, made evaluative visits to 42 libraries to assist in developing assessment programs that demonstrate the libraries' contributions to teaching, learning, and research. In particular, they emphasized the importance of the integration of assessment and organizational development, noting that “there are steps that can be taken to provide a library organizational infrastructure and culture that is more receptive and supportive of good data acquisition, analysis, presentation and use” (Hiller, Kyrillidou, & Self, 2008, p.229) and stressing that “leadership direction and support combined with a customer-centered organizational culture are the foundations for effective assessment and informed decision making” (Hiller, Kyrillidou, & Self, 2008, p.229). These leaders, with the support of their institutions, also collaborated in sponsoring the highly successful series of

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Library Assessment Conferences that by 2010 attracted 470 attendees and turned away many more (ARL, 2010, n.p.). Recently, ARL announced a successor program named OPAL—Organizational Performance Assessment for Libraries. This consulting service is designed to help academic libraries effectively integrate planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development within the organization so that ultimately the library will be well prepared to demonstrate its value in advancing the institution. OPAL underscores the integration of planning and assessment with an organizational development component, emphasizing the need for libraries to “create strategic capacity within [the] organization by cultivating senior library leaders to integrate strategy and performance and by assisting middle managers to focus more on what’s strategic and less on on-going operations ... and facilitate the understanding of [the] staff about the link between strategy and performance” (ARL, 2011b, para. 6). Many academic and research libraries benefit from the robust ARL Statistics and Assessment Program, which continues to provide research and tools and to support practices that enable libraries to engage in organizational performance assessment.

## **National and International Standards and Metrics**

Beyond what can be covered here, there certainly are many other efforts that have contributed to laying the groundwork for organizational performance assessment in the past two decades and that offer resources that can assist academic and research libraries in identifying useful performance measures. For example, the International Organization for Standardization has established a set of performance indicators for user satisfaction, public services, and technical services (ISO FDIS 11620, 2008). As described by Carbone (1995),

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Performance evaluation is more and more necessary for libraries acting in a competitive environment and obliged to prove their usefulness to their users and to the authorities. ... The choice of indicators that are the most appropriate to each situation depends on the objectives assigned to the individual library. The performance indicators are integrated in a global process of planning and management; they are aimed at facilitating the dialogue between librarians, users and funders, and they form a decision-making tool. (p. 274)

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) developed international guidelines for performance measurement with a focus on measuring effectiveness and on user-oriented indicators. One goal of the IFLA guidelines was “to promote acceptance of performance measurement as an important tool for effective management” (te Boekhorst, 1995, p. 278). A benchmarking project that ranks academic libraries on a national basis, known as “BIX—the library index,” has been developed by the German Library Association (DBV). The BIX ranking for academic libraries is devised from measures of resources/infrastructure, usage, efficiency, and development (German Library Association, 2010). “Though cumulating into a very condensed result—the ranking itself—the BIX offers participating libraries a broad basis for comparison. A benchmarking-type orientation based on the principle of best practice makes it possible to initiate discussion and decision-making processes and thereby improve the communication between libraries and their funders through a transparent presentation of performance” (Poll & te Boekhorst, 1996, p. 62).

Another noteworthy international project is the work of the Society of College, National, and University Libraries (SCONUL), a membership organization for libraries in higher education

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and national libraries across the United Kingdom and Ireland. SCONUL provides a toolkit of research, data, measurement techniques, and instruments in the field of library performance measurement so that libraries may demonstrate the contribution and worth of their services to institutional stakeholders. Resources organized for SCONUL's web-based performance portal include:

- Frameworks, such as the European Framework for Quality Management and key performance indicators;
- Impact, with information on learning and teaching, including information literacy measurement;
- Quality, including Customer Service Excellence (the successor to Charter Mark, the UK Government's national standard for excellence in customer service), Investors in People, and LibQUAL+® and SCONUL satisfaction surveys;
- Statistics, such as SCONUL statistics material and services and reference to the UK Higher Education Library Management Statistics (HELMS) statistical publications; and
- Value, including contingent valuation and transparency costing. (Town, 2007, p. 103)

Internationally, academic and research libraries are conducting research and applying a variety of practices around organizational performance assessment that can serve as models and resources for other organizations.

Finally, academic libraries are not alone in their growing attention to effective organizational performance; rather, the developments in libraries have taken place within the broader higher education context, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Yet one significant factor that bears mention is the influence of accreditation, the process of external quality review

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where, increasingly over the past two decades, the emphasis has been on qualitative and quantitative measures of student performance and achievement. With interest from the U.S. Department of Education and many legislators, there is likely to be increased pressure on colleges and universities to measure and report more “outcomes” rather than “input” data about their success in educating students. Higher education institutions are actively creating a wide range of assessment systems to provide accreditation agencies with the outcome evidence required to show that accreditation standards have been met. Miller (2007) outlines seven areas of organizational performance—effectiveness, productivity, quality, customer and stakeholder satisfaction, efficiency, and innovation—being used by colleges and universities (p. 130). The National Association of College and University Business Officers recently published *Integrating Planning, Assessment, and Improvement in Higher Education*, which “introduces a five-step model used for integrating planning, assessment, and improvement, and includes data sources and tools” (Sherlock, 2009, p. 3). Academic and research libraries, through the recommended practices and tools provided by various organizations and through their individual efforts, are working to align and integrate their practices in planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development.

### LIBRARIES ‘LIVING THE FUTURE’ WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

As noted earlier, organizational performance assessment involves the interplay of a number of organizational practices with integration and alignment—of the library with the parent institution, of planning with strategy, of assessment with planning, of organizational

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development with assessment. What practices are libraries employing to fully realize this integration and alignment?

Dillon (2008) emphasizes the starting point for all academic library organizational performance assessment in a compellingly simple yet direct way:

The academic library is tied to the academic mission of the university ... the ability to engage in the most fundamental way with the mission of a university will define the importance of academic librarianship in the future. ... For those of us in research universities, the point can be made succinctly: libraries must enable and accelerate learning and discovery. Only by understanding this essential component of the university's goal can we steer a path through the ambiguities of the future ... libraries cannot thrive without aligning their workings directly to the core mission of their host institutions. (pp. 53–57)

A key starting point in effective organizational performance assessment, then, is to frame the library's mission so that it is deeply integrated with the university's mission. This is not simply starting the library's mission statement with the phrase "In support of the University's mission, the XYZ Library is ..." Rather, it starts with rethinking the library's *raison d'être* in terms of the university's core purposes and desired outcomes. Two example mission statements reflect this fundamental shift:

- "The mission of the Purdue University Libraries is to foster a dynamic information environment that advances learning, discovery, and engagement." (Purdue University Libraries, 2006, para. 11)

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- “The UW Libraries advances intellectual discovery and enriches the quality of life by connecting people with knowledge.” (University of Washington Libraries, 2011b, para. 1)

Aside from reconceiving one’s mission in terms of the parent institution’s, a library’s strategies and goals need to be integrated and aligned with those of the university. This also requires a focus outside of the library on the core functions of the academy. Rather than a strategic plan with initiatives organized around “collections,” “access,” “service,” and “facilities,” for example, the library can construct its goals around key university strategic directions in alignment with the campus academic plan. University libraries that have shifted their strategic focus from an internal view of the library to a broader view of the campus and aligned their strategic plans accordingly include the examples in Table 1.

[insert Table 1 here]

Organizational performance assessment requires the library to consider how its goals and objectives are aligned with the institutional mission and with the core activities of teaching, learning, research, scholarship, clinical care, and community service engaged in by faculty, students, researchers, clinicians, and other customers.

Another critical component is the full integration and alignment of the organization’s practices for planning and assessment. Library efforts in these areas need to shift from being mutually independent to be intentionally intersecting, informing each other in a dynamic way. Several academic and research libraries actually embed measures within their strategic plans,

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including *The University of Arizona Libraries and Center for Creative Photography Strategic Plan FY 2009–2013*, which specifies performance measures and quality standards; the *University of Calgary 2009–2014 Business Plan*, which includes both performance measures and performance targets; and *The University of Connecticut Libraries Plan 2009–2014*, which presents metrics indicating the (baseline) measure and the 2014 goal (see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 here]

These examples show how libraries demonstrate the intention to measure progress, particularly in terms of outcomes for faculty and students.

Possibly the most robust practice for integrating and aligning planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development is found in the use of the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). Originated by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in the early 1990s, the Balanced Scorecard started as a performance measurement framework but has since evolved to a full strategic planning and management system. BSC outlines four perspectives in which to generate strategic objectives:

- the financial perspective, which is “balanced” by
- the customer perspective, strategies for creating value from the perspective of the customer;
- the internal process perspective, the strategies for the business processes in which the organization has to excel to create customer and stakeholder satisfaction; and
- the organizational learning and growth perspective, the strategies that enable the organization to change, innovate, and grow.

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Kaplan (2001) explains why the Balanced Scorecard, originally designed for business use, is equally appropriate for mission-driven organizations:

In my experience, nonprofits have considerable difficulty in clearly defining their strategy. I have seen ‘strategy’ documents that run upwards of fifty pages. And most of the documents, once the mission and vision are articulated, consist of lists of programs and initiatives rather than the outcomes the organization is trying to achieve. Such organizations, when implementing a performance measurement system, typically measure progress in achieving milestones on their initiatives. This is backwards. Initiatives should exist to help the organization achieve its strategic objectives. They are means, not ends. Strategy and performance measurement should focus on what output and outcomes the organization intends to achieve, not what programs and initiatives are being implemented. (p. 358)

A characteristic in effective organizational performance assessment is the nature of the library’s strategies and initiatives, or goals. The library’s strategies need to articulate what the library intends to do and to signify what it does not intend to do. The library needs to focus its initiatives on its strategic intent rather than to generate a “wish list” of goals, of ideas contributed from individuals throughout the organization—some doable and others that may sound good but are unlikely to be accomplished.

Several academic and research libraries adopted the Balanced Scorecard framework to align and integrate planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development. A Library Scorecard Pilot project, initiated by the Association of Research Libraries, involved

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the Johns Hopkins University Libraries, the McMaster University Library, the University of Virginia Library, and the University of Washington Libraries with consulting assistance from Ascendant Strategy Management Group during 2009–2010 (Kyrillidou, 2010). Characteristic of other ARL initiatives, key elements of organizational development were embedded in the pilot project. A small group of participants from these libraries learned and worked collaboratively together; the cohort approach enabled these staff to share experiences and support each other. Each library, however, independently developed strategies in the four perspectives, captured in a “strategy map,” outlined a set of “initiatives,” and created a “scorecard.” In addition to these products, the process itself gave the participating libraries a set of practices to utilize to shift the focus of the library to be more aligned with the institution, to be more strategic, and to understand the library’s impact and value for users (Lewis, Hiller, Mengel, & Tolson, 2010). As noted by Matthews (2008), “The real value of the scorecard will emerge as it is integrated into the life of the library. The scorecard will be a focal point of discussion within departmental and other group meetings in the library. It will also be a topic of conversation among the library’s management team when they meet with the library funding decision makers” (p. 81). The sum of these Balanced Scorecard efforts demonstrates integration and alignment between the library and the institution and among planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development.

Recently libraries at both McMaster University (McM U) and the University of Washington (UW) released the planning and strategy documents that will guide their organizational performance in the coming years. Some examples of strategies determined by these two libraries, from each of the Balanced Scorecard perspectives, include:

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### Customer perspective:

- “Create world-class teaching & learning spaces” (McM U)
- “Improve discovery of and access to scholarly resources” (McM U)
- “Enhance UW teaching and learning” (UW)
- “Advance UW research and scholarship” (UW)
- “Provide productive and engaging library spaces” (UW)

### Business Process perspective:

- “Apply and assess new subject librarian framework” (UW)
- “Realign online and print services support” (UW)
- “Review and revise collections and digitization strategies” (UW)

### Learning and Growth perspective:

- “Grow an evidence-based culture that encourages innovation and risk taking” (McM U)
- “Develop highly-trained, technologically-fluent superlative staff” (McM U)

### Financial perspective:

- “Develop a sustainable academic business plan” (UW)
- “Evaluate one library three campus model” (UW)

(McMaster University Library, 2010b, p. 2; University of Washington Libraries, 2011a, n.p.)

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Following the articulation of customer, business process, organizational, and financial strategies, the libraries using the Balanced Scorecard outlined a limited number of key initiatives to enact each strategy. McMaster named 13 initiatives for 2011–2012, such as:

- “Conduct a broad-based audit of the Library’s facilities and practices to ensure compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*”;
- “Secure broad-based campus support and use of the Institutional Repository”;
- “Create an enhanced web presence for library development to encourage and facilitate donations”; and
- “Identify and cost approaches for reducing the footprint of the Library’s physical collections.” (McMaster University Library, 2010a, n.p.)

As described by Balanced Scorecard founders Kaplan and Norton, initiatives arise out of the gap between the organization’s measure of current performance on its strategies and the “target” level of each measure that the library has to achieve to be successful in meeting the desired outcomes embedded in its strategies. BSC performance measures—entirely aligned with the main strategic objectives—reveal to what extent the organization is meeting its strategic intent. As often quoted, Kaplan and Norton emphasize that “what you measure is what you get” (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, p. 71) and, with the Balanced Scorecard, “the measurement system has shifted the organization’s focus from programs and initiatives to the outcomes the programs and initiatives are supposed to accomplish” (Kaplan, 2001, p. 369).

For academic and research libraries engaged in organizational performance assessment, identification and monitoring of metrics that align with mission and strategy are essential. A library needs to designate the critical few measures that support its plan, ideally metrics that

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focus on outcomes, impact, and value. In most cases, this means moving beyond merely collecting statistics of input and output measures. In *Scorecards for Results: A Guide for Developing a Library Balanced Scorecard*, Matthews (2008) underscores the intent of the measurement practices of organizational performance assessment:

Primarily for historical reasons, the vast majority of libraries collect a plethora of internally focused performance measures and statistical information. Some of these measures are reported to the library's stakeholders, some are used to complete annual surveys required by various organizations, and sadly, many are gathered but then ignored. ... The goal ... [is to determine] what performance measures and metrics are important within a broader context of strategic planning and management. These important measures should focus on what defines the success of the library and shows the difference it makes in the lives of customers.

(p. 1)

Academic and research libraries undertake library assessment and make use of the standards, benchmarks, input and output statistics, and quality service and customer satisfaction measures provided or recommended by the associations and agencies described above. But libraries continue to struggle to identify the most appropriate measures for organizational performance assessment. A significant challenge for libraries today is to ensure that assessment efforts include outcomes tied to institutional mission and goals. There are many efforts under way; there is still much to be done. Although research suggests that LibQUAL+® is more of a satisfaction measurement than an outcomes measurement tool, the survey has five questions that focus on personal benefits to the user provided by the library:

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- The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest;
- The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work;
- The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work;
- The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information; and
- The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study.

(Thompson, Cook, & Kyrillidou, 2005)

Another positive example of identifying measures of impact and value is provided by the University of Washington Libraries' locally administered survey, in which faculty are asked to respond to questions such as:

What contribution does the UW Libraries make to your:

- Keeping current in your field;
- Finding information in related fields or new areas;
- Being a more productive researcher;
- Being a more effective instructor;
- Enriching student learning experiences;
- Helping you make more efficient use of your time; and
- Recruiting colleagues and students to UW.

Rate the importance of the following abilities to student success in your program AND your assessment of student performance in these areas (for undergraduates):

- Developing and refining research topics;
- Finding scholarly or other appropriate information;

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- Evaluating information sources critically;
- Using information ethically (e.g., avoiding plagiarism); and
- Working in groups with other students. (University of Washington Libraries, 2010)

As these examples show, organizational performance assessment shifts the focus from looking internally to measuring the library's contributions to and effect on the institution and the pursuits of faculty and students.

A new development in colleges and universities may soon heighten the need for academic and research libraries to become proficient with performance measures. Already under way in the United Kingdom and Canada, and with significant interest among government agencies in the U.S., the trend toward activity-based (ABB) or performance-based (PBB) budgeting is being embraced by many American public universities. "There is no one single definition of performance-based budgeting (PBB). A review of the literature does, however, suggest what it means commonly ... the allocation of funds to achieve programmatic goals and objectives as well as some indication or measurement of work, efficiency, and/or effectiveness" (Young, 2003, p. 12). As described by one university, "ABB is a method of budgeting in which the activities that incur costs in every functional area are accounted for, analyzed, and then linked to the mission and strategic goals of the institution. The full costs of programs and services are then more transparent and available to help with planning, budgeting and decision making" (University of Washington Office of the Vice Provost, 2011, para. 1). Application of this budgeting methodology will likely require the library to articulate and evaluate specific programmatic initiatives—what they are, how they relate to institutional mission, the impact on

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various constituencies, and the associated costs, so that decisions can be made that link resources to value and impact. Reports of the adoption of activity- or performance-based budgeting processes in colleges and universities are increasing and libraries in such institutions will need to integrate their own planning and assessment with those of the parent institution, and align resource allocation practices accordingly.

Possibly the pinnacle of an integrated approach to organizational performance management is found in the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of the U.S. Commerce Department. The program administers the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award that was created by Public Law 100-107 in 1987 and named for a former Secretary of Commerce. Criteria for high-quality performance are defined in seven “categories”; these are described by Wilson, del Tufo, and Norman (2008), who implemented the Baldrige framework for the Delaware State Library:

In order for an organization to increase customer satisfaction, to improve customer loyalty, and to continue to bring in new customers (Category 3 – Customer Focus), there must be a system-wide effort to develop a well thought-out organizational strategy (Category 2 – Strategic Plan). . . . Motivated and highly trained employees are the ones who implement the plan since they are the ones who work closest to the process and know what needs to be done (Category 5 – Human Resources). . . . Organizations manage their knowledge base through the use of technology and a system wide communication plan (Category 4 – Knowledge Management). How will the strategic plan be carried out? The Baldrige way involves the use of efficient and effective processes that result in cost savings to the company and quality services to customers (Category 6 –

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Processes). ... The quality approach is to have performance measures in place to monitor outcomes and to continuously improve performance (Category 7 – Organizational Results). Most of all ... the Baldrige way says that the leader (Category 1 – Leadership) is the major driver who provides direction, vision, and leadership. (Wilson, del Tufo, & Norman, p. 25)

Successful organizational performance is based upon a set of interconnected practices that link planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development; this integration and alignment are embedded in the Baldrige approach. In addition to the national award, state and regional Baldrige-based award programs use the criteria to advance organizational excellence at the local level.

The Emory University Libraries currently are exploring the use of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as a self-assessment framework and improvement tool (Bailey & Dale, 2010). The Vice Provost and Director of Libraries at Emory previously led the Los Alamos National Laboratory Research Library to receive two New Mexico quality awards in organizational performance excellence. Based on that experience, the Emory Libraries have multiple staff members learning about the Baldrige process. At this writing, the Associate Vice Provost is guiding the Emory Libraries' organizational performance excellence initiative, working with the Libraries' Senior Leadership to apply the framework and to craft the narrative for Categories 1 and 2, Leadership and Strategic Planning; additionally, the senior leader in the Services Division is documenting the Libraries' current "Voice of the Customer" process for identifying customer wants and needs and developing the narrative for Category 3, Customer Focus. At the present time, no decision has been made about a possible future formal Baldrige

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Quality Award application, but “the Libraries continue on their journey of discovery and understanding about the Baldrige Criteria and how they can be used in a library setting” (Xuemao Wang, personal communication, April 14, 2011).

### THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

As these examples of libraries “living the future” illustrate, organizational performance assessment involves the development of a dynamic set of practices that go beyond the individual, and sometimes internally-focused, activities of planning and assessment. Capitalizing on the rich synergy of planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development practices positions the library to demonstrate the value of its contributions to the parent institution and to the work of faculty, students, researchers, and clinicians. Betsy Wilson describes this effect for the University of Washington Libraries; she notes that the use of various organizational performance assessment practices “makes a huge difference ... especially as our institution takes metrics, criteria, and planning seriously” (ARL, 2011a, 1:23).

We began building a robust assessment infrastructure in 1992 ... in order to help us define and propel what we called a user-centered library. So, when the leadership of the University of Washington in the last, oh I’d say two years, began calling for more data-driven planning and resource allocation, we were way ahead of the game and we were looked to as a model across campus ... last October I was asked to share our work as an exemplar with the Board of Deans and Chancellor here at the University of Washington. (ARL, 2011a, 1:18)

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Similarly, Stoffle and colleagues underscore the rationale for organizational performance assessment:

... as we look at our context—especially the economic environment, our competition, and demands for accountability—it is evident that we cannot live in isolation from the outside pressures our institutions face. We cannot evaluate quality as if a library was an end in itself. We must address and measure the value of the library by the standards and outcomes that are important to our customers and campus stakeholders. (Stoffle, Allen, Morden, & Maloney, 2003, p. 367)

At the University of Arizona today, as Stoffle and Cuillier (2011) report, “... our libraries are on the verge of greater integration into the campus’s learning and research programs than ever before ... we are seen by the campus and our students as a strong, vital, contributing force to the university’s excellence” (p. 131).

Since the mid-1990s, Stoffle and others in academic and research libraries have encouraged changes in library practices “now”, in order to be better prepared for “tomorrow.” At this time there is an unmistakable awareness that colleges and universities, and their libraries, face political, economic, social, and other challenges and opportunities. In this uncertain future, libraries must manage their organizational performance in a deliberate and thoughtful manner. Organizational performance assessment is a developing set of practices that will guide organizations in “living the future” within this environment. Academic and research libraries are evolving toward the integration and alignment of planning, strategy, performance, assessment, and organizational development that is such a critical aspect of effective organizational performance.

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**TABLE 1** Examples of Library Alignment with University Strategic and Academic Plans

UNIVERSITY (ACADEMIC) STRATEGIC PLAN	LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN
<p align="center"><b>Purdue University 2001–2006 Strategic Plan</b></p> <p>DISCOVERY: Achieve and sustain preeminence in discovery            LEARNING: Attain and preserve excellence in learning through programs of superior quality and value in every academic discipline            ENGAGEMENT: Effectively address the needs of society through engagement</p>	<p align="center"><b>Purdue University Libraries Strategic Plan 2006–2011</b></p> <p>DISCOVERY: Further the University’s discovery goal by providing information resources and applying library science expertise to interdisciplinary research.            LEARNING: Advance learning with information literacy initiatives and further the University’s learning goal with focused collections and information resources.            ENGAGEMENT: Apply specialized knowledge and information resources to collaboratively address challenges and to enhance the intellectual, economic, and cultural life of individuals and communities at the local, state, and national levels, and internationally.            INFRASTRUCTURE: Align facilities, services, information technology, administration, faculty and staff with the University’s learning, discovery and engagement goals and key overarching strategies.</p>
<p align="center"><b>The University of Kentucky 2009–2014 Strategic Plan</b></p> <p>PREPARE STUDENTS for Leading Roles in an Innovation-driven Economy and Global Society            PROMOTE RESEARCH and Creative Work to Increase the Intellectual, Social, and Economic Capital of Kentucky and the World beyond Its Borders            DEVELOP the Human and Physical RESOURCES of the University to Achieve the Institution’s Top 20 Goals            PROMOTE DIVERSITY and Inclusion            IMPROVE quality of Life of Kentuckians through Engagement, Outreach &amp; Service</p>	<p align="center"><b>UK Libraries Strategic Plan, 2010–2014</b></p> <p>PREPARE STUDENTS and Faculty for Innovation and Leadership in a Global Society            PROMOTE RESEARCH and Scholarship in Support of Academic, Social, and Economic Growth            DEVELOP the Libraries’ Human and Physical RESOURCES to Provide Opportunities for Growth and Enhancement            PROMOTE DIVERSITY and Inclusion in Library Staffing, Services, and Collections            PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT, Outreach, and Service</p>
<p align="center"><b>The University of Connecticut Academic Plan 2009–2014</b></p> <p>UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: Engage our undergraduates in an intellectually challenging and diverse learning environment that combines excellent opportunities in the liberal arts and sciences with strong pre-professional education, co-curricular activities, and research collaborations with members of the faculty.            GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: Sustain and develop select graduate and professional programs of national and international distinction.            RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY: Enhance the benefits to the state, nation, and world from faculty, staff, and student research, scholarship, and creative activity by increasing productivity, building on our existing strengths and focused areas of excellence, developing a stronger extramural funding portfolio, and expanding the infrastructure that supports research and strengthens our ability to translate new discoveries into practical applications, including... technology transfer.            DIVERSITY: Ensure an enriched learning and work environment by creating a more inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates individual differences.            PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Enhance the contributions of UConn faculty, staff, and students to the state, nation, and world through appropriate collaboration with partners in both the public and private sectors.            ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION, Capital Infrastructure, and Budget Processes            Establish administrative, infrastructural, and budget systems designed to efficiently realize the goals of the Academic Plan.</p>	<p align="center"><b>The University of Connecticut Libraries Strategic Plan 2009–2014</b></p> <p>UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION: Actively support our undergraduates with intellectually challenging and diverse resources, continuous improvement in services, excellent learning environments, and opportunities to engage in critical thinking that adhere to information literacy standards.            GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: Enhance strategic graduate and professional programs through active library liaison engagement and resource support.            RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY: Actively support faculty, student and staff research, scholarship and creative endeavors through quality instruction, liaison collaboration, collections, and information access.            DIVERSITY: Ensure an enriched learning and work environment by creating a more inclusive community that recognizes and celebrates individual differences.            LIBRARY SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Enhance the contributions of UConn Libraries’ staff to the state, nation, and world through public programming and appropriate collaboration with partners in the public and private sectors.            LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION            Adopt a new library organizational structure that aligns with and supports the University’s Academic Plan.</p>

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**TABLE 2** Examples of Performance Measures Embedded in Library Strategic Plans

<b>The University of Arizona Libraries and Center for Creative Photography Strategic Plan FY 2009–2013</b>		<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Quality Standards</b>
<b>METRICS</b>	<b>DESIRED RESULTS</b>	<b>BASELINE (2005–2007)</b>	<b>TARGET (2012)</b>
LibQUAL+® Information Control	Reduce superiority gap for all respondents	From -1.09	To -0.87
LibQUAL+® Affect of Service	Reduce superiority gap for all respondents	From -0.87	To -0.70
LibQUAL+® Item “Personalization features in the electronic library”	Reduce superiority gap for all respondents	From -0.81	To -0.65
Percentage of holdings open to web browsers	Holdings of Libraries and CCP added from 2000 forward are in OCLC or otherwise open to most web browsers		100%
<b>The University of Calgary 2009–2013 Business Plan</b>		<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Performance Targets</b>
<b>METRICS</b>	<b>DESIRED RESULTS</b>	<b>BASELINE (2007)</b>	<b>TARGETS (2010)(2013)</b>
LibQUAL+® Library as Place “Library space that inspires study and teaching”	Change in adequacy gap for all respondents	From -0.12	To -0.03 To +0.50
LibQUAL+® Library as Place “Library space that inspires study and teaching”	Change in adequacy gap for undergraduates	From -0.07	To +0.02 To +0.50
LibQUAL+® Library as Place “Quiet space for individual activities”	Change in adequacy gap for all respondents	From +0.21	To +0.24 To +0.50
LibQUAL+® Library as Place “Quiet space for individual activities”	Change in adequacy gap for undergraduates	From -0.01	To +0.01 To +0.50
<b>The University of Connecticut Libraries Plan FY 2009—2014</b>		<b>Metrics</b>	
<b>METRICS</b>	<b>DESIRED RESULTS</b>	<b>BASELINE (2008)</b>	<b>TARGETS (2014)</b>
Group study rooms/spaces	Increase number of technology-enhanced group study rooms/spaces for small group collaboration, student meetings, and tutoring	From 4	To 10
Libraries-sponsored events aimed at undergraduates	Increase number	1 per year	3 per year
Faculty initiatives (forums, colloquia, etc.) on infusing information literacy into the curriculum and assessing student skill development	Increase number	1 per year	3 per year
LibQUAL+® Information Control “Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information”	Increase perceived level of service quality for undergraduates	From 7.41	To 8.00
LibQUAL+® Information Control “A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own”	Increase perceived level of service quality for undergraduates	From 7.07	To 7.77
LibQUAL+® Library as Place “Quiet space for individual activities”	Increase perceived level of service quality for undergraduates	From 7.07	To 7.77