

Report of the Library Assessment

Advisory Committee

September 2012

Revised September 2013

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Introduction

In Fall 2010, Jim Cogswell, Director of the MU Libraries, appointed the Library Assessment Advisory Committee (LAAC) and charged the Committee with designing and implementing a library assessment program to address the following objectives of the new MU Strategic Plan:

- *Assure that MU Libraries are able to support the teaching, research, outreach, and economic development missions of a major research university;*
- *Develop a suite of benchmark measurements to track use of: online and print collections, research and document delivery services, consultation and instructional services, and facilities.*

With no established committee examining assessment of the MU Libraries for the previous decade, the LAAC's initial task was to define how the library should conduct current and future assessments. Significant time was spent gathering and reviewing many of the statistics collected annually for in-house use and data provided to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) for its annual statistical report. After reviewing available data, the Committee recommended some new data categories to be collected and reviewed in future assessments. Forms to collect new data were designed, approved and tested by the appropriate library committee or department. In addition, the Committee used ARL's LibQual+ Lite survey instrument to seek input from MU's students, faculty, and staff.

This report summarizes the MU Libraries efforts to assess its support of the teaching, research, outreach, and economic development missions of a major research university and recommends steps to ensure an ongoing, meaningful program of assessment is established beginning in 2013. The report shares data from two principal surveys in 2012 and from existing data sources to illustrate current assessment capabilities. This report is not to be considered a complete summary of results. The report looks at assessment opportunities in the areas of **Library Collections**; **Services to Campus**; and **Library as Place**, then concludes with recommendations on next steps in creating an ongoing assessment program.

A note about Data Sources

Statistics included in this report were drawn from internal MU Libraries' statistics and from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The Committee conducted the LibQUAL+ Lite survey (LibQUAL), a standard library survey instrument developed by ARL, in the spring semester of 2012. A table summary of negative/positive comments as identified in LibQual+ Lite is included. LAAC was grateful for an opportunity to review the results of a faculty survey by the Library Committee implemented in the spring of 2012. The report will refer to this survey as the Library Committee Survey (LCS). LAAC also used data gathered by the Missouri Student Association (MSA) in a survey sent to students in the spring of 2011.

Library Collections

Assessment Tools and Opportunities

The MU Libraries collect extensive internal data on the size, cost, and use of our physical and electronic collections. Electronic collections include subscriptions, purchased digital collections, and material digitized by the Libraries for preservation and access. Data related to size of collections and expenditures are contributed to the Association of Research Libraries, allowing for comparison with peer organizations. In addition, the libraries contribute data to the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) that can be used for comparative purposes. Usage data is readily available for collections that circulate and use of electronic resources. In most cases data can be reported for the current five years, thus allowing the libraries to illustrate changes over time. Survey instruments such as LibQual+ Lite and the survey developed by the Library Faculty Committee provide insight into faculty and student perceptions of the collection as relates to their research, teaching, and learning. In the future, it would be useful for the Libraries to supplement existing assessment tools with targeted assessment activities that would deepen our understanding of how our collections contribute to the success of individual researchers, teachers, and learners on campus.

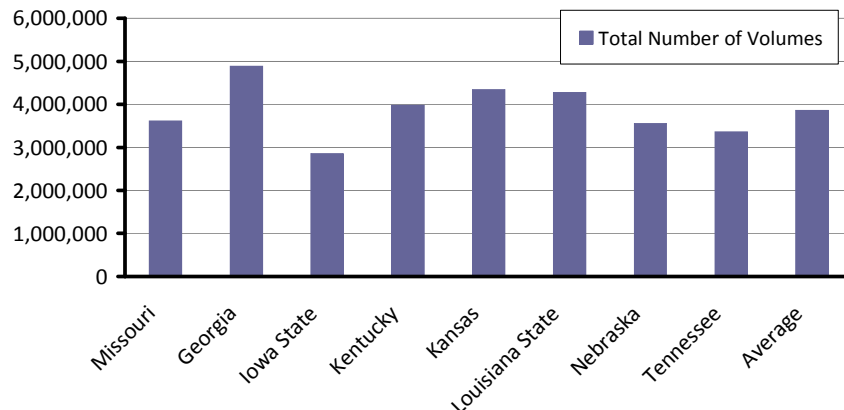
Resources Offered

The collection of the MU Libraries goes far beyond the individual books and journals found on its shelves; it also includes a growing collection of electronic journals, electronic books, online databases and a variety of other types of resources that are essential for education, research, teaching and patient care. The MU Libraries seek to provide the information resources that faculty and students need in an atmosphere of rapidly escalating prices and an ever-changing information landscape. Existing sources of quantitative data provide information on the size of collections, expenditures on collections, and use of collections. Survey results inform the Libraries about user satisfaction with collections and perceptions regarding the quality of our collections.

Sample Collection Size Data Points:

- The MU Libraries have slightly less than the average number of print volumes as compared to peer institutions.
- The LibQual survey and the Library Committee Survey (LCS) indicate that faculty would like to see an increase in the number of electronic journals purchased.
- According to the LCS, 84% of faculty members believe that electronic resources should be acquired versus print resources where possible.

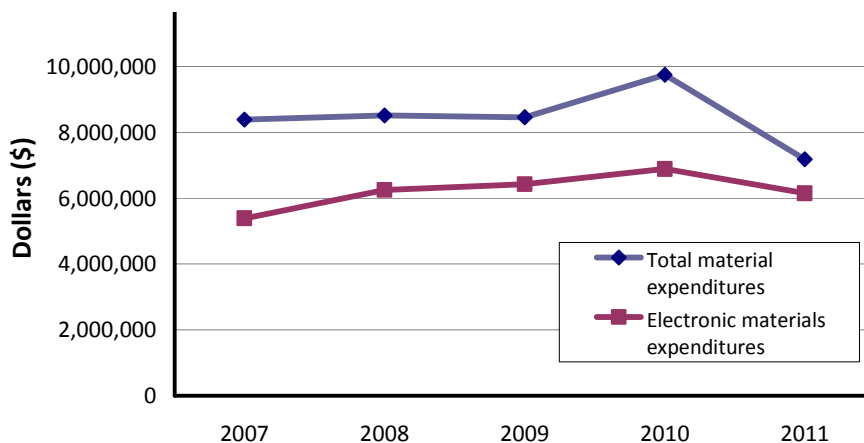
Total number of volumes in MU Libraries compared with peer universities



Sample Expenditure Data Points

- The Libraries are dedicating a higher percentage of total library material expenditures to the purchase of electronic resources over time to respond to user needs and the information environment.
- In FY 2011, 85% of total materials expenditures were spent on electronic resources.

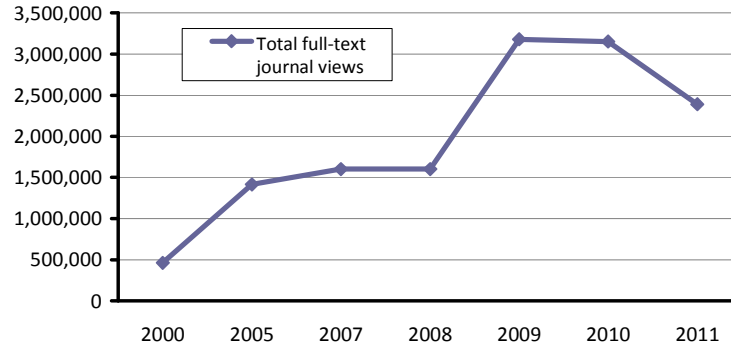
Total and electronic material expenditures for MU Libraries for selected years



Sample Usage Data Points

- Although use of the print collection is declining over time, use of electronic resources has rapidly increased.
- MU Libraries' electronic materials are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to MU students, faculty and staff anywhere in the world.
- Full-text online journal usage for library-subscribed materials that are not freely available online was over 2 million views in 2011.

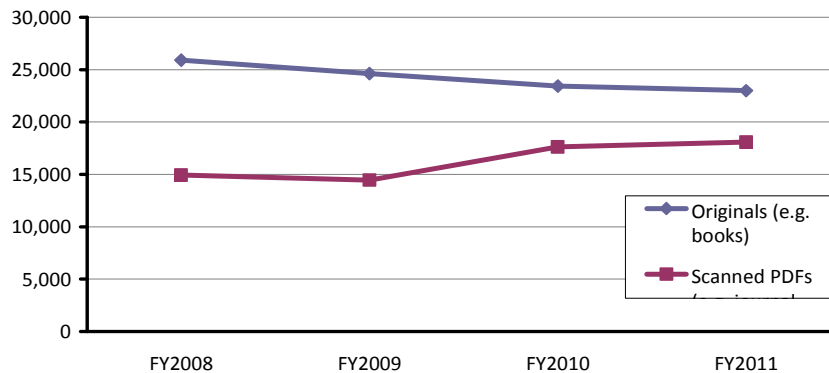
Total full-text journal views for MU Libraries over selected years



Use of Interlibrary Loan

- In FY 2010, Interlibrary Loan delivered 42,950 materials to MU users. These materials would have cost users \$3,888,030 if purchased directly (at \$125 per book & \$45 per journal article).
- According to the LCS, 86 % of faculty members were satisfied with the Libraries' ability to supply materials via interlibrary loan.

Materials borrowed for MU Libraries users, 2008-2011



Services to Campus

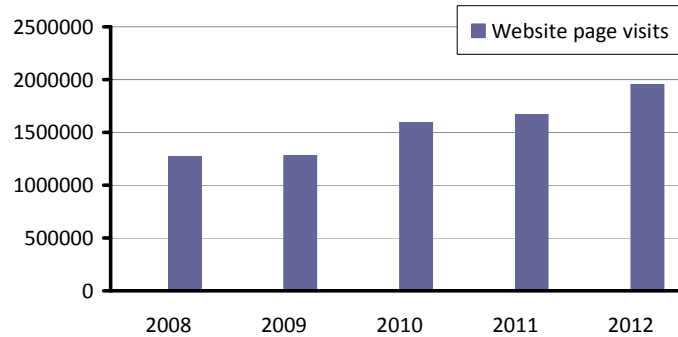
Assessment Tools and Opportunities

Assessment of library services requires use of both quantitative and qualitative assessment tools. Services range from the traditional in-person services to newer online services (synchronous and asynchronous). As part of the current project to review assessment activities in the library, the LAAC has identified new service areas that require regular data collection. Examples include online services related to reference and instruction, as well as scanning and digitization services offered by the libraries. Reporting activities will need to be reviewed annually in order to ensure that new services are represented as they develop. Future assessment activities should include efforts to deepen our understanding of comments compiled from surveys, perhaps through the use of Focus Groups or in-depth surveys targeted to specific audiences.

Use of the Library website

- The Libraries' website use continues to increase.
- The MSA survey of MU students indicated that students used the MU Libraries website regularly with 35% visiting weekly and 41% once or twice a semester.

MU Libraries website use, 2008-2012



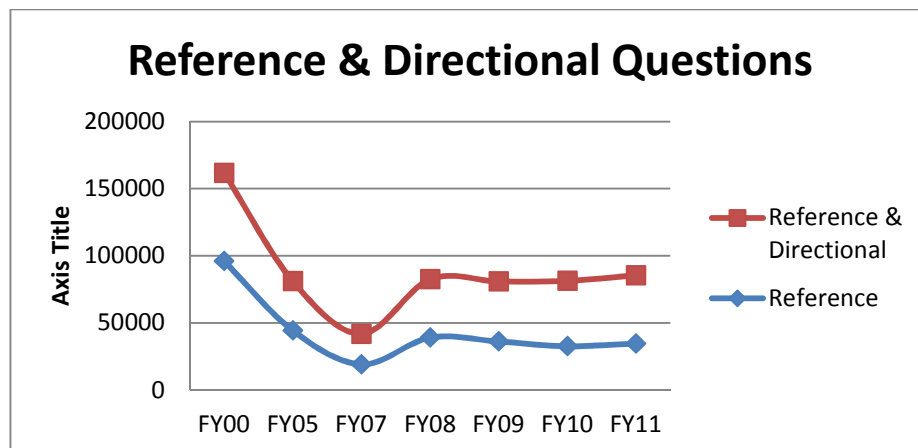
Reference & Research Support

The MU Libraries provide research assistance to members of the MU community, people in Columbia, mid-Missouri and beyond. Research questions may be answered quickly or may require substantial investigation. Users may ask for help from MU Libraries in-person or by using e-mail, chat, or text options. Subject librarians are available to meet with students, faculty, and staff by appointment.

Sample comments from the LibQUAL+ Lite survey related to reference & research support:

"The librarians understand that time is often important in researching a topic or preparing a paper and they regularly turn around requests within 24 hours if not sooner. I have great admiration and respect for them and the value they bring to this university..."

"...I thought the ability to write/email in a research question and get a librarian's response was/is an awesome feature as well. Thank you."



Instruction Services

MU Libraries provide on-campus and distance instruction services for MU graduate and undergraduate courses as well as UM Extension. Instruction sessions are provided for a variety of courses, ranging from introductory composition classes to advanced graduate seminars in biochemistry. The Libraries also provide open workshops on using research tools. MU librarians have become increasingly integrated into the curriculum. For example, Dorothy Carner, Head of the Journalism Library, works as a partner with faculty and has integrated an information gathering and evaluation training session into the J2100 news core course. Dorothy meets with every section each semester, reaching every journalism and strategic communication undergraduate – approximately 800 students each year.

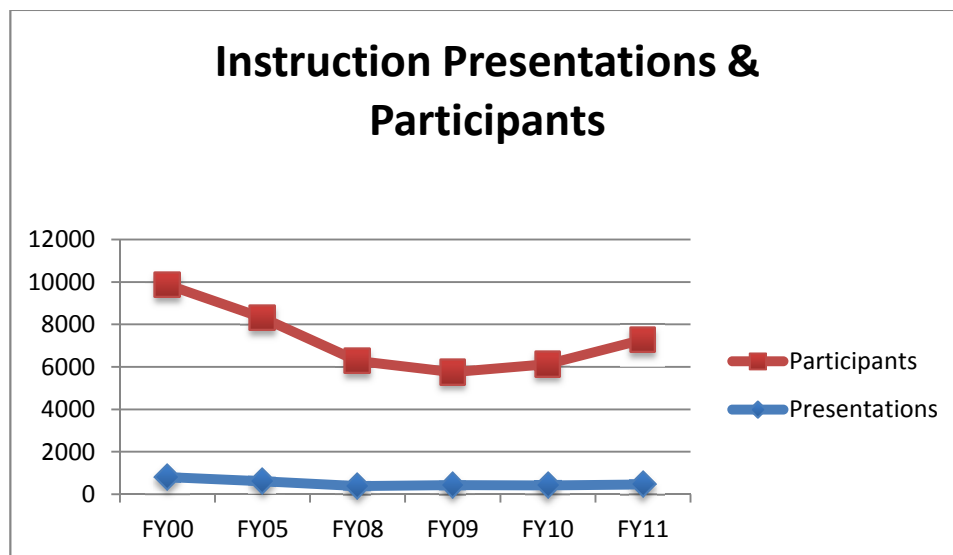
The Health Sciences Library offers Information Services in Context, in which they participate in patient care and learning environments for particular MU Hospital departments, including child health. A librarian attends morning reports, supports residents in their preparation for evidence-based medicine conferences, offers instruction on resources and services and performs literature searches as needed.

Here are some sample comments from the LibQUAL+ Lite survey related to instruction:

"I have always been impressed with the help we can obtain from the librarians. They will customize presentations to our students and help them learn how to search resources for their assignments. What a wonderful asset for our students!"

"I have attended some of the workshops provided by staff on research (Zotero, Endnote, etc.) and felt they were very good."

"The info session on research was extremely helpful. I had this my freshman year."



Library as Place

Assessment Tools and Opportunities

The MU Libraries regularly collect basic facilities data such as number of seats, number of ports, and number of group study rooms. In addition, the library counts at regular intervals the number of people in our facilities. Surveys, such as LibQual+ Lite, provide user feedback on the quality of our facilities. Additional surveys and focus groups could be conducted to identify how to best use our spaces to meet the needs of our users.

LibQual+ Lite Survey

Five questions on the LibQUAL+ Lite survey form the core inquiry of the library's facilities: library space that inspires study and learning; quiet space for individual activities; a comfortable and inviting location; a getaway for study, learning or research; and community space for group learning and group study.

Library facilities were rated highest by undergraduate students and lowest by faculty. While the faculty's mean perceived scores for "Library as Place" were lower than the students' perceived scores, they actually ranked the Libraries as doing better than their minimum expectations in three areas: (1) library space that inspires study and learning; (2) quiet space for individual activities; and (3) community space for group learning and group study. While students scored the Libraries' facilities as generally high, both their minimum and desired means in this area were higher than the faculty scores. We can see from the data that students, especially undergraduates, still desire to use the physical library facilities. Faculty members are not using the library building at the same frequency as the students.

Here are some of the comments from the LibQUAL+ Lite survey about study space in the Libraries.

"The library is always a safe and reliable refuge for studying amidst a very crowded campus. However, there are some times that there are no available seating for independent study. But using room reservations helps tremendously." – undergraduate student

"Sometimes I feel like that the atmosphere of the library is not a result of the library itself but rather the result of the people in the library. The library inspires study and learning when I am with certain people who help to advance that." – undergraduate student.

"Having the graduate study carrels is a great bonus to studying here. But even though we get some good laughs out of the "cages," it would be great if they were remodeled or updated." – graduate student.

"Making a space conducive to scholarly work would not be expensive." –faculty member

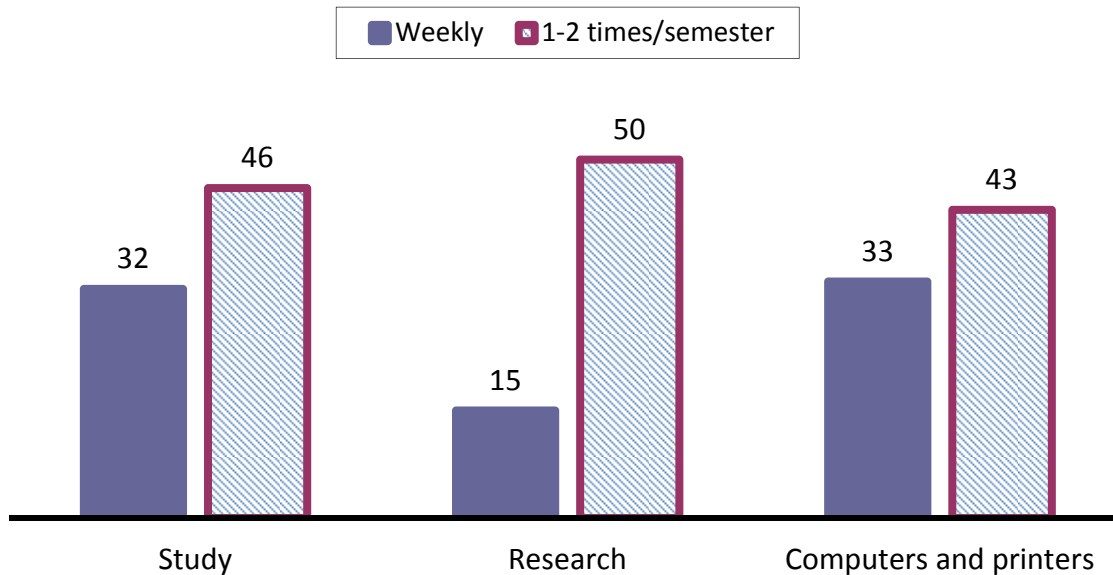
Number of Patrons in MU Library Facilities Annually for Selected Years*

	Ellis Library	Health Sciences	Engineering	Journalism
2000	746,982	195,587	94,224	89,582
2005	1,051,489	210,226	81,508	85,458
2006	1,078,458	222,492	88,449	88,449
2007	878,194	225,260	174,087	63,051
2008	657,051	180,090	173,021	84,231
2009	1,001,433	160,781	179,452	205,047
2010	875,712	161,806	197,727	208,976

*The new James B. Nutter Information Commons opened in August 2004 on Level 1 of Ellis Library. New MU Student Center opened in summer 2010.

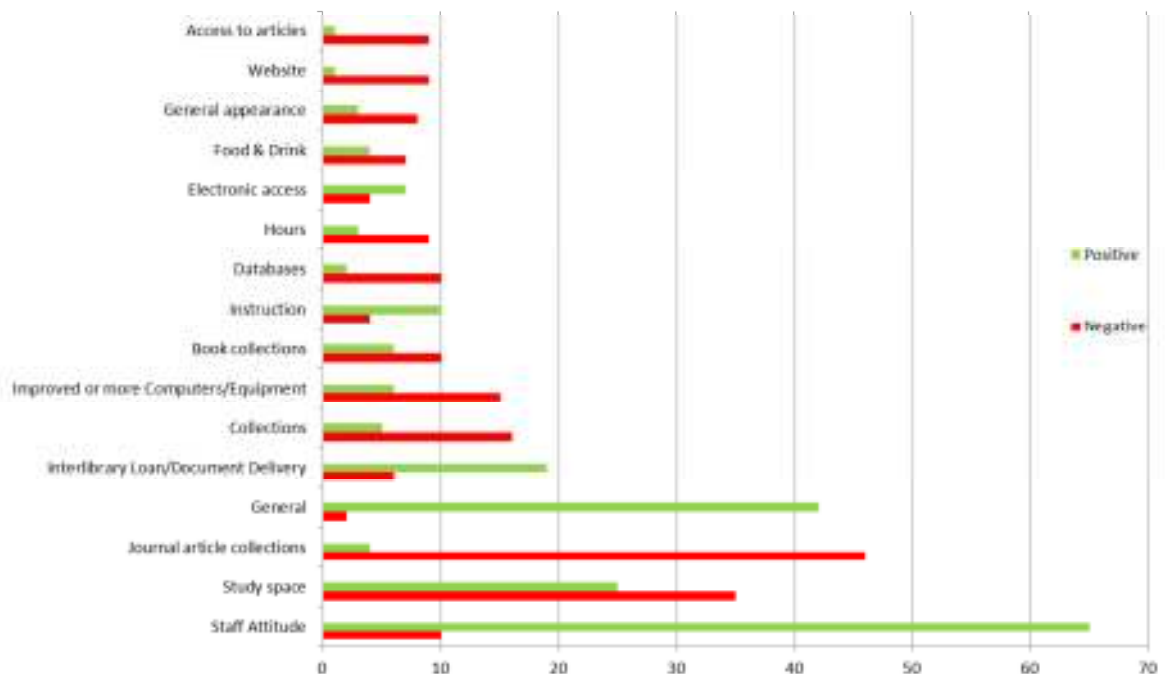
Data from the MSA study also shows that a large number of our students are still using the Libraries to study, perform research and use technology.

Reasons for visiting the library, MSA-GPC survey, 2012



The Library Assessment & Advisory Committee reviewed both the quantitative results of the surveys and open comments submitted by students, faculty, and staff who completed the surveys. Below is a table summary of negative and positive perceptions based on comments from the LibQual+ Lite survey conducted in spring 2012.

LibQual+ comments - positive and negative



Recommendations

Assessment activities such as those conducted over the past two years confirm MU Libraries' centrality to research, teaching, and learning across all of the disciplines at MU. MU Libraries will continue to collect usage data in order to:

- (1) Articulate the value of the MU Libraries to our users and stakeholders; and
- (2) Inform planning and to aid the MU Libraries in making decisions about future actions regarding how we serve our patrons.

The overarching recommendation of the Committee is for MU Libraries to establish and commit to a library assessment program that includes standard data elements and user feedback that can be benchmarked over time, as well as supplemental assessment activities that help us to explore particular issues in greater depth. LAAC will work with the Library Administration, the Library Committee, and the MU Libraries Web Advisory Group to make pertinent assessment data and statistics available internally and to the public using the Libraries' website, as well as other communication venues.

Three recommended priorities for the immediate future are to:

1. Establish a permanent **Assessment Committee**

- a. Charge:

- i. Assist the Libraries with benchmarking by completing an annual statistical report each year and by conducting the LibQual+ Lite survey every three years.
 - ii. Seek input from the Libraries' management team and department heads about new services or other information that needs to be added to the annual statistical report.
 - iii. Implement alternative assessments to be conducted in years when LibQual+ Lite is not administered. (Options could include library-created surveys, focus groups, or other types of assessment activities).
 - iv. Gather data from relevant campus surveys.
 - v. Monitor the Association of Academic and Research Libraries' (ACRL) *Value of Academic Libraries* initiative, as well as other research libraries and health sciences libraries assessment activities.
 - vi. Communicate results of surveys, user feedback, and trend analysis to the Libraries and to the campus community.
 - vii. Investigate and recommend new assessment tools and practices for use by the Libraries, including national assessment instruments that might be considered for use.
 - viii. Partner, as needed, with the Library Committee and other campus units on conducting assessments or gathering data that relates to the Libraries.

- b. Include representatives from the following units:

- i. Administration – RAIS Division Head (LMT Liaison)
 - ii. Administration – Communications Officer
 - iii. Health Sciences Library Representative
 - iv. Two members-at-large

2. Implement **LibQual+ Lite** every three years as our primary benchmark of user satisfaction with collections, services, and facilities. The next implementation should be scheduled for spring 2015.
3. Implement an **annual statistical report** to provide the Libraries and the campus community with benchmark data on collections, services, and facilities. Ideally, the report will include five years of data and a summary of trends. Elements of the report should remain consistent over time. However, the library should review these elements annually to ensure that new services are reflected. The first report, to include the following elements, will be completed by January 2014.
 - a. Collections
 - i. Expenditures
 - ii. Size of collections
 - iii. Use of collections (e.g. circulation, interlibrary loan, database usage)
 - iv. User feedback
 - v. Association of Research Libraries (ARL) data and peer comparisons
 - vi. Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL) data and peer comparisons
 - b. User Services & Outreach
 - i. Research support (e.g. instructional services, liaison services, reference services)
 - ii. Web services (e.g. website, research guides)
 - iii. Programming
 - iv. User feedback
 - v. ARL data and peer comparisons
 - vi. AAHSL data and peer comparisons
 - c. Facilities
 - i. Spaces and Seating
 - ii. Use of facilities
 - iii. User feedback
 - d. Staffing & Salaries
 - i. ARL data and peer comparisons
 - ii. AAHSL data and peer comparisons
 - e. Summary ARL data and peer comparisons
 - i. Total expenditures
 - ii. Expenditures per student
 - iii. ARL Investment Index
 - f. Giving to the Libraries
 - i. Number of donations
 - ii. Amounts of donations
 - iii. Types of donations (e.g. restricted, planned giving, material)