Assessing Libraries in Support of Campus Missions

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I’ve chosen to address the educational role of the library. There are many other facets of library programs and services that are an integral part of the campus mission -- such as building collections that support research and teaching - but in continuing Rita’s focus on access vs. ownership, and balancing the functions of collection development with connection development - our role as educators also continues to evolve from point of use instruction - to classroom instruction - from teaching library research skills to teaching information literacy skills.
As I address this role of the library as a teaching partner, some of the points I intend to address are:

- Current Trends and the Campus Mission
- Intersection of the Campus Mission and the Library Mission
- Information Literacy Imperative
- Successful Planning Strategies -- Linking Programs and Campus Priorities
- Determining Outcomes
- Evidence of Effectiveness

What I hope to do is raise some issues - point out innovative or experimental examples from specific institutions - and hopefully provoke you to think about your own campus relationships with your library as partner in the educational process.
There are external variables that influence the articulation of our mission and the programs we design to meet it.

Quality -- Evolving philosophy of service focussing on student as customer (especially true as we move into period of intense competition from distance learning programs)

Accountability -- Increasing involvement from funding agencies, investors, and political leadership seeking to control costs and assess productivity and quality.

Demographics -- dramatic shifts in demographics in student population (older, part time, diversity)

Partnerships -- Greater focus on collaboration and cooperation both as a requirement for success and for the potential of resource sharing and potential cost for cost containment.

Technology -- telecommunications, networking and the power of personal computing all contribute to an ever escalating empowering of the individual to access and manage information.

MTV Generation - Generation that demands a more graphical, integrated, and interactive multimedia presentation of information -- Edutainment - Infotainment

Workforce for the 21st century -- Workplace demanding self-directed, flexible employees with skills in using technology effectively, with the ability to access and evaluate information for use in oral and written communication, and the ability to work in teams.
So - we have these many points of intersection between the library mission and the campus mission --but in order to address the question of how libraries support the campus mission, I am going to turn to the question posed by the President of my own University -

How do we teach students to synthesize what they have learned and to appreciate the infinite connections between different modes of thought and analysis? ... More than ever, because of the dynamism of modern society, students must have a firm grasp of the fundamental methods of intellectual inquiry in order to be equipped for lifelong learning.

Modesto A. Maidique
President
Florida International University
I will be so bold as to speak for thousands of librarians in academic libraries across the country who might answer that question by saying:

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development adopted this statement in 1992:

Today’s information society transcends all political, social, and economic boundaries. The global nature of human interaction makes the ability to access and use information crucial. Differences in cultural orientation towards information and symbol systems make the management of information complex and challenging. Current and future reform efforts should address the rapidly changing nature of information and emerging information technologies.

Information Literacy, the ability to locate, process, and use information effectively, equips individuals to take advantage of the opportunities inherent in the global information society. Information literacy should be part of every student’s educational experience. ASCD urges schools, colleges, and universities to integrate information literacy programs into learning programs for all students.

Pause -- one of the most fundamental ways that the library reflects the university mission is through its information literacy programs.
I want to present two different perspectives on information literacy as an imperative: SCANS Report - Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills--What Work requires from Schools - A SCANS Report for America 2000 -- identifies 5 competencies required by individuals -- one is “acquires and evaluates information” and another is “selects appropriate technology and applies to task”

A second perspective - one less rooted in workplace skills but reflecting the more humanistic viewpoint of the individual's role in society -- is from an article in Educom Review by Jeremy Shapiro ??and Shelley Hughes “Information Literacy as a liberal art: enlightenment proposals for a new curriculum”

They propose that although Information and computer literacy are valuable technical skills,” information literacy should in fact be conceived more broadly as a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact -- as essential to the mental framework of the educated information-age citizen as the trivium of basic liberal arts (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) was to the educated person in medieval society”

They go on to say that this broader definition of information literacy is essential to the future of democracy," if citizens are to be intelligent shapers of the information society rather than its pawns, and to humanistic culture, if information is to be part of a meaningful existence rather than a routine of production of consumption.”
The ALA has taken the lead in establishing coalitions to address the information literacy imperative.

NFIL - ALA helped fund -- focussing on policies; publications; and programming. A major activity of NFIL members is to internalize the concepts of information literacy within their organization, incorporating the goals of information literacy into their own plans.
Elements of a Successful Program

- Developed together with faculty, teaching experts, and administrators
- Integrated into the curriculum
- Sequenced to facilitate development of competencies
- Emphasizes collaborative learning and active teaching
- Incorporates assessment for continuous improvement
- Includes programs for faculty development
- Reflected in planning documents of university
- Part of the Organizational Culture
Characteristics of Some Interesting Programs

- Partnered with Freshmen Composition
- Partnered with Freshmen Experience
- Credit Course taught by librarians
- Integrated into the core curriculum
- Sequence integrated into curriculum
- Faculty-Librarian Team Teaching
- Faculty-Librarian-Computer Team

Partnered with Freshmen Composition -- One of the most common partners - objectives mutually supportive - research papers, often persuasive or argumentative (but reflect schism of Composition programs with English…)
Rutgers - FIU - many others

Partnered with Freshmen Experience (entire thread at LOEX) -- obviously goals of students success create a strong link for info lit skills -- also, if required - provides infrastructure to reach all freshmen (Credit Course taught by librarians -- dozens of programs - especially at schools with a library science program to provide Grad students for teaching - ? Required or not….

Integrated into the core curriculum

Sequence integrated into curriculum

--One of the most desired yet most challenging models -- FIU example - King’s College - PA --“faculty designed competence growth plans for each of the transferable skills of liberal learning” -- sequential - fresh-senior - linked to core - specific application in the major

Faculty-Librarian Team Teaching - such as at Louisiana State with composition
Faculty-Librarian-Computer Team-UWired at University of Washington
Successful Planning Strategies for Linking Programs and Campus Priorities

- Are the campus priorities articulated?
- Do the academic and administrative agendas complement each other?
- Is there a campus strategy for continuous planning? Is the library part of it?
- Is information literacy included in planning documents?
- Is it part of the campus culture?

Libraries as leaders - and often even grass roots efforts between individuals -- but to be truly successful -- collaboration and coordination - and yes - strategic planning - needs to take place at the administrative level. For example -- a case study:

University where librarians recognized the importance and had the skills
- liaisons outreach to faculty - encourage components (but uneven within a department -- some faculty buy in - others don’t - uneven response)

- Dept Head in Library to Dept Chair/Program Director - formal partnership with specific classes - outcomes articulated - assignments developed in concert with department - required for all instructors teaching specific core classes in that dept (relationships still based upon personal/professional relationship -- difficult and time-consuming for library to initiate - success dependent upon persuasive skills/education

- Dept head in Library to Dean of college - formally written into core (still uneven now across the campus

Dept Head in library forges partnerships with others on campus - still grass roots effort - need campus “leadership” to help determine the culture
1. Defining the need for information
   (includes articulation of the information problem)
2. Initiating the search strategy
   (understand that a plan for searching needs to be developed - includes brainstorming, choice of vocabulary, using boolean logic, identifying potential sources, evaluating appropriateness of sources for information need)
3. Locating the Resources -- use wide variety of sources in many formats - include non-library
4. Assessing and Comprehending the Information -- screen/filter the information for relevance and quality -- skimming - recognizing errors in logic - differentiate between cause and effect - etc.
5. Interpreting the Information - Summarize, synthesize, organize, draw conclusions
6. Communicating the Information - organize and communicate the results -- identify important facts/conclusions to share -- create an original product - provide appropriate documentation.
7. Evaluating the Product and Process - measure how well the final product resolved the information problem and if the steps taken were appropriate and effective.
Outcomes Continued

- Use information in critical thinking and problem solving
- Organize, store, and manipulate the information gathered, ready for practical application
- Identify public policy issues relating to the access to and uses of information
- Identify the influence of market forces on information access
US Coast Guard Academy Librarians that published their research findings in the article “Developing Lifelong Learners: an integrative and developmental approach to information literacy”. (Spring 96 issue of Research Strategies) Comparison of pre- and post-test scores show increased student levels of information literacy.

Louisiana State University Library - “Teaching critical thinking in a library credit course” (Fall 1993 research Strategies) - evaluation of students research papers and retention of skills
Questions to Consider

◆ What can the campus administration and the faculty do to create an environment that supports the integration of information literacy across the curriculum?
◆ Is there a strategic planning process for my campus that involves the library in a significant way?
◆ To what extent does the core curriculum include writing and speaking assignments that require research?
- What mechanisms are in place to review syllabi and assignments for research components that would require information literacy?
- Do librarians serve as full and equal members of curriculum and other academic committees?
- Do librarians serve on committees that address student retention, achievement, or success?
- Are librarians part of the design and teaching of Freshmen Experience type courses?
- Are there any statewide initiatives to establish information literacy requirements?
- How does my campus recognize and award initiatives that demonstrate collaboration?
- Is there an office or service on my campus dedicated to the improvement of teaching?
- How many library professionals are engaged in teaching information literacy?
- What kind of facilities are available within the libraries for librarians to teach information literacy?
Planning efforts at the top - in professional organizations -- and at the bottom - on the line where ref/instruction librarians are creating programs and forging campus partnerships -- but the two have to meet at the level of the campus administration so that the goals of information literacy become part of the campus culture.