Introductions

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How Did We Get Here?

Forming our outreach community:

- All working on outreach activities
- Struggling with issues of oversight, staffing, and assessment
- Trying to demonstrate value of our work to stakeholders
- Difficulty finding programmatic models for outreach in librarianship
The SPEC Survey

Survey ran in summer of 2018:
- 125 ARL member institutions
- 46% (57) response rate
- Limitations:
  - Variant nature of responding institutions
  - One representative responding from each institution
  - Non-organizational structure of outreach makes the survey structure difficult
What is Outreach?
Definition of Outreach

There is **no agreed upon** definition of outreach or activities at ARL institutions.
Outreach to Specific Populations

For which of the following underserved or special populations has your library developed targeted outreach and engagement strategies?

- Commuter college students
- Non-traditional college students
- First generation college students
- International college students
- Veterans
- LGBTQIA+ patrons
- Incarcerated or ex-offenders
- Older adults
- People of color
- People with disabilities
- Low-income patrons
- Homeless patrons
- Rural, tribal, and native patrons
- Bookmobile patrons
- Adult literacy patrons
- Other population, please briefly describe
Activities During the Previous Year

Which of the following outreach activities did your library engage in during the last calendar year?

- Orientation presentations
- Open houses
- In-person tours
- Virtual or self-guided tours
- Gaming events
- Film screenings
- Author talks
- Resource tables
- Social media
- Scavenger hunts
- Other activity, please briefly describe

Responses
Institutional Support
Outreach in Library Mission and Vision Statements

How is outreach and engagement addressed in your library’s mission/vision statements? Check all that apply.

- It is explicitly included in our mission statement
- It is explicitly included in our vision statement
- We do not explicitly include outreach in our vision or mission statement, but it falls under a broader category
- We have a separate outreach mission statement
- We have a separate outreach vision statement
- We do not include outreach in our mission or vision statements
Outreach Budgeting as Ad Hoc

• 72% did NOT have a defined Outreach budget
  o 83% reported using central library budget, but no line item for outreach
  o Departmental and special funds were prevalent sources
  o Who managed outreach funds varied greatly, but was most common amongst administrators, managers, or committees.
  o Difficulty reporting annual expenditures (graph) without central management and defined budgets
Establishing Goals and Outcomes
Developing Outreach Goals and Outcomes

Please indicate how outcomes or goals specific to outreach and engagement are established at your library. Check all that apply.

- Our library establishes goals/outcomes for our overall outreach program
- Our library establishes goals/outcomes for groupings of outreach activities
- Our library establishes goals/outcomes for specific populations (e.g., outreach goals for)
- Our library establishes goals/outcomes for individual outreach activities
- Library units establish outreach goals/outcomes
- Individual librarians establish outreach goals/outcomes
- Our library does not have outreach goals/outcomes established at any level
- Other process, please briefly describe

Yes
No
Responsibility for Outreach Goals and Outcomes

Who is responsible for setting outreach goals and objectives at your library? Check all that apply.

- Library dean/director
- Other library administrator
- Department head
- Librarian
- Non-librarian staff
- No one is responsible for this activity at this time
- Other individual, please specify

Responses
## Common Outreach Goals and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal/Outcome</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>promote services</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaboration and partnerships</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engagement</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student success and retention</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collections</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information literacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promote resources</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membership and participation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social media</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of library</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>user experience</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>welcoming</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning Outreach Activities
Timelines for Planning Outreach

Which of the following best describes the timeline on which your library determines its outreach activities?

- On an annual basis
- One semester at a time
- One month at a time
- One event at a time
- Other timeline, please briefly describe
Approval for Outreach Events

Do outreach events require approval from library managers or library administration?

- Yes, for every activity
- Yes, for some activities
- No
Frequency of Constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Constraints</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>1X</th>
<th>2X</th>
<th>3X</th>
<th>4X</th>
<th>5X</th>
<th>6X or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timing and scheduling issues</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding constraints</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of availability of strategic partners</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest from strategic partners</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member with expertise was unavailable</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient staffing for the event</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility constraints</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library administration did not like idea for the event</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other constraint(s)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staffing Outreach
Outreach Leadership Activities

Program Activity Responsibility by Staff Category (N=57)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Category</th>
<th>Planning Prior to outreach events</th>
<th>Overseeing outreach activities during the event</th>
<th>Soliciting volunteers to staff outreach events</th>
<th>Identifying library promotional materials for outreach events</th>
<th>Purchasing library promotional materials for outreach events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-librarian staff</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department head</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other library administrator</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event planning committee</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Dean/Director</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library event planner</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff category</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outreach Staffing

Outreach staffing operationalized:

- 95% have personnel with outreach responsibilities in their position descriptions
- 84% evaluate personnel on outreach activities, with more structure if it is directly embedded in job duties
- Public services librarians and employees tend to staff outreach events more frequently
- Many still rely on calls for volunteers from across the library
Outreach Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Frequency (N=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library staff do not have time to participate in outreach activities</td>
<td>17 7 7 8 3 3 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty soliciting volunteers and/or library staff to work of activities</td>
<td>16 10 14 8 1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing outreach activities is not valued on performance evaluations</td>
<td>33 7 6 1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty staffing activities on evenings/weekends</td>
<td>11 16 10 9 1 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library student workers are not available to staff outreach</td>
<td>28 7 5 4 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing outreach is viewed as only a &quot;public services&quot; job</td>
<td>34 4 6 3 3 1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library staff or volunteers for outreach activities cancel at the last minute</td>
<td>27 10 8 3 3 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library managers do not support their staff's participation in outreach activities</td>
<td>34 9 2 3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library student worker budgets are insufficient to cover outreach staffing</td>
<td>37 3 4 3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other challenge(s)</td>
<td>6 11 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: Never 1X 2X 3X 4X 5X 6X or more
Collaboration
Collaboration Across ARL Institutions

How much of your library’s outreach program is dedicated to responding to requests for library involvement in larger institutional and external outreach activities?

- All of our outreach activities
- The majority of our outreach activities
- About half of our outreach activities
- A few of our outreach activities
- None of our outreach activities

Responses
Assessment and Reporting
Assessment Methods

- Libraries are using a variety of assessment methods
- Most are quick, unobtrusive, and less resource-intensive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headcounts</td>
<td>98.21%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>82.14%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minute papers</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>94.64%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting comments</td>
<td>82.14%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compiling social media comments</td>
<td>58.93%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from outreach volunteers and partners</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage statistics</td>
<td>78.57%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other method, please briefly describe</td>
<td>16.07%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Assessment Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Category</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications and marketing staff</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment librarian/staff</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizers of outreach events</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event planning committee</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach head/director</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library event planner</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff external to the library</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired consultants</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual or group</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment Leadership

- Majority response: No one person was responsible for assessing overall outreach program
- Of those institutions who had a primary person responsible, they were:
  - Administrators (13)
  - Outreach librarians (7)
  - Assessment librarians (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible for assessing overall outreach program</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library dean/director</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other library Administrator</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department head</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach head/director/librarian</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment librarian or dedicated assessment staff person</td>
<td>8.93%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library event planner</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event planning committee</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and marketing staff</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent institution assessment unit</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No one is responsible for overall program</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.79%</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other individual or group, please specify</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Assessment Data & Reporting Impact

- Majority of respondents have **canceled/discontinued** (38, or 68%), or **made changes** (49, or 88%) to events based on assessment data.
- Outreach activities are typically reported in **performance evaluations** (44, or 79%) & assessment data is used to respond to admin requests (32, or 57%).
- Reports are provided to administrators on a **regular basis** (28, or 50%).
- Majority do **not have a defined time frame** to demonstrate success or impact (34, or 61%).
Case Studies
Case Study Findings

• **Types of Events:**
  - Resource Fairs
  - Open House Events
  - Finals De-Stressing Activities
  - “Human Library” Events

• **Collaborations and Partnerships:**
  - Academic Departments
  - Student Support Units
    - Writing Centers
    - Wellness Centers

• **Budgets:**
  - Vary from $0 to $50,000 per event
Recommendations
Recommendations cont.

- Define what outreach means for your institution.
- Institutions should establish a programmatic approach to outreach; coordinate, budget, plan, and staff at the program level
- A variety of assessment methods should be used and mapped back to goals
- Library staff would benefit from more training around both goal writing and assessment strategies for outreach
Questions & Discussion

Join the conversation by typing questions in the chat box in the lower left corner of your screen.
Thank you!
Slide 1: Outreach and Engagement

Hello, I am Lee Anne George, coordinator of the SPEC Survey Program at the Association of Research Libraries, and I would like to thank you for joining us for this SPEC Survey Webcast. Today we will hear about the results of the survey on Outreach and Engagement. These results have been published in SPEC Kit 361, which is freely available at publications.arl.org.

Before we begin there are a few announcements:

Everyone but the presenters has been muted to cut down on background noise. So, if you are part a group today, feel free to speak among yourselves.

We do want you to join the conversation by typing questions in the chat box in the lower left corner of your screen. I will read the questions aloud before the presenters answer them.

This webcast is being recorded and we will send registrants the slides and a link to the recording in the next week.

Slide 2: Introductions

Now let me introduce today’s presenters:

Shannon L. Farrell, Natural Resources Librarian at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities,

Stephanie J. Graves, Director of Learning and Outreach at Texas A&M University Libraries,

Sarah LeMire, First Year Programs Coordinator at Texas A&M University, and

Kristen L. Mastel, an outreach and instruction librarian at the University of Minnesota

Use the hashtag ARLSPECKit361 to continue the conversation with them on Twitter.

Now, let me turn the presentation over to Stephanie.

Slide 3: How Did We Get Here?

Thank you, Lee Anne.

So, how did we get here, to this place where the four of us came together to create this SPEC Kit? We found each other through our professional practice and research and discovered that we were struggling with similar issues. We were all working on outreach activities and programs at our respective libraries. We struggled with issues of oversight, staffing, and assessment of outreach. We knew that we needed better models to demonstrate the value of outreach work, not only to our libraries but also to our campuses and our profession. Finally, we discovered that we were all searching for program-level models for outreach in libraries and had difficulties finding examples of strategic outreach programs in our profession.
Slide 4: The SPEC Survey

The SPEC survey was released to all 125 ARL member institutions in the summer of 2018. 57 institutions replied, for a 46% response rate. There are some limitations to the study that we should acknowledge. First, as we all know, not all library institutions are similar. There is a wide variance amongst ARL member institutions, from traditional academic libraries on college campuses to the Library of Congress. This variance in library type can greatly color the data. In addition, only one representative from each institution was tasked with filling out the survey on behalf of their organization. As you will see as we go thru the slides, outreach was often distributed throughout library organizations, which made central reporting on outreach activities difficult for those filling out the survey. Regardless, we feel as though the data gathered in this SPEC Kit is a good first step in understanding library outreach as a professional activity that crosses across multiple library types.

Now over to Kristen.

Slide 5: What is Outreach?

Thank you, Stephanie.

In order to understand the staffing, budget, and other components for a successful outreach program we needed to know how the profession and institutions define outreach. In this first section, we asked respondents for definitions around outreach at their institutions.

Slide 6: Definition of Outreach

Most respondents indicated that outreach at their institution was multifaceted, involving working across campus or the broader organization. For example, one institution defined outreach as “creating moments of discovery, learning, and exchange with the university community.” Other respondents did not seem to have a predefined outreach definition, but instead created a response specifically for the survey on what activities they were considering outreach.

Slide 7: Outreach to Specific Populations

When reviewing where libraries were spending their time and energy towards outreach efforts, undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty were the audience the majority of the time.

We asked respondents about their outreach and engagement strategies with underserved groups or specific populations. Survey respondents have worked with international students (45, or 83%), first-generation students (33, or 61%), LGBTQIA+ patrons (29, or 54%), people of color (26, or 48%), people with disabilities (23, or 43%), and/or veterans (22, or 41%). Of the 17 “Other” responses, K-12 and distance or online students were mentioned several times.

Slide 8: Activities During the Previous Year

Outreach typically involves multi-pronged efforts to reach desired audiences throughout the year. Not surprisingly, the majority of respondents selected tours (56, or 98%), orientations (54, or 95%), open houses (55, or 96%), and resource tables (55, or 96%) as activities they have participated in over the past year. These could be viewed as the first point of contact for many users to learn about
library services and programs. Author talks, film screenings, and friends of the library events were also noted as frequently used engagement activities, while scavenger hunts, gaming events, and virtual or self-guided tours were mentioned less often. Write-in responses commonly mentioned finals/de-stress and wellness activities such as crafts and therapy animals.

While there may be no agreed upon definition of outreach across ARL institutions, libraries are serving their populations through a variety of methods and engagement strategies.

Now I am going to turn it over to Stephanie to talk about the institutional support to do such activities throughout the year.

**Slide 9: Institutional Support**

Thank you, Kristen.

The level at which responding institutions provided structural support for outreach is an indicator of how closely outreach might align with library priorities. In other words, if you want to know what an organization values, look to see what they put in strategic missions and what they fund.

**Slide 10: Outreach in Library Mission and Vision Statements**

When we asked about mission and vision, we were unsurprised to find that approximately 18% of institutions did not include outreach in their mission and vision statements. The remainder believed that they included outreach in mission statements, but to a wide variety of degrees. The majority (48%) did not address outreach explicitly, but thought that they were covering it in other ways. There were lots of words in the comments to describe what this might look like; liaison, instruction, collaboration, partnerships, marketing, and communication were just a few common phrases. What this tells us is that there is a systemic issue in our profession. We don’t have a clear idea of what outreach is in a way that spans institutions and can be assessed holistically in our field. However, it is also clear that libraries value outreach and believe that they are addressing it through strategic visioning.

**Slide 11: Outreach Budgeting as Ad Hoc**

The issue of outreach budgets was complex. 72% of respondents did not have a defined Outreach budget, yet 83% reported using central library budget for funding. This means that while libraries are funding outreach, they aren’t dedicating a line item in their budget for outreach activities. Additional comments show that libraries are using alternate sources for funding such as department budgets and special funds such as grants and donations. Who managed outreach funds varied greatly, but was most common amongst administrators, managers, or committees. Finally, the survey asked respondents to report on their annual outreach expenditures. The graph shows the wide variety of funding across institutions, with a floor of under $5K and approximately 24% of respondents spending more than $50K per year. Finally, the 14% that are coded as unknown had difficulty reporting annual expenditures (graph) without central management and defined budgets at their library. This was a prevalent theme in the open comments. As you can imagine, the inconsistencies in which libraries both define and fund outreach makes it difficult to get a baseline on what is happening in the profession.

Now over to Sarah.
Slide 12: Establishing Goals and Outcomes

Thank you, Stephanie.

Another area of interest for us was goals and outcomes. Our perception was that outreach, unlike other public services programs like instruction, was often treated in an *ad hoc* manner. We wanted to better understand how ARL institutions were approaching their outreach programs and whether they were establishing intentional and strategic goals and outcomes for those programs.

Slide 13: Developing Outreach Goals and Outcomes

The good news is that the vast majority of respondents indicated that their libraries had goals or outcomes for their outreach programs. However, we also learned that these goals and outcomes are not typically set at the library level. Only about ⅓ of our respondents indicated that their library established library-wide goals and outcomes for outreach. This dovetailed with the comments we received. Quite a few respondents commented that the survey was difficult to answer because outreach was not centrally organized at their library. Respondents most commonly indicated that outreach goals and outcomes were established by individual librarians or library units. And, indeed, this is how it works at my institution, where our Learning and Outreach unit and librarians who work in that unit are responsible for establishing goals and outcomes related to outreach.

Slide 14: Responsibility for Outreach Goals and Outcomes

Similarly, the most common individual responsible for setting outcomes was an individual librarian or department head. However, it does appear that library administrators are more involved in setting outcomes than expected based upon previous responses. Although only about ⅓ of respondents indicated that their libraries established library-wide outcomes, about half indicated that their library dean was responsible for setting those outcomes, and over 60% indicated that another administrator was responsible. This may indicate that although individual librarians and department heads are most commonly responsible for this activity, administrators are taking an interest in establishing goals and outcomes for outreach at their libraries.

Slide 15: Common Outreach Goals and Outcomes

In addition to asking about who was responsible for setting goals and outcomes, we also wanted to know what those outcomes were. Respondents shared a wide variety of goals and outcomes with us. The most common response categories are listed here. Outreach goals and outcomes are most commonly centered around promoting library services, developing collaborations and partnerships, and engagement. We also found that many goals and outcomes are internally focused, meaning that they describe how the library will devote its resources and plan its activities. Few goals and outcomes were externally focused, meaning that they describe what patrons will experience, know, or do as a result of outreach programs.

Now over to Shannon.

Slide 16: Planning Outreach Activities

Thank you, Sarah.
Now we are going to discuss how institutions plan their outreach activities.

**Slide 17: Timelines for Planning Outreach**

We asked respondents to describe what kind of timeline they have to determine their outreach activities, if it was on an annual basis, on a semester-by-semester basis, monthly, or if it happened one event at a time.

20 respondents stated they planned outreach activities on an annual basis. There were fewer responses for “one semester at a time” and “one event at a time”.

However, 22 respondents chose “Other timeline” illustrating the complexity of the planning process. Many of these write-in responses stated that these institutions try to plan their activities on an annual basis but also try to react to unanticipated outreach opportunities.

**Slide 18: Approval for Outreach Events**

We also asked what kind of events require approval from library managers or library administration.

Most institutions needed approval for outreach activities from managers or administrators. Only 5 respondents did not require such approval.

The types of activities that required approval were those that: required funding, advertising, or significant staff time; were high impact or high profile; were new or innovative; or were aligned with strategic goals. Events that involved external audiences or donors also required approval.

We noted that the requirement for approval could impact libraries’ ability to respond and act quickly to new opportunities.

**Slide 19: Frequency of Constraints**

Finally, we also asked about common constraints that can impact outreach events and how often institutions were impacted.

There were a wide variety of responses. Most respondents experienced impacts related to timing and scheduling issues, facility constraints, and funding constraints. Funding constraints may be tied to the need for administrative approval and/or a lack of dedicated outreach funds.

Those who selected “Other constraints” mentioned issues such as a lack of space, security, and receiving approval for events.

Now over to Stephanie.

**Slide 20: Staffing Outreach**

Thank you, Shannon.

Librarians that do quite a bit of outreach understand that it can be an enormous output of effort. We wanted to understand how that responsibility was being distributed across libraries. Who is
doing the work of outreach? By the way, this image is of the Texas A&M Dean and Associate Dean handing out t-shirts at our annual Open House event.

**Slide 21: Outreach Leadership Activities**

The following chart shows who in the library is performing various leadership tasks related to outreach, such as planning, overseeing events, soliciting volunteers, and identifying and purchasing promotional items. It's clear that librarians and staff are carrying the lion's share of the load, with staff and department heads and library administrators following closely behind. One of the more enlightening themes in the open comments was that there was little consistency to the allocation of who did what, as it changed from event to event in most libraries.

**Slide 22: Outreach Staffing**

The degree to which outreach staffing is operationalized by being explicitly mentioned in job duties is an important indicator of its value to libraries. We found that the majority (95%) of libraries had personnel with outreach responsibilities outlined in their position description and almost as many were evaluating personnel on outreach activities. When asked who was staffing outreach events, public services librarians and staff tended to most frequently staff events. Library liaison made up the majority of the list at 89%, with the remainder being evenly divided amongst dedicated outreach librarians, staff, and marketing positions. Even with positions dedicated to outreach, many libraries still must engage staff from across departments to provide sufficient staffing for outreach events. There were consistent themes in many of the responses. The majority of libraries reported that the staffing of outreach events is done on a voluntary basis by library staff. In addition, staff volunteers often had to seek supervisory approval to use their time to staff outreach events, while in other cases the event organizer would have to seek supervisory approval. Email was the most frequently used method for soliciting staff, with a few libraries mentioning library newsletters and staff meetings as another venue to solicit participation.

**Slide 23: Outreach Challenges**

This chart shows how frequently libraries face certain challenges in staffing outreach activities. Thankfully, the majority of libraries reported that many of these challenges had never happened at their institution. However, the write-in comments indicated that many respondents had difficulty answering the question because outreach was not centrally organized in their library so they had no way to quantify staffing difficulties. The three issues that occurred most often were difficulty staffing evening and weekend events, soliciting staff to work events, and staff time to participate. The data indicated that while staffing outreach may not be an issue for some libraries, it is a significant barrier to others. In fact, seven libraries (13%) indicated that insufficient staff time was a problem for them more than six times in a year.

Now over to Kristen.

**Slide 24: Collaboration**

Thank you, Stephanie.

As we all know, outreach cannot be done in a vacuum. The very definition of outreach implies that we are interacting with our communities. We asked several questions related to the strengths and


challenges of collaborative partnerships, and who are common collaborators to gain a picture if outreach was responsive to requests or proactively seeking partnerships.

**Slide 25: Collaboration across ARL Institutions**

- ARL libraries collaborate with a wide variety of units and organizations
  - Remain opportunistic and goal-driven
- Many benefits and challenges

In reviewing responses it was clear that libraries are tuned in to campus activities and seek opportunities to partner across the institution. Libraries are always looking for potential new partners and collaborators, as 49 (89%) respondents identified working with a new partner over the past three years. Campus orientation departments and development were the most frequent collaborators, but libraries collaborate with a wide variety of units and organizations to help them accomplish their goals. As one can expect with any large project or event, there are many benefits to collaboration, such as access to new audiences, created additional marketing efforts, and leveraged resources, both financial and staffing. However, collaborations were not without their challenges, which included differing expectations, communication issues, varying timelines between partners, a lack of follow through, and limited ability to hold partners accountable.

Now over to Shannon.

**Slide 26: Assessment and Reporting**

Thank you, Kristen.

Now we are going to talk about library outreach assessment and reporting.

**Slide 27: Assessment Methods**

We asked respondents to indicate what assessment methods they are using to assess their outreach activities.

A variety of methods were employed but the most common were headcounts, observations, feedback from volunteers or partners, and collecting comments.

Some methods were uncommon, such as: minute papers, interviews, and focus groups.

These results indicate that libraries relied on quick, unobtrusive, and less resource-intensive techniques to assess their outreach.

**Slide 28: Assessment Responsibility**

We also asked respondents to indicate who was responsible for designing and testing assessment tools at their library.
Very few libraries had designated staff to design and test assessment tools. It was more often the people or groups who were planning the events or communications and marketing staff who did this work.

Most libraries were not using event planners, staff external to the library, or hired consultants.

Similarly, there was not one person who was responsible for assessing the library’s overall outreach programs. This illustrates the ad hoc approach to assessing outreach programs.

**Slide 29: Assessment Leadership**

Similarly, we also asked who was responsible for assessing each institution’s overall outreach program.

The majority of institutions stated that there was not one person who was responsible for assessing the overall outreach program.

However, of those who did have a primary person responsible, they were often: administrators, outreach librarians, or assessment librarians.

This illustrates the ad hoc approach that institutions are taking to assessing outreach programs.

**Slide 30: Using Assessment Data & Reporting Impact**

Finally, we asked respondents how they were using assessment data and reporting impact.

The majority of respondents indicated that they have canceled or discontinued events, or made changes to events based on assessment data.

The kinds of data used to cancel events were mostly poor attendance or low usage statistics.

The kinds of data used to change events were more varied: including using feedback, observations, surveys, and focus groups.

Most respondents said outreach activities are reported in employee’s performance evaluations, and that assessment data was compiled to respond to requests from administration. Reports were typically provided to administrators on an annual or regular basis. Only 9 respondents said that no reporting on outreach is required in their libraries.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify how much time libraries give to establish impact and demonstrate success of their outreach activities. The majority responded that there is no defined time frame. A few responses said “incrementally” (14, or 25%) or after two or three iterations (4, or 7%). Only one said impact had to be demonstrated immediately.

Now over to Sarah.

**Slide 31: Case Studies**

Thank you, Shannon.
The last section of the SPEC survey was the case study section. In this section, respondents shared the details of a single outreach event at their library.

**Slide 32: Case Study Findings**

Respondents submitted a wide variety of outreach activities in the Case Study section of the survey, clearly illustrating the myriad of potential approaches to outreach. Common events mentioned were resource fairs or tabling events, open houses, human library events, and finals stressbuster events like therapy dog visits. Respondents commonly mentioned collaborating with campus entities such as academic departments or student support units like writing centers. Perhaps the biggest variety was in budget, as some institutions mentioned events with no associated cost at all, while others mentioned annual events with a price tag of $50,000. We encourage you all to review the case study section of the SPEC Kit to get a sense of the wide range of outreach activities that libraries are using to engage patrons.

Now over to Kristen.

**Slide 33: Recommendations**

Thank you, Sarah.

By understanding the various practices across ARL institutions, we are able to provide some guidance for libraries at the local and national levels. We hope that these findings provide a jumping off point for further research and developing best practices and professional development around programmatic outreach.

**Slide 34: Recommendations cont.**

Institutions could be more effective by first, defining what outreach means for their library. This includes a programmatic approach that includes a clear definition, meaningful and measurable outreach outcomes and goals, a defined budget, and utilization of various assessment methods.

Instituting a high-level of planning would allow for a distributed model of staffing that works towards institutional objectives. In addition, a dedicated outreach budget would allow staff to plan for outreach programming throughout the year yet remain nimble enough to respond to opportunities and outside requests for participation.

There also seemed to be issues with oversight of outreach programs; for example, many individuals participated in disparate outreach events, but no one person or group was responsible for overseeing institution-wide outreach programs. Instead, it appeared that the labor of outreach, including event planning and staffing, mostly fell to public services librarians and library staff, who were tasked with creating outreach activities without programmatic oversight or alignment.

Further, the discipline would benefit from more training around goal writing and assessment strategies as the data suggests that most professional development and training was self-initiated.

With a programmatic approach to outreach and additional library staff training, library outreach activities will be more likely to be intentional, strategic, and impactful.
If outreach is to grow and evolve like other library services, it needs to be more than just “nice to have” and instead seen as essential to student, faculty, and staff success and wellbeing.

We would like to thank Lee Anne George for all of her time and guidance through the development of this SPEC Kit. SPEC Kits have a long tradition of being a valuable resource for libraries across many issues, and we hope that ours furthers the conversation around outreach and engagement.

**Slide 35: Questions & Discussion**

Thank you, Sarah, Stephanie, Kristen, and Shannon. And now we welcome your questions. Please join the conversation by typing questions in the chat box in the lower left corner of your screen. I will read the questions aloud before the presenters answer them.

**Slide 36: Thank you!**

Thank you all for joining us today to discuss the results of the outreach and engagement SPEC survey. You will receive the slides and a link to the recording in the next week.