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More or Less?: Telling the Library's Story Through the Academic Program Review

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More or Less?

Telling the Library's Story Through the Academic Program Review

John Barnett, Dean of the Library
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What are we talking about?

- Program review requirements and accreditation standards related to library collections and services
- The variety of information that you can use to convey library support for degree programs and accreditation
- An outline or template to help standardize and expedite preparation of program reviews
- Response to the USC Upstate Library's contributions to the academic program review/accreditation standards

Have you felt this way before?

- “The library is often referred to as the heart of a university, but numerous studies reveal that librarians perceive that they are sidelined in the academic program review process.”
 - L. Bowker, The (in)visibility of academic librarians in the cyclical program review process: A corpus-based study of two Ontario universities, *Canadian Journal of Information & Library Sciences*

Why me?

- Many years of experience with providing this information
- Frustration with narrow view of library contributions
 - “Rubber stamp” expectation
 - Contributions may be overlooked altogether
- The need to provide information quickly with limited support
 - Little professional literature on the topic
 - Limited guidance from administrators
- Preliminary SACSCOC reaffirmation response to library

Why now?

- Change in administration—Dean, Provost, Chancellor
- Limited experience among library faculty and staff
- New library services platform/system
 - Difficulty in gathering statistics
- Embarrassing statistics!
 - \$100K budget cut; no book budget for 2 to 3 years
 - Age of collection/the need to weed
 - Do we really want to share this information?

Why at all?

- Offer a more holistic view of library collections, services, and initiatives
- Empower library personnel
 - Gather data
 - Assess collections and services
 - Prepare timely responses to requests
- Standardize the process for whoever takes the lead
 - Become familiar with data sources and needs
 - Create a narrative that can be easily updated

What's an academic program review?

- “Today, a major aspect of program coordination in higher education is the institutional and state-level review of proposed and ongoing instructional programs. Currently, most state coordinating agencies of higher education either undertake an advisory role or exercise regulatory authority over new programs in public institutions of higher learning Some ... coordinating agencies conduct reviews of existing programs with an eye toward either their expansion or elimination.”
 - V. L. Gregory, *The Academic Library in the Program Review Process* (1990), *Collection Management* 12(3-4)

What's an academic program review?

University of South Carolina System Policy ACAF 2.20

- “... A mechanism by which an academic unit may benefit from the assessment and advice of disciplinary peers and reflect on how the program aligns with other programs of its type and/or how well the program prepares students for success after graduation”
- Primary focus of the self-study: *Program resources* and students
- Includes information about the program faculty complement and *other resources and initiatives that support the program*
- Conducted at least every 7 years (exception: professional program accreditation)

What's an academic program review?

External Program Review

- Any degree program that is not evaluated by a professional accrediting agency must be reviewed by a team that includes a total of at least three (3) members which includes peer faculty members external to the university. Also referenced as external review.

Professional Program Accreditation

- Accreditation review conducted by the primary accrediting body of the program/college/school
- Specialized Professional Association (SPA)
 - A specialized professional association that reviews programs within certain colleges/schools

USC Upstate procedure for ACAF 2.20

Other units involved in program review: Library

- “The library faculty and staff will provide a description of the university libraries’ collections, services, and resources that support the unit’s instruction, scholarship/creative activity, and service endeavors.”
- “The Office of the Provost will notify the Dean of the Library each fall semester of units being reviewed during the academic year. The library information must be to the unit by October 15 so that it can be included in the self-study.”

SACSCOC accreditation/reaffirmation

- 11.1 Library and Learning/Information Resources
 - The institution provides adequate and appropriate library and learning/information resources, services, and support for its mission.
- 11.2 Library and Learning/Information Staff
 - The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/ or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution.
- 11.3 Library and Learning/Information Access
 - The institution provides (a) student and faculty access and user privileges to its library services and (b) access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources.

Professional program accreditation

- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
 - NASAD Handbook
 - Section G *Library and Learning Resources* (pp. 68-70)
 - 1. Overall requirements
 - A. Standards
 - (1) The art/design unit shall have library, learning, and information resources necessary to fulfill its purposes and appropriate for the size and scope of its operations.
 - (2) The institution shall place importance on the development and maintenance of library, learning, and information resources to support its curricula in art and design.
 - (3) The institution shall have policies concerned with, but not limited to, the following aspects of library operations: (a) Governance and administration; (b) Collections and their development; (c) Personnel services; and (d) Access, facilities, and finances

Professional program accreditation

- Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)
 - Business Accreditation Standards 2020; updated June 2023
 - Standard 2: Physical, Virtual, and Financial Resources
 - Definitions [p. 27]
 - *Physical resources include* buildings, furniture and fixtures, technology labs, collaboration space, *libraries (including virtual)*, and any other physical infrastructure directly used by the school.
 - Standard 3: Faculty and Professional Staff Resources
 - 3.3 Professional Staff Sufficiency [p. 37]
 - Describe the *professional staff structure* with respect to advising, career placement, IT support, faculty instructional support, *library support*, and faculty research support.

Professional program accreditation

- Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE)
 - Standards for Accreditation of Baccalaureate and Graduate Nursing Programs (Amended 2018)
 - Standard II: Program Quality: Institutional Commitment and Resources
 - Key element II-C. [page 10] *Academic support services are sufficient* to meet program and student needs and are evaluated on a regular basis
 - Elaboration: *Academic support services, which may include library, technology, distance education support, research support, and admission and advising services, foster achievement of program*

What do we share?

Tried and true collection numbers

- Books and physical media in relevant call number ranges
 - Difficult to determine in interdisciplinary programs/disciplines
- Age of the physical collection
 - Sometimes scary results!
- E-books
 - Difficult to count
- Journals (subscriptions more than volumes)
 - Same problem with e-journals as e-books
- Databases/e-resources

What else?

More tried and true numbers

- Expenditures on materials specific to the program
- Expenditures on interdisciplinary resources that strongly or indirectly support the program
 - How to determine?
 - Cost + narrative

Beyond numbers: Collections

- Titles/descriptions of e-resources and journals
 - LibGuides, *Magazines for Libraries*, specialized guides
- Core titles
 - *Resources for College Libraries*, specialized guides
- Archives and special collections (incl. juvenile, curriculum)
 - Collections used for teaching and research in the discipline
- Institutional repository content (managed by the library)
 - Capstone projects, theses and dissertations, digital scholarship, research data, et al.
- Significant gifts and donations

Beyond collections: Liaison services

- Reference/research questions
 - Includes chat and “book a librarian” consultations
 - Numbers may be too general; narrative is more important
- Instruction sessions
 - Content/course supported, number of sessions, students served
- Library guides/instructional materials
 - Guide names, guide usage, link to guides

Beyond collections: Services, programs, exhibits, facilities

- Access services
 - ILL/document delivery/PASCAL Delivers, borrowing/lending agreements, equipment loans, course reserves
- Programs and exhibits
 - Film series in collaboration with courses, author talks featuring disciplinary faculty
 - Exhibits on climate change, Constitution Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women and Gender Studies, et al.
- Facilities
 - Study spaces and resources (“anatomy lab”), computing resources

Beyond collections: Relationships

- Consortia memberships
 - PASCAL
 - USC System
 - DISCUS/State Library
 - Carolina Consortium
 - Lyris
- Collaborations with disciplinary faculty
 - Archival research
 - Digital projects
 - Grants
 - Open educational resources
 - Book and journal publishing
 - Research data

Toward a template

- Standardized approach
 - Data collection (what to collect, from whom, for what purpose)
 - Formatted tables
 - List of topics to cover (some optional)
 - Boilerplate narrative (remember to edit/update)
 - Liaisons and LibGuides help guide narrative
 - *Magazines for Libraries*, et al., help guide assessment
- Sections can be repurposed
- Added benefit: Assists with liaison training

Was it worth it?

Faculty/administrator response

- Often (pleasant) surprise over depth and breadth of library offerings
 - Persistence of historical view of libraries
 - Misperception of teaching/research the library can support
- One size doesn't fit all
 - Some information may be irrelevant to the discipline
 - Faculty/administrators may be overwhelmed by what library doesn't have and what it will cost to acquire
- “It's not you, it's me”
 - Faculty may not be invested in the external review process (Bowker)

Was it worth it?

Library challenges

- Lack of knowledge about how to gather and evaluate information
- Lack of access to data resources
 - Alma materials budget
 - Alma collection statistics
 - Library annual report/SACSCOC scorecard
 - ACRL Benchmark Survey
- Responsibility for the work
 - “The Dean has always done it ...”
 - And that may be OK ... but the Dean may need help

Yes, it was worth it!

- Library assessment for new Doctorate of Nursing Practice
- SACSCOC response was positive and complimentary
 - Noted our thoroughness and completeness
 - “You’ve addressed all the questions we had. We have no concerns about the library’s resources for this program.”

Thank you!

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