Assessing Library Internationalization Efforts and Impacts: Tools and Strategies

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Introduction

Research demonstrates that U.S. campuses are increasingly emphasizing internationalization[1] in their strategic plans and missions.[2] Many academic libraries also report a growing focus on internationalization through support and contributions to campus internationalization initiatives.[3] As internationalization promulgates on many campuses, academic libraries are being called upon to contribute to globally-focused curricular initiatives, study and research abroad programs, international branch campuses, and integrating international students into the campus environment. While wanting to support their institutions' international initiatives, libraries are struggling to determine if and how they can support these initiatives with their limited resources and how they can integrate this work into their already full portfolio of services.[4]

As academic libraries grapple with questions of how to strategically integrate internationalization into their missions, strategic plans, and work, there is need for a broader understanding of how to adequately measure the extent of current activities, comprehend needs, and develop internationalization strategies. In order to better determine the scope of library contributions to internationalization key questions to be addressed include: How can libraries efficiently support growth in international areas? How can libraries measure their level of activity and know when they have achieved success? How can libraries demonstrate their contributions to their campus colleagues?

The forthcoming *College and Research Libraries* article, "Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization,"[5] is a first step in identifying the extent of academic library internationalization efforts. Based on the American Council on Education's (ACE) *Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses* survey,[6] which measured and examined campus internationalization activities, the library survey provides a starting point from which to further understand what academic libraries are doing and not doing in support of campus internationalization.

Questions about assessing internationalization activities are also being asked at the campus and national level. Results from the 2012 ACE survey[7] suggest that institutions need to develop better measures of the quality and impact of curricular and co-curricular activities that support internationalization. This need for planning and assessing internationalization activity at multiple levels (library, campus, national) presents an opportunity for libraries and institutions to learn from each other and to work together to establish frameworks for assessment.

Contributing to the conversation between the results from the ACE survey[8] and the forthcoming article in *College and Research Libraries*,[9] this paper

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examines literature that focuses on assessment of international campus activities and trends in academic library assessment. The intent is to integrate these two literatures to provide ideas for assessment frameworks and practices that would enable academic libraries to evaluate what they are doing on their campuses regarding internationalization in relation to their own institution's goals, objectives, priorities, and cultures.

Assessment of Internationalization in Higher Education

Assessment and evaluation of the internationalization of higher education takes many forms ranging from measuring impacts of study abroad experiences to macro level evaluations of campus engagement in activities to support global objectives. The literature presented here focuses primarily on the more macro efforts to engage in campus or institution level assessment of internationalization.

One example is the reflective ACE Mapping Internationalization Assessment Tool that enables campuses to compare their own levels of campus internationalization with that of peer institutions.[10] The tool asks representative questions from the range of categories of items on the larger ACE *Mapping Internationalization survey* and then provides a mechanism for comparing institutional results to national averages. Institutions can subsequently use that data as a basis for further planning and action into the future, in relation to their own institutional priorities and cultures.

As a tool, it is simple, involves little expenditure of time, and produces useful information, providing a starting point from which to have further institutional conversations. More importantly, the tool contributes to what ACE has established and is reinforcing, a common language and framework to discuss, reflect upon, and take action with regard to campus internationalization. If further baseline data can be gathered for libraries, a similar tool could be developed to help compare levels of internationalization across libraries.

Another widely referenced document on the assessment of campus internationalization efforts, enti-

tled, "Measuring and Assessing Internationalization," was published by NAFSA: Association of International Educators.[11] In this essay, Madeleine Green distinguishes between measuring institutional performance and assessing student learning outcomes supporting internationalization. Similar to ACRL's Assessment in Action program,[12] Green discusses the importance of both, as a means to an end of improving existing programs and services. She reviews best practices of an assessment process, including utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering, utilizing evaluative rubrics, and the importance of communicating results to all stakeholders.

While not directly providing a suggested assessment tool, Green's detailed discussion offers much to consider regarding best practices for developing a meaningful process for assessing campus internationalization. It would be a very useful core document in developing an internationalization assessment strategy within libraries.

R. Michael Paige identifies ten key performance categories for assessing internationalization: university leadership for internationalization; internationalization strategic plan; institutionalization of international higher education; infrastructure—professional international education units and staff; internationalized curriculum; international students and scholars; study abroad; faculty involvement in international activities; campus life—co-curricular programs; and monitoring the process.[13] To use these categories effectively for assessment Paige suggests a combination of three approaches: 1) determine whether the performance indicator currently exists; 2) measure whether there has been an increase or decrease in each indicator in the last year; and 3) include qualitative, descriptive questions for each indicator.

There is merit to such an assessment approach that focuses on examining changes over time, especially as compared to stated institutional commitment and institutional priorities. It would be helpful, for a single unit such as campus libraries, to consider incorporating a mechanism for examining unit changes over time in relation to larger institutional changes

over time. This would help libraries to understand whether or not they are working in tandem with their institutions in regard to internationalization, and if not, why differences exist.

Rodenburg has developed a measurement tool that allows institutions to identify what they are concretely doing regarding campus internationalization as well as identify how much they are doing.[14] By expanding on Paige's performance indicators, Rodenburg identifies eight institutional performance areas and within each area lists a series of specific statements that respondents rank by indicating whether their institution engages in these actions either never (0 points), sometimes (1 point), seldom (2 points), or always (3 points). He suggests using the tool to define areas for improvement, to assist with future planning, and to identify where more resources may be needed.

Using Assessment to Demonstrate Value in Libraries

Both higher education and libraries have entered an era in which their value is not assumed and must be demonstrated. Although libraries have a long history of engaging in assessment activities, it is only recently that it has become a recognized priority for academic libraries to think more deeply about how to use assessment to articulate their impact and the value they add to their parent institutions.[15]

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has been a leader at the national level in this move towards a focus on demonstrating impact and encouraging libraries to engage in the conversations taking place in higher education around institutional values and assessment. Recognizing the need for academic libraries to be participants in these campus conversations, in 2009 ACRL conceptualized the Value of Academic Libraries Initiative, "intended to empower academic librarians with data and methods for demonstrating library value relative to institutional goals and objectives."[16] With the publication in 2010 of "The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report," authored by Megan Oakleaf, ACRL began a coordinated effort

to encourage academic librarians to participate in the accountability discussions taking place in their institutions and to rethink how and what they measure.[17]

Oakleaf's 2010 report emphasized the importance of linking library assessment activities and outcomes to the assessment activities and goals of the parent institution. The report highlights the need for libraries to support their parent institutions' goals and "… strives to help librarians understand, based on professional literature, the current answer to the question, 'How does the library advance the missions of the institution?'"[18] As Weiner notes, libraries, as one of the units on campus "whose function and influence extend beyond its own limitations," have a very important role to play at the institutional level.[19]

At approximately the same time that ACRL started their Value of Academic Libraries Initiative, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) began work to revise their statistics and measures to better capture library "contribution[s] to research, teaching, and learning" and better demonstrate the impact of library services and collections on the parent institution.[20] ARL's desire to revise their measures reflects the new assessment needs of the current higher education landscape and the changing work of libraries today. This move towards new ways to measure and a focus on how library contributions impact the broader institution are another key piece in the shifting assessment environment.

These recent national initiatives from major US library organizations demonstrate the importance in libraries today of linking library assessment to the parent institution's goals mission and outcomes. Therefore, in thinking about assessing internationalization activity in libraries, it is first necessary to determine the extent and importance of internationalization in a library's parent organization. Is internationalization reflected in the parent institution's values or mission statements, strategic plans, or institutional documents? If not, where does internationalization "live" at the institution and where is internationalization as a campus or campus department priority? Ensuring that library efforts towards internationalization

complement and support the work of the institution is important. Similarly, before engaging in assessment related to internationalization, libraries should consider how their parent institution will be measuring its success related to internationalization and how the library can contribute to and/or mirror these assessment activities in its own work.

After the library has investigated the campus' goals, current work, and assessment needs around internationalization it can begin crafting its own goals, work and assessment activities around its contributions to campus internationalization. Tools such as Megan Oakleaf's, "Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit,"[21] a workbook of over 50 activities that help libraries reflect on their work and how it aligns with their parent institution, and the ACE Mapping Internationalization Assessment Tool,[22] which could be useful to libraries as a way to gauge their parent institution's level of internationalization activity, are useful in helping libraries to determine institutional priorities and then align with those. .

Recommendations for Assessment Activities

Based on a review of the literature which included assessment tools and current trends in higher education and academic libraries, the following are recommendations for elements to be included in a suite of activities for effectively assessing internationalization-related efforts in academic libraries. These recommendations are based upon an overarching principle of linking library efforts to broader campus missions and strategic goals.

1. Before initiating an assessment of international activities, conduct an environmental scan of the library. Research suggests that international activities within academic libraries are largely uncoordinated and dispersed throughout the organization. Multiple individuals and units may be involved in complimentary international activities that need to be considered in any library-wide assessment.[23]

2. Conduct and environmental scan of international activities on your campus. What are the institution's priorities in this area?

3. Incorporate a way to concurrently consider library support of internationalization related activities in relation to wider university goals and support of campus internationalization.

4. Use already-constructed broad categories for measuring internationalization such as those used in the *Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization* survey. These categories were created to allow for direct comparison with the wider ACE data, and have potential to allow for comparisons into the future. The broad categories include: Institutional Information; Library Commitment; Organizational Structure and Staffing; Internationalizing Collections/ Services; Financial Support; Faculty Policies and Opportunities; Internationalization as a Focus. More categories can be added as make sense for the purposes of meaningful assessment.

5. Incorporate a way to measure both the current ways in which the library supports internationalization, and the more dynamic changes that occur over time, at both the library and larger institutional levels.

6. Incorporate a progressive scale that allows for measuring varying levels of both engagement and satisfaction with specific internationalization-related activities. Ratings can range from minimal or non-existent, to acceptable, to optimal.

7. Include a reflective qualitative element that provides further information on institution-specific goals and priorities, and areas for improvement.

Assessment documentation should include sections on how to administer, how to analyze the data, and how to utilize the results to both increase performance and demonstrate value. Assessment tools should be easy and manageable to use, and should be able to be completed without a prohibitively large expenditure of time.

The recent ACRL Assessment in Action initiative has demonstrated that a team-based approach to assessment activities, that includes members from outside the library, has multiple advantages, and we believe this to be important within this specific assessment context as well. "One benefit of the team-based approach …is the opportunity provided by team members from outside the library to become more aware of library assessment activities and what they tell us about the value of academic libraries to the institution."[24] This awareness increases the potential for involvement in meaningful cross-campus collaboration.

Conclusion

Embedded within the concept of comprehensive internationalization is the notion that the top leadership in higher education institutions must be committed to advancing internationalization with planning and resources that widely permeate the entire institution. But how, in reality, does this involve the library within specific institutional contexts? Libraries are making contributions to internationalization, but how do they articulate these efforts with honest benchmarks that help both libraries and campuses define levels of success, areas for improvement, and relevance within our own institutional frameworks, budgetary realities, and institutional cultures?

The "Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization" study indicates that libraries have been engaged in internationalization-related activities in multiple ways and that these activities have been increasing in recent years.[25] However, the study also found that in most respondent libraries, there is no particular person or unit overseeing or coordinating these activities. Similarly, contributing to campus internationalization is infrequently mentioned in library strategic planning and administrative documents. Working in more coordinated ways and using assessment to measure work and impact are tools that can help libraries to be more effective. As the library profession moves assertively towards articulating the value that libraries bring to their institutions,

the time is ripe for assessment of internationalization activities to be further developed.

The purpose of this discussion has been to review the literature in order to consider best practices for assessing library contributions to campus internationalization. Based on the literature, recommendations were made for principles to be incorporated into developing an effective assessment tool for measuring these efforts. Though it has been beyond the scope of this present discussion to develop a prototype assessment tool for measuring library contributions to campus internationalization, the hope is that with further and wider discussion of the presented recommendations, we can develop a meaningful and useful tool for libraries to elucidate, within their own institutional contexts, what they are doing well, what they could improve upon, and what the value is of their activities to their parent institutions. As the academic library community moves forward with assessment of its international contributions to campus internationalization, it is incumbent upon us to encourage our national organizations such as ACE, ACRL, ARL, and NAFSA to collaborate on tools and evaluation protocols to ensure that the contributions of libraries to campus internationalization are included in future assessments and research on the internationalization of higher education.

Notes

1. ACE American Council on Education, "Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2012 Edition" (2012), 1. http:// www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Mapping-Internationalizationon-US-Campuses-2012-full.pdf [accessed 27 February 2015]. Although many definitions of "internationalization" have been offered, this paper uses the American Council on Education definition, "broadly referring to institutional efforts to integrate an international, global and/or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research or services function."
2. Ibid., 4.
3. Steve Witt, Laurie Kutner, and Liz Cooper, "Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization," *College & Research Libraries* (forthcoming). http://crl.acrl.org/content/early/2014/05/29/crl14-619.full.pdf.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. ACE American Council on Education, "Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2012 Edition."

7.   Ibid.

8.   Ibid.

9.   Witt, Kutner, and Cooper, "Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization."

10. ACE American Council on Education, "Mapping Internationalization Assessment Tool" (2015), http://www.acenet. edu/news-room/Pages/Mapping-Tool.aspx [accessed 17 February 2015].

11.   Madeleine Green, "Measuring and Assessing Internationalization" (2012), http:// www.nafsa.org/_/File/_/downloads/ measuring_assessing.pdf [accessed 17 February 2015].

12. Association of College and Research Libraries, "Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success" (2015). http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA [accessed 17 February 2015].

13. R. Michael Paige, "Internationalization of Higher Education: Performance Appraisal and Assessment," *Nagoya Journal of Higher Education* 5 (2005): 99-122. http://hdl.handle. net/2237/16615.

14. Terry C. Rodenberg, "Measuring Commitment to Internationalizing the Campus: An Institutional Footprint," *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education* 2 (2010): 39-53.

15. Megan Oakleaf, *The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2010), 11. http://www. ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/issues/value/ val_report.pdf.

16. Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, "The Value of Academic Libraries: A Look Forward," *College and Research Libraries News* 71, no.9 (2009): 466.

17. Oakleaf, *Value of Academic Libraries*.

18. Ibid, 11-12.

19. Sharon Weiner, "The Contribution of the Library to the Reputation of a University," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 35, no. 1 (2009): 10.

20. Martha Kyrillidou, "Statistics and Measurement: Reshaping ARL Statistics to Capture the New Environment," *ARL: A Bimonthly Report 256,* (2008): 11. http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/arl-br-256.pdf.

21. Megan Oakleaf, *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Kit*. (Syracuse, NY:Dellas Graphics, 2012).

22. ACE American Council on Education, "Mapping Internationalization Assessment Tool."

23. Witt, Kutner, and Cooper, "Mapping Academic Library Contributions to Campus Internationalization."

24. Scott Walter, "Assessment is Everywhere," *College & Research Libraries News* 75, no. 9 (2014): 502-505.

25. ACE American Council on Education, "Mapping Internationalization on U.S. Campuses: 2012 Edition."