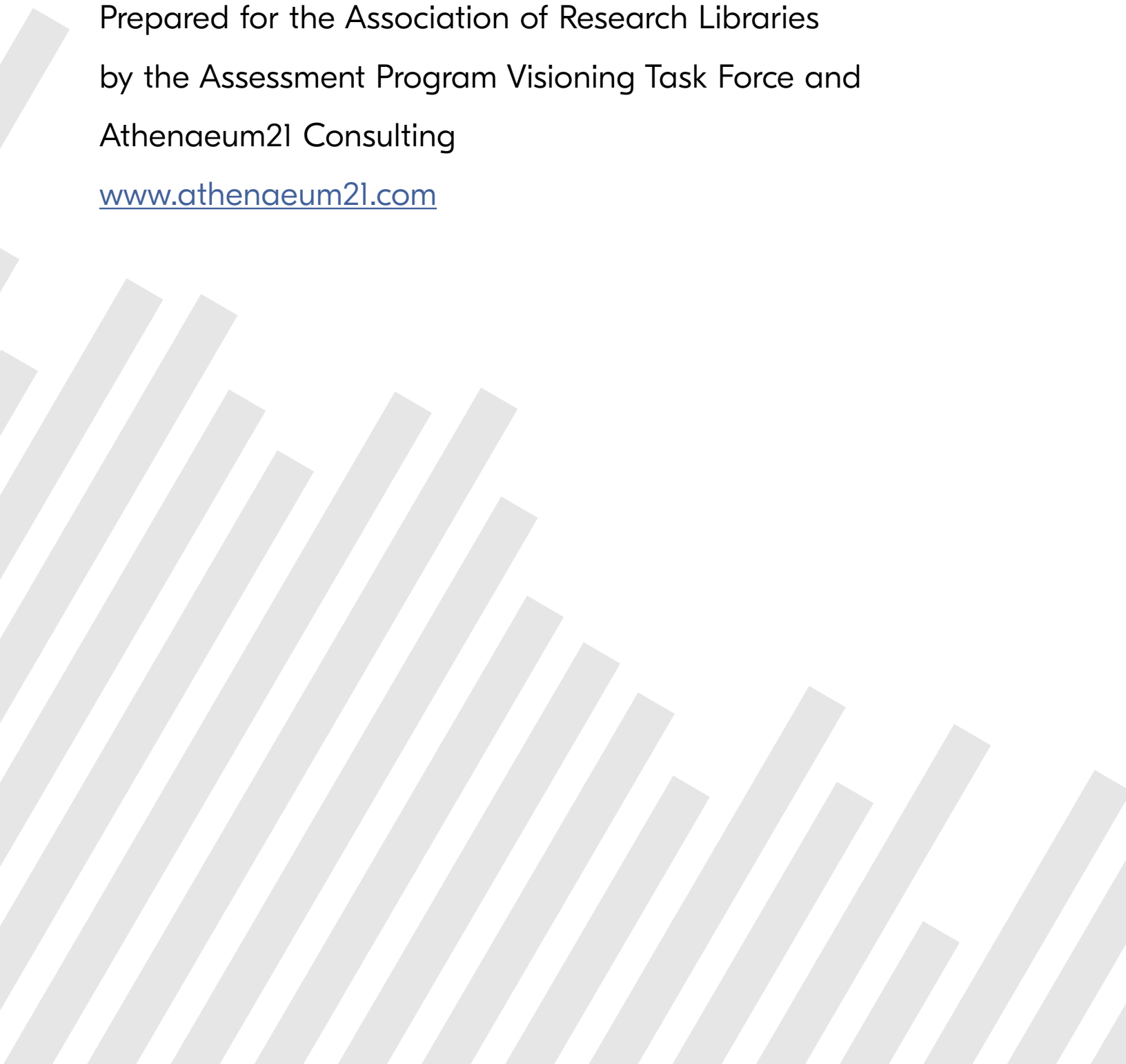


ARL Assessment Program Visioning Task Force Recommendations

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Prepared for the Association of Research Libraries
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Overview

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Assessment Program Visioning Task Force (VTF) is responsible for “developing a forward-looking program that advances the organizational outcomes of the 21st-century research library.”¹ As a first step, the task force was “charged to consider all **current and potential** ARL assessment-related services, including the goals, outcomes, deliverables, staff, and other resources related to the existing metrics and tools, and to the surveys in the StatsQUAL suite.”² The Association asked the VTF to write recommendations—presented in this report—for investment, maintenance, and disinvestment of programs, services, and tools as well as for new service areas and foci. In devising the recommendations, the task force considered “the types of issues ARL libraries will need to address in their measurement and evaluation program in the context of contemporary movements in higher education.”³

ARL secured Athenaem21 Consulting to work with the Visioning Task Force to realize its charge by developing the recommendations for consideration and discussion by the ARL membership. This report presents the recommendations along with an overview of the discussions, research, and review processes undertaken. The report also sets out a fairly detailed structure for a renewed assessment program that the VTF believes will better meet the assessment needs of ARL members.

There is a strong sense from ARL members that the program should continue to focus on supporting library assessment in member libraries. However, the needs of ARL member libraries and staff have evolved since the program’s inception, and while the program meets some pressing needs of ARL members, there are distinct gaps between the audiences that the ARL assessment program currently serves and those that ARL members most need the program to serve.

A multiplicity of successful models and approaches to library assessment are present in ARL member libraries. The many commonalities, and important differences, between institutions in their assessment needs are evident, such as differences between public and private institutions; governmental mandates that drive reporting needs; or a parent institution’s culture and orientation around data and metrics. There is no “one size fits all” approach to library assessment that will work for all libraries. This necessitates a “modular” approach to ARL’s future assessment program services and offerings that will enable libraries to see the entire ecosystem, and pick and choose those elements of the system that are relevant to their own situation.

While the VTF and A21 are aware of the implications regarding past and future business models, these recommendations have been made independent of funding considerations and business models. Once the directions and priorities have been agreed upon, the VTF will enter the “design” and “deploy” phases of this work (see “Process Design” below) and more specific proposals regarding implementation plans and business models will be made, along with ongoing plans for measuring the success of the revised program. To support transition to these next phases, the VTF has created an [indicative road map](#).

Summary Recommendations

ARL members want the Association to tell the story of the importance and success of research libraries in society and in their specific institutions. Then they want ARL to provide them with the right framework, conceptual models, data, and tools to tell that story locally. The Visioning Task Force therefore makes the following high-level recommendations, with more detailed recommendations outlined at the end of this document:

1. **Align Assessment with ARL’s Vision for the Future of Research Libraries**—Research libraries need to define the values by which they want to be measured, rather than trying to manifest values out of the data that they have. Therefore, building upon the vision and strategy defined and ratified by ARL in its recent strategic design process, the assessment program will work with ARL members to create measures that align with the values and vision of 21st-century research libraries. This will include aligning assessment measures with ARL membership criteria and advocacy.
2. **Develop a Framework for Action**—The assessment program will work with other ARL programs and committees to build an intellectual framework that will translate the vision into the actionable, constituent parts of the program. The framework will provide shared reference points for ARL members to think about the operational, cultural, and contextual commonalities and differences between their libraries. The comprehensive framework will be comprised of modular components that map data and assessment criteria to the strategic objectives of the library within the context of parent institutional goals, and to the operations of the library.
3. **Refresh the Data Points Collected and Technology Used**—Building upon the strengths and successes of ARL’s long history of data collection and publication, the assessment program will reinforce the primary importance of high-quality, meaningful, open, and portable/interoperable data, and the supporting (and secondary) role of technology. Data is one of the assessment program’s greatest assets, and measures such as the ARL Statistics are still important. These measures, however, need to shift from input and output data to measures of outcomes and supporting impact narratives. ARL should not create or support software or systems that are available through open licensing, are commercially available, or are accessible through partnerships.
4. **Share Knowledge and Build Community Support**—Recognizing the intrinsic value of the experience and knowledge of the ARL community, the assessment program will elicit, curate, and disseminate that expertise for collective benefit, including through data-supported case studies. Training will remain an integral offering of the assessment program and should give library directors and practitioners the skills and confidence to choose and effectively communicate data and evidence appropriate for the needs of their target audience and messaging priorities.

Process Design

To meet its charge (above), the Assessment Program Visioning Task Force has engaged in a process that is similar to a model called appreciative inquiry, whereby the task force members were asked to assess and re-envision ARL's assessment program. The appreciative inquiry model⁴ is about valuing the best of “what is” while envisioning “what might be.” It provides a cycle of four processes:

1. **Discover:** The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. **Dream:** The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. **Design:** Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. **Deploy:** The implementation of the proposed design.

This document is an output of the first two phases of the visioning process—“discover” and “dream.” The report is based on research into current and future-looking needs of ARL members (and secondarily, of the wider assessment communities); into current ARL assessment program offerings; and into the gaps between member needs and ARL's current offerings. Everything has been “on the table” and nothing has been considered to be “off-limits.”⁵ Athenaem21 (A21) conducted the data-gathering phase of work and presented the gap analysis, findings, and preliminary recommendations to the Assessment Program Visioning Task Force (VTF). Together A21 and the VTF have created these recommendations. All of this activity is described in more detail in the following section.

Research and Evaluation Process

Athenaem21 used a mixed-methods approach of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the current ARL assessment program and to identify the needs of members. A21 used this information to define personas representing the consumers and constituents of ARL's assessment offerings, which were further analyzed and prioritized. Current (and past) ARL assessment programs, services, and tools were inventoried. The priority personas and their needs were compared against existing audiences served, and existing program offerings. ARL staff time allocation across all assessment programs, services, and tools was analyzed for a more accurate picture of distribution of ARL resources across the portfolio of current offerings. These analyses directly informed the recommendations in this document, which were further refined and prioritized during the VTF's meetings in August and September 2017. The result was a “road map,” which can become the foundation for further elaboration of business models, technology development and/or migration plans, implementation plans, and ongoing assessment plans. For a full description of the proposed work and deliverables, see [Appendix 1](#).

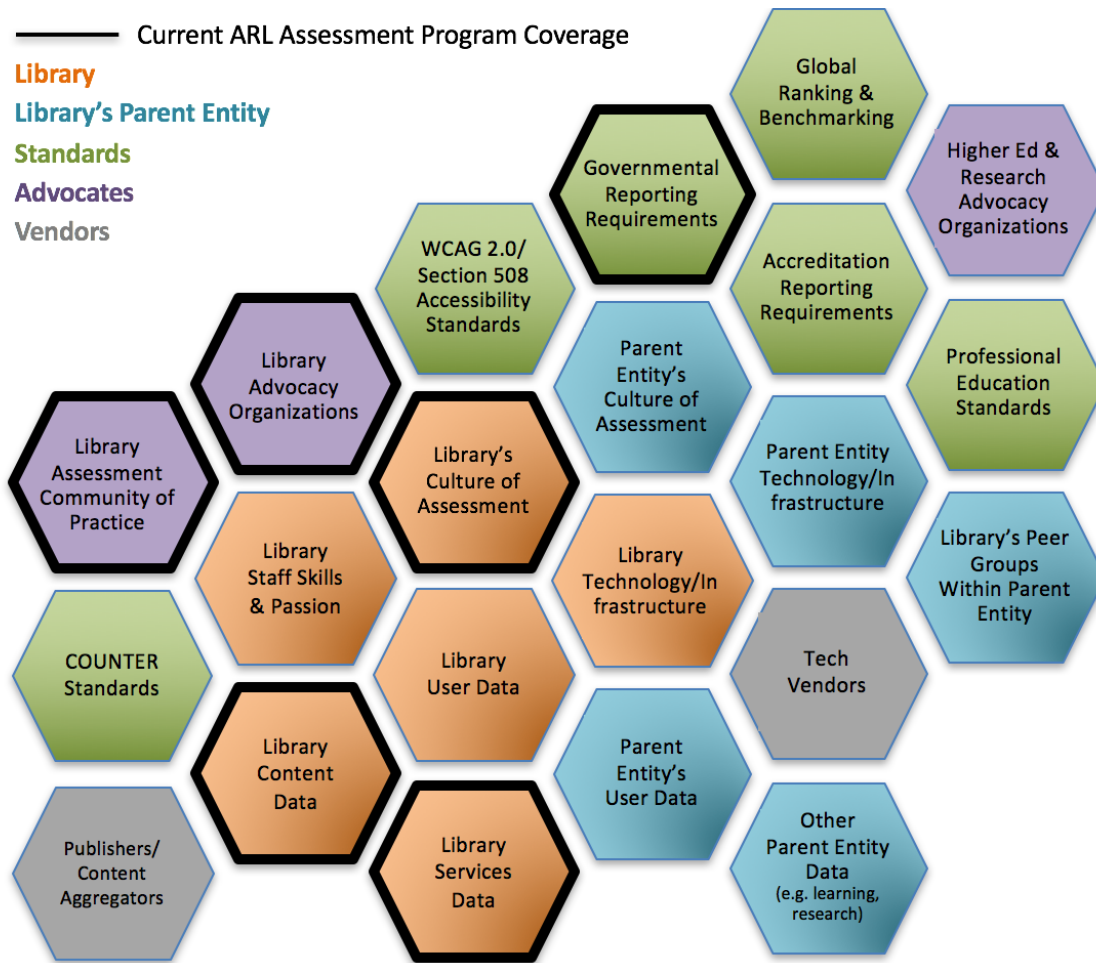
Inputs to the visioning process and recommendations included the following research and activities:

- Interviews (82) with library directors, assessment librarians, assessment community leaders, research funders, and others
- Site visits (4: University of Minnesota, York University, MIT, UMass Amherst)

- Survey distributed to membership of the ARL-ASSESS and ARL-Directors discussion lists (211 responses; 9% response rate)
- Instant ARL member poll at May 2017 Association Meeting (78 responses)
- Review of usage data from current tools (where available)
- Inventory of current ARL assessment programs, services, and tools
- Stakeholder identification and prioritization
- Journey-mapping workshop with Visioning Task Force members
- ARL staff time analysis
- Prioritization of recommendations with Visioning Task Force members, by estimated impact and level of effort
- Drafting of a preliminary road map and timelines to guide next steps

Current Library Assessment Ecosystem

At the highest and broadest levels, the following diagram describes the ecosystem affecting the library assessment landscape today and into the foreseeable future. Most ARL member libraries, depending on their unique circumstances, are affected by some of the elements outside of the library (whether a parent entity, peer groups within a parent entity, externally enforced standards, advocacy organizations, or vendors). ARL's assessment programs and services currently provide coverage of at least some aspects of the areas outlined in black below. The assessment ecosystem is broadening and becoming much more complex for libraries, and the VTF has prioritized which areas need the most focus to best serve ARL members going forward.



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A New ARL Assessment Program

A restructured ARL assessment program should focus on illustrating the research library's impact on society, economy, culture, and public policy. The program should enable members to demonstrate their impact in all of these areas, in addition to showing their role in supporting teaching, learning, and research (and therefore meeting their parent institution's strategic goals). The ARL assessment program needs to “tell the story” of the impact of the research library (write large) and then enable member libraries to tell this story locally in their own institutions. This means that tools for facilitating the creation of data-supported impact narratives need to be balanced with tools for measuring performance and process improvement (the latter of which currently dominate ARL's assessment offerings). Measures such as the ARL Statistics are still important—particularly for allowing libraries to benchmark—but need to shift from input and output data to measures of outcomes and supporting impact narratives. The data collected must have utility to the institutions collecting it. The following sections outline the core components and principles that are needed to meet these goals.

Core Components

The proposed restructured ARL assessment program should include:

1. Vision Alignment

Building upon the vision and strategy defined and ratified by ARL in its recent strategic design process, the assessment program will work with other ARL programs and committees to define, integrate, and operationalize assessment measures aligned with this vision. The new ARL assessment program should align closely with [ARL's vision statement](#) in defining the elements of effective, valued research libraries in the 21st century. This should include an aggregated picture of the impact of research libraries on society as well as the role of research libraries in teaching, learning, research, and the production and preservation of knowledge. The 2016 [Strategic Thinking and Design Initiative Extended and Updated Report](#) expands on ARL's vision statement and provides more detail about what research libraries will look like in the future. The assessment program should both build on and align with this work to define the criteria for measuring success against this vision and to identify where more definition is needed to support a meaningful framework and data collection.

Rather than trying to define “impact” and “value” independently, the assessment program should set the context for understanding and communicating the stories of the research library to external stakeholders and provide the tools for members to tell this story locally. Library assessment is effectively the creation of metrics and analysis of data to evaluate how well an organization is meeting its goals. This vision alignment process should help establish and communicate those goals that are common to all ARL members. Research libraries need to define the values by which they want to be measured, rather than trying to manifest values out of the data that they have. They can also use these values to advocate

for and demand the data that they need from third parties. The ARL assessment program should therefore be led by a strong vision and supporting narrative of what it means to be a successful and effective research library in the 21st century.

2. Conceptual Model and Framework

Building further upon ARL’s vision and strategy, the assessment program will work with other ARL programs and committees to translate the vision into a conceptual framework that provides a shared reference point for ARL members to think about the operational, cultural, and contextual commonalities and differences between their libraries. Following directly from the visioning activities, a comprehensive assessment framework will help research libraries translate values into measures.⁶ In other words, this framework should provide a clear connection between the vision of the elements of successful research libraries and the data (qualitative and quantitative) that are collected to evaluate them. The framework allows for the definition of metrics and methodologies that can be used to locally illustrate a library’s value, as well as the clear establishment of boundaries of data worth collecting. The framework should ensure that all variables and data collected for ARL Statistics either contribute to local process improvement and organizational effectiveness, *or* contribute to impact narratives. It should make clear which variables do not contribute; therefore ARL should stop collecting them. A comprehensive assessment framework should also consider linking assessment activities and data collections with the other parts of the Association that are supporting libraries in their most pressing issues, for example open access, diversity and inclusion, advocacy and public policy, and communications and marketing.

3. Refreshed Data and Technology

Building upon the strengths and successes of ARL’s long history of data collection and publication, the assessment program will reinforce the primary importance of high-quality, meaningful, and portable/interoperable data, and the supporting (and secondary) role of technology. Data should be collected, using a number of methodologies, to measure the effectiveness and value of member libraries in categories that align with the vision of 21st-century research libraries. Data sets should be up to date, consistent, flexible, open, and usable—allowing members to download, manipulate, and mine them with the technology of their choice. Data should conform to common and open standards.

The technological infrastructure should be targeted to facilitating the collection of data and access to the data in its raw form, as well as providing a few, key, “canned” reports and/or visualizations that are commonly needed by a critical mass of the membership. ARL should consider that the life cycle for any given technology, infrastructure, or software will be short compared to the useful life cycle of the data, and invest appropriately in infrastructure that can be updated or replaced while maintaining the integrity and usability of the data. Technology partnerships should be fully explored. Branding, effectiveness, and user experience of all tools and services should be assessed on a recurring basis.

4. Knowledge and Community Support

Recognizing the intrinsic value of the experience and knowledge of the ARL community, the assessment program will elicit, curate, and disseminate that expertise for collective benefit. A unified clearinghouse or knowledge base of assessment data, best practices, and research should support ARL members (and non-members alike). This should include case studies of successful assessment activities and can draw on a large number of existing resources, including the proceedings of the Library Assessment Conference (LAC), the ARL-ASSESS email list, SPEC Kits, and other relevant publications.

A robust and integrated program of community support and training will help ARL members make the most effective use of the core components above. Assessment-related topics—including evidence-based change management and assessment’s role in supporting decision-making, as well as process improvement—should be integrated into existing ARL training and leadership development activities for library directors to emphasize the link between assessment activities and the creation of a strong vision. For library directors, assessment professionals, and other relevant personnel, the use of appropriate online training and “bite-sized” offerings should be balanced with access to more comprehensive, robust, and deep programs. Training and support should give directors and practitioners the communication skills and methodological confidence needed to create local impact stories that are fully supported by evidence, based on the needs of their target audience.

ARL should recognize that the assessment community is far larger than its own members and should leverage partnerships with that broader community and other organizations where appropriate, but also recognize that the needs of its members are intrinsic to the research library community and cannot always be sufficiently met by that wider community.

Principles for Success

In addition to the four core components described above, a successful assessment program should be undergirded by four core principles.

1. Integrate and Cooperate within ARL

The new ARL assessment program should be more unified and integrated with ARL’s other programs focused on enabling capacities and the System of Action. That is, assessment activities should be both dependent upon, and useful to, the rest of ARL. An example of this is to collect data that would be useful to the other areas of activity in ARL (e.g., statistics on diversity), but the integration should not be limited to data. Existing training initiatives in the ARL Academy should include assessment, but also be assessed for their efficacy in helping participants achieve their institutional goals. To provide a more unified access point, assessment activities and announcements should be integrated into the rest of the ARL News and similarly, other ARL publications (such as Digital Scholarship Profiles and other writings by fellows) should be considered as useful to the assessment program.

2. Build and Support Global Partnerships

While ARL has led the way in defining and developing successful strategies and tools for library assessment, other organizations around the world have advanced in several key, complementary areas. For example:

- Jisc has established both a technical and strategic framework for rolling out [learning analytics](#) on a large scale. They are currently experimenting with incorporating library analytics into this platform.
- The [Association for Institutional Research](#) (AIR) has amassed a significant knowledge base of methods, best practices, and professional development opportunities relevant to library assessment professionals.
- A number of UK-based institutions of higher education have developed significant expertise in both measuring and reporting on impact.
- The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), and others continue to refine and develop the data they require their members to submit. Other consortia that administer university-wide surveys, such as the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE), should also be considered.
- The Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) developed a strategic impact framework.⁷
- Various accreditation and professional certifying organizations in the US, Canada, and beyond (e.g., medical, legal, and engineering associations) have expertise in this area.

A successful ARL assessment program should consider both public and private partnerships as a core foundation of its activities—learning from other initiatives, leveraging existing tools and services that might fit the need of ARL members, and ensuring alignment where appropriate to save members time and efforts (for example continuing to align ARL Statistics with IPEDS data⁸). Supporting campus partnerships to create a better understanding of the library’s role in a university’s success should also be a priority. Before embarking on new assessment activities, someone should always ask, “Is someone else doing this well?” and “Might we partner with someone to accomplish this rather than do it on our own?”

3. Leverage Expertise

ARL members have enormous respect for the skills and expertise of ARL assessment staff, and they recognize that their time is a finite resource. ARL assessment staff recognize that the majority of the expertise and innovation in library assessment is happening in member libraries. The revised assessment program should leverage the expertise that resides in the ARL member libraries and recognize that the best use of ARL staff time might be in supporting the recording and distribution of the best practices of members. Designing and implementing pilot projects to test new measures; recording case studies that illustrate best practices; and supporting members to share their expertise are all means to a more scalable, sustainable assessment program that leverages both staff and member expertise.

4. Invest in and Manage Data as an Independent Asset

Recognizing the value of ARL’s historic, current, and future data, the ARL assessment program should efficiently invest time in collecting the right data, and collecting, storing, and distributing it in the most usable ways possible. In light of the fast pace of technological change, this means that data should be considered an asset independent of the technologies used to deliver and analyze it.

Achieving the Vision: Recommendations of the Visioning Task Force

1. Align Assessment with ARL’s Vision for the Future of Research Libraries—

Building upon the vision and strategy defined and ratified by ARL in its recent strategic design process, the assessment program will work with other ARL programs and committees to more granularly define the vision as needed to integrate and operationalize it.

- a. **Define Elements of 21st-Century Research Libraries**—The ARL member institutions and all ARL programs should continue to define what 21st-century research libraries are and do. Some of this work has been done in the [Strategic Thinking and Design](#) report, and the [ARL Vision Statement](#) currently outlines the future trajectory of research libraries. The assessment program should therefore focus on defining the success criteria for meeting this vision. The ARL vision incorporates all aspects of research libraries’ varied roles in scholarly and scientific production, in learning and student success, and in knowledge preservation and access. The assessment program should follow suit and ensure alignment with research libraries’ parent institutional goals and missions. The revised assessment program should also be “modular” in the sense that not all ARL member libraries will have all components of what is defined (e.g., some libraries will manage their institutions’ faculty research data, while others will not), and libraries can easily select those components that are relevant to their own mission, stakeholders, and operations.
 - b. **Create Research Library Impact Stories**—Dependent on the definition of the 21st-century research library, and to be supported by a comprehensive assessment framework, research library impact stories should provide data-supported talking points for communicating the value of any given ARL member library to its institutional and public stakeholders. As not all impact narratives will resonate with all libraries, sharing the methodologies for creating local impact narratives will be an important part of this process.
- ### 2. Develop a Framework for Action
- building further upon ARL’s vision and strategy, the assessment program will work with other ARL programs and committees to translate the vision into a conceptual framework and mental model that provides a shared reference

point for ARL members to think about the operational, cultural, and contextual commonalities and differences between their libraries.

- a. **Define a Research Library Comprehensive Assessment Framework**—The ARL assessment program should base the comprehensive assessment framework upon the definition of 21st-century research libraries. The framework is comprised of modular components that map data and assessment criteria to the strategic objectives of the library within the context of parent institutional goals, and to the operations of the library.
 - b. **Stop Publishing the Current Investment Index and Consider New Measures**—Stop publishing, or at minimum stop promoting, the “investment index”⁹ and explore (through pilot cohorts) more current and meaningful benchmarks. Although not created to “rank” libraries, the index is increasingly used this way and a majority of members dislike this use as it implies that budget size is the only important measure of a library’s quality, and it does not reflect *effective use* of funds. Work closely with the Membership Committee to align new metrics and rankings to membership criteria. While expenditures data is still important to collect, it should not be promoted in a way that can be misinterpreted as the singular measure of a library’s quality or relative rank to other ARL member libraries.
 - c. **Consider Data Needed for ARL Collective Advocacy**—The ARL organization as a whole should identify, collect, and utilize ARL Statistics data points as leverage for ARL’s advocacy of important issues affecting libraries and the higher education, scientific, scholarly, and civic ecosystems. Examples include advocating for vendors to better comply with data standards, or lobbying for open access policy.
3. **Refresh the Data Points Collected and Technology Used**—Building upon the strengths and successes of ARL’s long history of data collection and publication, the assessment program will reinforce the primary importance of high-quality, meaningful, and portable/interoperable data, and the supporting (and secondary) role of technology.
- a. **Create Cohorts to Pilot New Benchmarks**—Define, test, and refine new ARL Statistics and new quantitative, data points (both their collection and analysis) that can be benchmarked with pilot “communities of practice” or cohorts. These data points should inform the research library impact stories, ARL’s other programs and initiatives, and be driven by crucial economic and strategic questions for libraries. The pilot cohorts should include members of other ARL programs and initiatives and ARL member institutions.
 - b. **Refresh ARL Statistics**—The comprehensive assessment framework should prioritize data that is not being collected by other organizations (such as IPEDS) and should support members’ needs to contribute to accreditation or that may affect global university rankings. The ARL Statistics data should also align with other ARL programs, enabling capacities, and core activities—e.g., policy and advocacy, diversity and inclusion, open access, and other key initiatives.

- c. **Demand Better Data from Publishers**—Work on behalf of ARL members to insist on better—and more timely and useable—data about the use of digital collections from publishers. Eliminate manual or individual data collection when it can be replaced by systematic collection of statistics.¹⁰
- d. **Refresh ARL Salary Survey**—The position types and data types collected in the Salary Survey should be reviewed, updated, and clarified on a recurring basis. Regional cost-of-living factors and other data should also be included to enhance interpretability. The data should be made accessible to ARL members.
- e. **Conduct Data Management Process Review**—Engage in a systematic review of ARL data collection-through-delivery processes to streamline and improve delivery times and support member data reporting.
- f. **Develop Data and Technology Partnerships**—Explore formal data and technology partnerships to strengthen research libraries’ position and visibility in their parent institutions’ assessment landscapes. Explore and expand partnerships with higher education organizations currently involved in institutional assessment, including ACRL, IPEDS, Jisc, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL), AIR, accrediting organizations, and COUNTER. Explore possibilities for a shared, higher education data access and exploration portal, where aggregated and co-located data sets provide more value to end users.
- g. **Spin Off LibQUAL+**—Minimize or eliminate ARL investment in LibQUAL+ through licensing or partnership. Explore continuation of revenues through low-investment business model. The focus on LibQUAL+ over the years has resulted in widespread and meaningful cultural shifts in libraries. This is a testament to the success of this tool. However, 31% of ARL’s staff resources expended on assessment program activities are currently utilized for LibQUAL+ (and ClimateQUAL) activities, whereas, on average, less than 10% of ARL members have utilized these tools since 2014. (See [Appendix 6, “LibQUAL+ Use by ARL Members.”](#)) Further, just over 8% of ARL members surveyed at the Spring 2017 Association Meeting identified “service quality survey instruments” as their anticipated most or second-most important assessment need five years from now. LibQUAL+ is, however, much more widely used by non-members than by ARL members. The question is not whether LibQUAL+ is good or useful, or will be of future use to libraries, but whether ARL is the best organization to take LibQUAL+ forward, given that it no longer meets the needs of a majority of ARL members.
- h. **Spin Off ClimateQUAL**—Minimize or eliminate ARL investment in ClimateQUAL through licensing or partnership. Explore continuation of revenues through a low-investment business model. At the Spring 2017 Association Meeting not a single member identified “HR/Climate surveys” as their anticipated most or second-most important assessment need five years from now. (See [Appendix 7, “ClimateQUAL Use by ARL Members.”](#))
- i. **Spin Off MINES**—Minimize or eliminate ARL investment in MINES (Measuring the Impact of Networked Electronic Services) through licensing or partnerships. Explore continuation of revenues through low-investment business model.

- j. **Evolve the ARL Statistics Analytics Portal**—Dependent on data and technology partnership development and investigation of next-generation survey instruments, migrate the ARL Statistics data to a lightweight data warehouse environment that will provide an aggregated, self-service platform. This may be in partnership with another organization, may mean an evolution of the current software, or may utilize open or off-the-shelf software.
 - k. **Establish Web Infrastructure to Support Pilot Community and Case Studies**—License web infrastructure (or make use of IdeaScale or a similar tool) to support pilot community engagement, and “agile case studies” in a way that integrates with a new ARL Assessment Knowledge Base. See 3a, “Create Cohorts to Pilot New Benchmarks,” above, and 4b, “Document ARL Statistics and New Data Case Studies,” below.
 - l. **Establish Self-Service Training Infrastructure, Appropriate to Meet Library Directors’ Needs**—License web infrastructure to support self-directed training. See 4e, “Establish Self-Service, Online Assessment Training,” below.
4. **Share Knowledge and Build Community Support**—Recognizing the intrinsic value of the experience and knowledge of the ARL community, the assessment program will elicit, curate, and disseminate that expertise for collective benefit.
- a. **Establish ARL Assessment Knowledge Base¹¹**—Centralize and simplify access to existing ARL assessment program knowledge, including Library Assessment Conference Proceedings, SPEC Kits, the library assessment blog, and the ARL-ASSESS email list.
 - b. **Document ARL Statistics and New Data Case Studies**—The creation of cohorts to pilot new benchmarks (3a) should be documented and shared in an agile way as case studies. These case studies could eventually replace SPEC Kits, and they should be “published” in a way that enables them to be updated over time. They should be integrated and discoverable through the ARL assessment knowledge base.
 - c. **Transform SPEC Kits**—SPEC Kits fill a need and desire for case studies, but the overall processes for choosing topics and gathering data is seen as slow and cumbersome, and there is no mechanism to keep the information up to date. By following a comprehensive assessment framework and more agile publication cycles, SPEC Kits could evolve into 4b, ARL Statistics and new data case studies. Appropriate re-branding should follow.
 - d. **Integrate with ARL Academy**—Integrate training on developing and communicating research library impact stories and utilizing the comprehensive assessment framework through case studies into the ARL Academy program.
 - e. **Establish Self-Service, Online Assessment Training**—Provide format-appropriate access to training for ARL directors about assessment, with an orientation towards the library’s primary stakeholders and research library impact stories. These might be video recordings of the trainings for the ARL Academy. For assessment professionals, build on the ARL Statistics pilots and case studies, by

providing skills-focused trainings on methodologies and tools used, possibly in collaboration with the [Association for Institutional Research](#) (AIR). Training should be aligned with the goals and framework of the new assessment program and should give directors and practitioners the skills and confidence to choose and effectively communicate data and evidence appropriate for the needs of their target audience and messaging priorities. All trainings should be focused on one of the two assessment areas of activity (impact narratives or process and service-quality improvement) and marketed appropriately.

- f. **Spin Off Survey Customization and Implementation Consulting**—ARL staff has provided survey customization and implementation consulting for LibQUAL+, ClimateQUAL, and MINES. With the recommendation to spin off the LibQUAL+, ClimateQUAL, and MINES services (see 3g, 3h, and 3i), survey customization and consultation would no longer be provided.
- g. **Offer Library Assessment Framework Consulting Services**—Consider offering or brokering consulting services that align with the comprehensive assessment framework.
- h. **Pursue Library Assessment Conference Partnerships**—Find partners to co-produce or assume production of the Library Assessment Conference.
- i. **Maintain ARL-ASSESS email list**—Maintain the ARL-ASSESS email list and integrate archives into 4a, “Establish ARL Assessment Knowledge Base.”
- j. **Discontinue Library Assessment Blog**—Discontinue and archive the *Library Assessment* blog and integrate blog archives into 4a, “Establish ARL Assessment Knowledge Base.” Integrate new library assessment-related posts with the ARL News feed, utilizing a special tag for “assessment.”

Chart of Recommendations' Impact and Effort

The right two columns in the chart below broadly summarize recommendations and their phasing over time. Color-coding represents the following:

- **Green:** an increase in investment compared to current levels of investment;
- **Light green:** a relatively smaller increase in investment compared to other recommended increases;
- **Yellow:** no change in investment compared to current levels;
- **Red:** a decrease in investment compared to current levels;
- **Light gray:** ending of all investment or no investment;
- **White:** to be determined based on investments/disinvestments.

Asterisks (*) indicate potential new sources of revenue to replace any lost revenues from programs, services, and tools that are spun off or ended.

ARL Assessment Programs, Services, and Tools	Recommendations	Impact	Effort
1. (NEW) Vision Alignment			
a. (NEW) Define Elements of a 21st-Century Research Library	invest	high	high
b. (NEW) Create Research Library Impact Stories	invest	med-high	med-high
2. (NEW) Framework			
a. (NEW) Define a Research Library Comprehensive Assessment Framework	invest	high	med-high
b. Stop Publishing the Current Investment Index and Consider New Measures	evolve/transform	-	-
c. (NEW) Consider Data Needed for ARL Collective Advocacy	invest	high	med-high

3. Data and Technology			
a. (NEW) Create Cohorts to Pilot New Benchmarks	invest	med-high	med-high
b. Refresh ARL Statistics	evolve/transform	med-high	med-high
c. (NEW) Demand Better Data from Publishers	invest	med-high	med-low
d. Refresh ARL Salary Survey	update	med-high	med-high
e. (NEW) Conduct Data Management Process Review	invest	TBD	TBD
f. (NEW) Develop Data and Technology Partnerships	invest	med-high	med-low
g. Spin Off LibQUAL+	spin off		
h. Spin Off ClimateQUAL	spin off	TBD	TBD
i. Spin Off MINES	spin off		
j. Evolve the ARL Statistics Analytics Portal	TBD	-	-
k. Establish Web Infrastructure to Support Pilot Community and Case Studies	invest	-	-
l. Establish Self-Service Training Infrastructure	invest	-	-
4. Knowledge and Community Support			
a. (NEW) Establish ARL Assessment Knowledge Base	invest	med-high	med-low
b. (NEW*) Document ARL Statistics and New Data Case Studies	invest	med-high	med-low

4. Knowledge and Community Support (continued)			
c. Transform SPEC Kits	evolve/transform, into ARL Statistics and New Indices Case Studies	-	-
d. (NEW) Integrate with ARL Academy	invest	med-high	med-low
e. (NEW*) Establish Self-Service Online Assessment Training	evolve/transform current training offerings and integrate with ARL Academy	med-high	med-low
f. Spin Off Survey Customization and Implementation Consulting	spin off	-	-
g. (NEW*) Offer Library Assessment Framework Consulting Services	TBD	med-high	med-high
h. Pursue Library Assessment Conference Partnerships	Committed through December 2018, further explore partnerships	high	med-low
i. Maintain ARL-ASSESS email list	maintain	-	-
j. Discontinue Library Assessment Blog	discontinue	-	-

Endnotes

- ¹ Sue Baughman, “Request for Proposals for Assessment Program Visioning Task Force Consultant,” news release, November 16, 2016, <http://www.arl.org/news/arl-news/4152-request-for-proposals-for-assessment-program-visioning-task-force-consultant-proposals-due-december-31-2016#.WcPZPYprzNB>.
- ² Baughman, “Request for Proposals.”
- ³ Baughman, “Request for Proposals.”
- ⁴ For more information about the appreciative inquiry model please see Wikipedia, “Appreciative Inquiry,” accessed September 21, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appreciative_inquiry; and Neil Amato, “The Four D’s of Better Strategic Planning,” *CGMA Magazine*, April 30, 2014, <http://www.cgma.org/magazine/2014/apr/201410038.html>.
- ⁵ For a full description of the scope of work, see [Appendix 1](#).
- ⁶ This should not be confused with attempting to create a formula for return on investment (ROI).
- ⁷ See, in particular, CAUL, *Principles and Guidelines for Australian Higher Education Libraries*, September 2016, <http://www.caul.edu.au/caul-programs/best-practice/>.
- ⁸ See, for example, American Library Association, “IPEDS Survey Adopts New Definitions Based on Academic Library Community Input,” news release, October 30, 2015, <http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2015/10/ipeds-survey-adopts-new-definitions-based-academic-library-community-input>; and Association of Research Libraries, “ARL Statistics Survey and IPEDS Crosswalk,” February 2016, <http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/statistics-assessment/3820-chart-comparing-arl-statistics-survey-and-ipeds-surveys#.WwEcdIqQzZO>.
- ⁹ For history and background, see ARL Statistics, “Investment Index” tab, <https://www.arlstatistics.org/analytics>.
- ¹⁰ Jisc’s Journal Usage Statistics Portal (JUSP), <http://jusp.jisc.ac.uk/>, is an interesting example of an organization collecting COUNTER-compliant statistics and providing tools and services to make them more usable.
- ¹¹ It is possible this will be successfully created outside of ARL.

Appendices

All appendices link to separate PDF documents. Appendices 5 and 10 are available only to ARL member representatives on <http://directors.arl.org/>.

1. [Project Plan, Methods, and Deliverables](#)
2. [Data Gathered](#)
3. [Outcomes of the VTF Persona and Journey-Mapping Workshop](#)
4. [Survey Results Summary](#)
5. **Spring 2017 Association Meeting Poll Results**
6. [LibQUAL+ Use by ARL Members](#)
7. [ClimateQUAL Use by ARL Members](#)
8. [Gap Analysis](#)
9. [Preliminary Assessment Program Road Map](#)
10. **Essential Criteria for Assessment Program Director**

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