Charge of Committee

The **Assessment Committee (AC)** is a standing committee that develops and oversees ARL’s role in describing the contributions of libraries to research, teaching, learning and community service as captured through outcomes assessment. This program develops new analytics that are responsive to the changing roles and needs of ARL members while also maintaining longitudinal and comparative peer data. A primary goal is to empower agile and dynamic decision-making by members through the mining and use of timely and relevant data in new ways that will enable integration with other data used by parent institutions and professional organizations. Key concerns include demonstrating the value and cost effectiveness of library resources and services in ways promoting alignment with institutional outcomes. The AC connects with other statistical and assessment entities that generate university rankings, provide benchmarks, identify resource strengths and weaknesses, monitor organizational performance, and measure productivity. Similarly, the AC monitors these academic indicators to recognize potential changes in library direction and involvement (for instance, by integrating learning and research analytics tools to develop improvements in existing services or the development of new services).

The committee also supports ARL’s internal assessment and evaluation processes. Assessment is not the exclusive domain of the Assessment Committee. It is the intent of the ARL Design process that all Design Teams engage in assessment.

Framework and Context for the Committee

1. **Describe the Breadth and Focus of the Committee**

   - Engage in assessment activities and developments that have strategic importance to member libraries by enabling innovation through the testing and experimentation of new methods, and generating reliable and valid evidence through well-tested approaches.
   - Emphasize approaches that move libraries from simply articulating to demonstrating and predicting how libraries impact research, teaching, learning and community service, and how libraries are transforming from being information repositories to sites of knowledge production.
   - Support library directors by providing data that enables them to grasp quickly the key strengths of their parent institutions and libraries, including providing indicators and data about human resources and organizational development.
   - Promote multiple methods and approaches that articulate the value of research libraries in helping parent institutions achieve desired outcomes.
   - Work with partner organizations to streamline and standardize statistical surveys and to help define and understand accreditation requirements related to libraries.
   - Continue to collect strategic longitudinal data that demonstrate the enduring investments and values of research institutions and research libraries.
   - Engage library assessment staff with expertise in data collection, development of analytical interfaces, quantitative and qualitative research methods, survey research and data management, the presentation of research results, and marketing and communicating the value of libraries in compelling and engaging ways.
   - Through liaisons, the AC also intersects with and supports the work of other ARL committees, particularly the committees on Policy and Advocacy, Diversity and Inclusion, and Member Engagement and Outreach and similarly it supports the SoA
initiatives as they work to develop new methods to evaluate the success of Collective Collections, Scholarly Dissemination Engine, Libraries that Learn, Innovation Lab, and the ARL Academy.

2. **Current Programs, Projects and Activities of the Association That Fit Within the Scope of the Committee**

**Membership Funded—Historical and foundational data on investments and human resources:**
- ARL Statistics (longitudinal trends)
  - Outcome: describe ARL member libraries
- ARL Annual Salary Survey
  - Outcome: describe salaries and demographics of professional workforce in ARL libraries

**Cost recovery—Established “new measures” ARL protocols:**
- LibQUAL+ (statistically significant trends); can be linked to student and faculty performance if the library implements the confidential protocol
  - Outcome: Capture library service quality perceptions on information access, service, and library as place
- ClimateQUAL
  - Outcome: Implement and improve your organizational climate and diversity assessment
- MINES for Libraries; can be linked to student and faculty performance if the technology infrastructure is setup appropriately
  - Outcome: Measure the impact of networked electronic services:

**Grant-funded—Testing and Experimentation**
- LibValue Toolkit; making available multifaceted outcomes assessment protocols
  - Outcomes: learning, scholarly reading, information commons impact, digitized collections impact
- Measuring Up – current IMLS grant
  - Outcome: understanding impact metrics for institutional repositories

**Convene experts and methodologists** as well as other organizations that are engaged in similar work as ours in higher education including continuing engagement with NCES/IPEDS, ACRL, CARL, etc.

**Build community** through shared approaches and perspectives, such as the Library Assessment Conference and related training like the Strategic Assessment workshops. Continue the current partnership with the University of Washington to support the Library Assessment Conference and engage key strategic alliances for future sustainability.

3. **Priorities:**

Based on committee conversations and feedback from ARL directors, we anticipate maintaining the mix of programs indicated above but note that this is always subject to ongoing review for relevancy. Going forward, we do expect to see a growing emphasis in both committee and ARL staff work devoted to assessing outcomes important to institutional scorecard priorities: university level indicators such as increasing research productivity/awareness, and improving student success (for example percent going to graduate school), retention and graduation rates as well as organizational indicators such as salary equity, workplace climate, updating learning spaces. For some of these outcome areas, we need to increase awareness of existing products
and services and for other areas, we need to develop new approaches and protocols. It may be
useful to think of a hierarchy of needs from the immediate to the longer term along the lines
depicted by the Global Libraries Initiative Impact Planning and Assessment Roadmap and/or
along the lines of the Value Scorecard models. Below are some example projects grouped into
three categories: current activities underway, projects that are considered for transformation,
and new projects.

Examples of existing projects underway:

- Supporting VPO researching salary equity issues - Dec 2016
- Capturing investment on facilities and special collections with new survey tools - May
  2016
- Delivering LibQUAL+, ClimateQUAL and MINES for Libraries to libraries that engage -
  2016
- IMLS-funded grant researching impact and metrics of institutional repositories as well
  as engaging VPOs - Nov 2018
- Developing the cohort of assessment professionals (community of practice) and new
  tools through the Library Assessment Conference (October 2016 and planning 2018) and
  Strategic Assessment workshops as needed

Examples of projects that we are considering for transformation:

- Capture the effects of the links between student success to information seeking attitudes
  and behaviors (LibQUAL+ Confidential) and regrounding LibQUAL+ (two to five years)
- Rethink the StatsQUAL infrastructure and service delivery (one to three years, possibly
  as part of the ARL rebranding)
- Transform SPEC Kits to provide information where we collectively decide we need more
  information (planning new approach for 2017)
- Share outcomes based strategic metrics and dashboards/ Balanced Scorecard initiatives
  (sharing twice a year in 2016-2018)
- Standardize survey and accreditation practices with partner organizations (establish
  partnership)

Examples of new ideas for capturing outcomes:

- How research analytics in the disciplines are comparing across different institutions?
  Capture and import from existing data sources and link them to institutional outcomes
  for peer comparisons across different segments (large/small, private/public, etc.); work
  with members in defining useful segments among ARL member libraries for creating
  dashboards (2016 or 2017 or 2018 or not now)
- Assessing the state of outcomes assessment: in collaboration with a VPO capture the
  effectiveness of outcomes assessment in ARL libraries (this can take place through a
  coordinated effort of focus groups across interested ARL libraries) (2016 or 2017 or 2018
  or not now)
- What is the value of libraries in student success? In collaboration with a VPO capture
  efforts in ARL libraries that relate libraries to student success measures (2016 or 2017 or
  2018 or not now)

Due to the number of potential new projects, it will be essential for the committee to prioritize
its efforts. A way of mapping activities and articulating responsibilities for ARL staff, committee
members, assessment professionals, and other organizations would be useful. There is a need
for the AC to articulate how we can support the other design team projects while we also leave
space for the AC to decide what are key assessment priorities and projects. If there are research directions important for the membership to engage, the AC can bring these forward.

As a way of encouraging new ways of thinking about assessment, a number of questions were captured by Elliott Shore during his listening tours with ARL member libraries and their staff:

- What tools can we use to tackle today’s problems
- How can we measure what scholars do (scholarly productivity)?
- Are there predictive models relevant to our work?
- How do we present dynamic information?
- How can we rely more on trend analysis?
- Who are the leaders in this? How are they doing it? Who’s experimenting with the best stuff right now?

As the Association charts new priorities it would be useful to reflect on how these questions can inform the work of the Committee. The chair of the Assessment Committee (Bob Fox), the vice-chair (Jennifer Paustenbaugh) and ARL staff (Martha Kyrillidou) also had the benefit of interacting with the Coordinating committee before (Sept 23) and after the ARL membership meeting where priorities for projects were defined. As articulated in the reports of the other enabling capacity committees and design teams, we see assessment being an integral part of all of these components. In particular we see the potential of developing a strong thread in research data management, where many of the issues are parallel to those we face in assessment with a slightly different scale and focus. Furthermore, assessment has a strong community of practice and can engage the talents of assessment staff from member institutions to assist with key priorities of the association. Already expressions of interest for serving as Visiting Program Officers have been articulated by a number of institutions and the members of the assessment committee stand ready to engage their staff in service of the association priorities.

**Assessment Committee**

Robert Fox, chair (Louisville)  
Jennifer Paustenbaugh, vice-chair (BYU)  
Austin Booth (Buffalo)  
Colleen Cook (McGill)  
Bella Gerlich (Texas Tech)  
Arnold Hirshon (Case Western)  
Artemis Kirk (Georgetown)  
Mary-Jo Romaniuk (Manitoba)  
Betsy Wilson (Washington)  
Staff Liaison: Martha Kyrillidou (ARL)