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## Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

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# Standards for Libraries in Higher Education



Association of College  
& Research Libraries  
A Division of the American Library Association

The *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* are available for download at: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

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# *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*

*Approved by the ACRL Board of Directors*

*October 2011*

The Association of College and Research Libraries  
A division of the American Library Association

Chicago, Illinois



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## INTRODUCTION

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The *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* are designed to guide academic libraries in advancing and sustaining their role as partners in educating students, achieving their institutions' missions, and positioning libraries as leaders in assessment and continuous improvement on their campuses. Libraries must demonstrate their value and document their contributions to overall institutional effectiveness and be prepared to address changes in higher education. These *Standards* were developed through study and consideration of new and emerging issues and trends in libraries, higher education, and accrediting practices.

These *Standards* differ from previous versions by articulating expectations for library contributions to institutional effectiveness. These *Standards* differ structurally by providing a comprehensive framework using an outcomes-based approach, with evidence collected in ways most appropriate for each institution.

### Sources Consulted

The Principles in this document reflect the core roles and contributions of libraries and were distilled from relevant higher education, accreditation, and professional documents. Professional sources consulted include the *ACRL Strategic Plan 2020*, the *ALA Library Bill of Rights* and *Code of Ethics*, the Association of Research Libraries' *Mission Statement and Guiding Principles*, the Council on Library and Information Resources' *Mission*, ACRL's *Value of Academic Libraries* report, and previous ACRL standards.

Issues and trends in higher education have direct impact on the missions and outcomes of academic libraries and their institution and require careful attention. Current concerns in higher education include increasing demands for accountability within the academy; expectation for outcomes-based assessment of learning and programs; efforts to increase graduation rates; greater emphasis on student success; the acknowledged connection between student engagement and academic achievement; and the importance of pedagogical practices such as research and inquiry-based learning. Documents

and publications from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities were consulted in the development of the *Standards*.

Accreditation language, trends, and contexts also inform the *Standards*. Academic library directors surveyed by the standards task force in spring 2010 stressed the importance of relating library standards to accreditation criteria.<sup>1</sup> Accreditation agency library reviewers were asked by the task force to identify characteristics of library strength and weakness within the context of institutional accreditation. The task force also reviewed guidelines from each regional accrediting agency<sup>2</sup> and extracted concepts and specific language (i.e., outcomes-based language, and terminology such as “sufficient” and “effective”). Trends in the accreditation process affecting libraries include an emphasis on using assessment results for continuous improvement; full library integration into the academic endeavor; a move away from a separate library standard within the overall accreditation standard; a focus on outcomes and benchmarking; recognition of information literacy as the catalyst for the library’s educational role; the library’s support of all student learning outcomes, not just those overtly library-related; an alignment of library and institutional missions; and a need for multiple forms of assessment and documentation.

## Standards Structure

The core of the *Standards* is the section titled “Principles and Performance Indicators.” *The nine principles and their related performance indicators are intended to be expectations—standards—which apply to all types of academic libraries.* Nonetheless, each library must respond to its unique user population and institutional environment.

The *Standards* assume that libraries:

1. adhere to the principles;
2. identify and select performance indicators that are congruent with their institution’s mission and contribute to institutional effectiveness;
3. add performance indicators that apply to the specific library type (for example, open access initiatives for research libraries, or workforce development support for community colleges);
4. develop user-centered, measurable outcomes that articulate specifically what the user is able to do as an outcome of the performance indicator;
5. conduct assessments that may be quantitative and/or qualitative;
6. collect evidence from assessments that demonstrate degree of success; and
7. use assessment data for continuous improvement of library operations.

In some cases, evidence does not require assessment. For example, the library might provide evidence that library staff have education and experience sufficient for their positions by compiling a list of staff members with titles, education, and relevant experience held.



In *all* cases, however, principles lead to performance, which requires evidence to measure success, impact, or value.

The two forms of the model are portrayed graphically below.

Outcomes assessment-based model:



Evidence-based model:



The *Standards* document provides examples of outcomes (appendix 1) and metrics (appendix 2). These are intended as suggestions only, rather than as checklists of requirements to be completed.

Like the performance indicators in the standards, many of the sample outcomes could apply to any academic library. However, examples are included in the outcomes that illustrate ways in which individual libraries will differ in the results they choose to measure, based on their own specific environment. The sample outcomes and metrics are provided along with the standards to demonstrate a pattern and provide possible tools with which to construct measurable outcomes based on local factors.

ACRL defines outcomes as “the ways in which library users are changed as a result of their contact with the library’s resources and programs.”<sup>3</sup> *Thus, outcomes are user-centered, whereas performance indicators are library-centered.* Since outcomes are user-centered, it is recognized that they are not wholly under library control. Nonetheless the outcome or impact of the library’s actions is ultimately how the library must judge its success. Local outcomes and metrics should be tailored to the institutional mission, goals, and assessment practices.

Outcomes can be assessed by gathering and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data. For example, to assess whether students consider access to collections sufficient to support their educational needs, one might survey students and obtain quantitative data. The results might be a metric such as the percentage of students who are satisfied or very satisfied with collections support for their educational needs. Focus groups or interviews might be used to solicit qualitative feedback, such as comments. Assessment may involve using metrics to benchmark with peers or track library performance over a period of time. For example, a ratio of volumes to combined total student FTE or headcounts is a metric that could be compared with peers and considered when determining whether collections are sufficient to support students’ educational

needs. Choice of metrics, like choice of outcomes, will depend on the institution, the accreditation process, and the library-specific context. The power of metrics is in their interpretation and presentation. Outcomes, assessment, evidence—all are elements of the continuous improvement cycle.

## Adoption of the Standards

These standards were approved by the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and the ACRL Board. They supersede all earlier separate library standards produced by the College Libraries Section (CLS), Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS), and University Libraries Section (ULS) of ACRL, as well as the 2004 *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*. A complete history of the standards is available in appendix 4: History of the Standards.

ACRL is committed to supporting effective use of the *Standards* and will offer professional development opportunities and training materials on the *Standards* to interested parties.

## Notes

1. Patricia Iannuzzi and Jeanne M. Brown, “ACRL’s Standards for Libraries in Higher Education: Academic Library Directors Weigh In,” *C&RL News* 71 (2010): 486–87.
2. Council for Higher Education Accreditation, “Regional Accrediting Organizations 2011–2012,” accessed October 24, 2011, <http://www.chea.org/Directories/regional.asp>.
3. Association of College & Research Libraries, *Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment Report* (Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 1998), accessed October 24, 2011, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/taskforceacademic>.

# PRINCIPLES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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The standards consist of principles and performance indicators.

## Principles

**Institutional Effectiveness:** Libraries define, develop, and measure outcomes that contribute to institutional effectiveness and apply findings for purposes of continuous improvement.

**Professional Values:** Libraries advance professional values of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights and values, user privacy and confidentiality, collaboration, and user-centered service.

**Educational Role:** Libraries partner in the educational mission of the institution to develop and support information-literate learners who can discover, access, and use information effectively for academic success, research, and lifelong learning.

**Discovery:** Libraries enable users to discover information in all formats through effective use of technology and organization of knowledge.

**Collections:** Libraries provide access to collections sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, format, and currency to support the research and teaching missions of the institution.

**Space:** Libraries are the intellectual commons where users interact with ideas in both physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.

**Management/Administration:** Libraries engage in continuous planning and assessment to inform resource allocation and to meet their mission effectively and efficiently.

**Personnel:** Libraries provide sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.

**External Relations:** Libraries engage the campus and broader community through multiple strategies in order to advocate, educate, and promote their value.

## Performance Indicators for Each Principle

1. **Institutional Effectiveness:** Libraries define, develop, and measure outcomes that contribute to institutional effectiveness and apply findings for purposes of continuous improvement.

- 1.1 The library defines and measures outcomes in the context of institutional mission.
- 1.2 The library develops outcomes that are aligned with institutional, departmental, and student affairs outcomes.
- 1.3 The library develops outcomes that are aligned with accreditation guidelines for the institution.
- 1.4 The library develops and maintains a body of evidence that demonstrates its impact in convincing ways.
- 1.5 The library articulates how it contributes to student learning, collects evidence, documents successes, shares results, and makes improvements.
- 1.6 The library contributes to student recruitment, retention, time to degree, and academic success.
- 1.7 The library communicates with the campus community to highlight its value in the educational mission and in institutional effectiveness.
2. **Professional Values:** Libraries advance professional values of intellectual freedom, intellectual property rights and values, user privacy and confidentiality, collaboration, and user-centered service.
  - 2.1 The library resists all efforts to censor library resources.
  - 2.2 The library protects each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality.
  - 2.3 The library respects intellectual property rights and advocates for balance between the interests of information users and rights holders through policy and educational programming.
  - 2.4 The library supports academic integrity and deters plagiarism through policy and education.
  - 2.5 The library commits to a user-centered approach and demonstrates the centrality of users in all aspects of service design and delivery in the physical and virtual environments.
  - 2.6 The library engages in collaborations both on campus and across institutional boundaries.
3. **Educational Role:** Libraries partner in the educational mission of the institution to develop and support information-literate learners who can discover, access, and use information effectively for academic success, research, and lifelong learning.

- 3.1 Library personnel collaborate with faculty and others regarding ways to incorporate library collections and services into effective education experiences for students.
- 3.2 Library personnel collaborate with faculty to embed information literacy learning outcomes into curricula, courses, and assignments.
- 3.3 Library personnel model best pedagogical practices for classroom teaching, online tutorial design, and other educational practices.
- 3.4 Library personnel provide regular instruction in a variety of contexts and employ multiple learning platforms and pedagogies.
- 3.5 Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to provide opportunities for faculty professional development.
- 3.6 The library has the IT infrastructure to keep current with advances in teaching and learning technologies.
- 4. **Discovery:** Libraries enable users to discover information in all formats through effective use of technology and organization of knowledge.
  - 4.1 The library organizes information for effective discovery and access.
  - 4.2 The library integrates library resource access into institutional web and other information portals.
  - 4.3 The library develops resource guides to provide guidance and multiple points of entry to information.
  - 4.4 The library creates and maintains interfaces and system architectures that include all resources and facilitates access from preferred user starting points.
  - 4.5 The library has technological infrastructure that supports changing modes of information and resource discovery.
  - 4.6 The library provides one-on-one assistance through multiple platforms to help users find information.
- 5. **Collections:** Libraries provide access to collections sufficient in quality, depth, diversity, format, and currency to support the research and teaching mission of the institution.
  - 5.1 The library provides access to collections aligned with areas of research, curricular foci, or institutional strengths.

- 5.2 The library provides collections that incorporate resources in a variety of formats, accessible virtually and physically.
- 5.3 The library builds and ensures access to unique materials, including digital collections.
- 5.4 The library has the infrastructure to collect, organize, provide access to, disseminate, and preserve collections needed by users.
- 5.5 The library educates users on issues related to economic and sustainable models of scholarly communication.
- 5.6 The library ensures long-term access to the scholarly and cultural record.
- 6. **Space:** Libraries are the intellectual commons where users interact with ideas in both physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.
  - 6.1 The library creates intuitive navigation that supports self-sufficient use of virtual and physical spaces.
  - 6.2 The library provides safe and secure physical and virtual environments conducive to study and research.
  - 6.3 The library has the IT infrastructure to provide reliable and robust virtual and physical environments needed for study and research.
  - 6.4 The library uses physical and virtual spaces as intellectual commons, providing access to programs, exhibits, lectures, and more.
  - 6.5 The library designs pedagogical spaces to facilitate collaboration and learning, and the creation of new knowledge.
  - 6.6 The library's physical space features connectivity and up-to-date, adequate, well-maintained equipment and furnishings.
  - 6.7 The library provides clean, inviting, and adequate space, conducive to study and research, with suitable environmental conditions and convenient hours for its services, personnel, resources, and collections.
  - 6.8 The library's physical and virtual spaces are informed by consultation with users.
- 7. **Management/Administration:** Libraries engage in continuous planning and assessment to inform resource allocation and to meet their mission effectively and efficiently.

- 7.1 The library's mission statement and goals align with and advance those developed by the institution.
- 7.2 Library personnel participate in campus decision making needed for effective library management.
- 7.3 The library allocates human and financial resources effectively and efficiently to advance the library's mission.
- 7.4 The library's budget is sufficient to provide resources to meet the reasonable expectations of library users when balanced against other institutional needs.
- 7.5 The library partners with multiple institutions (e.g., via collections consortia) for greater cost-effectiveness and to expand access to collections.
- 7.6 The library plans based on data and outcomes assessment using a variety of methods both formal and informal.
- 7.7 The library communicates assessment results to library stakeholders.
- 7.8 Library personnel model a culture of continuous improvement.
- 7.9 The library has the IT infrastructure needed to collect, analyze, and use data and other assessments for continuous improvement.
- 8. **Personnel:** Libraries provide sufficient number and quality of personnel to ensure excellence and to function successfully in an environment of continuous change.
  - 8.1 Library personnel are sufficient in quantity to meet the diverse teaching and research needs of faculty and students.
  - 8.2 Library personnel have education and experience sufficient to their positions and the needs of the organization.
  - 8.3 Library personnel demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development, maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skills for themselves and their coworkers.
  - 8.4 Library personnel contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.
  - 8.5 Library personnel are professionally competent, diverse, and empowered.
  - 8.6 Personnel responsible for enhancing and maintaining the library's IT infrastructure keep current with library technology applications and participate in ongoing training.

9. **External Relations:** Libraries engage the campus and broader community through multiple strategies in order to advocate, educate, and promote their value.
  - 9.1 The library contributes to external relations through communications, publications, events, and donor cultivation and stewardship.
  - 9.2 The library communicates with the campus community regularly.
  - 9.3 Library personnel convey a consistent message about the library and engage in their role as ambassadors in order to expand user awareness of resources, services, and expertise.



# APPENDIX 1

## SAMPLE OUTCOMES

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This appendix provides sample outcomes for selected performance indicators. It is expected that each library will develop its own outcomes based on the mission and goals of the institution.

The *Standards* include performance indicators which are intentionally library-centric. Outcomes, however, should be user-centric, preferably focusing on a specific population and articulating specifically what the user is able to do as an outcome of the performance indicator. All outcomes should be measurable, but the method of assessment selected—whether quantitative or qualitative—will vary by institution.

Here are examples of four possible outcomes for Performance Indicator 3.5, “Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to provide opportunities for faculty professional development.”

Faculty **integrate** collaboration with libraries into their best practices.

Faculty **participate** in library-involved professional development.

Faculty **translate** library-involved professional development into assignments that incorporate library collections.

Faculty **recognize** the importance of information literacy.

The outcome examples provided follow a simple pattern: population, action (verb), object (what the population does). In the examples above, “faculty” is the population. The verb and the object vary (the verb is highlighted in bold). Bloom’s taxonomy and the many elaborations on it are excellent sources of action verbs. Clemson’s “Bloom’s Taxonomy Action Verbs” is just one of many online lists of Bloom verbs.<sup>1</sup>

### Additional Sample Outcomes

#### *Principle 1. Institutional Effectiveness*

**Performance Indicator 1.6 The library contributes to student recruitment, retention, time to degree, and academic success.**

#### Sample Outcomes

Students improve their academic performance over their college experience through their contact with the library.

Students who have more contact with the library show higher levels of improvement in performance on standardized tests such as the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) from freshman to senior.

Students are able to describe the role of the library in improving their academic performance from freshman to senior.

**Performance Indicator 1.7 The library communicates with the campus community to highlight its value in the educational mission and in institutional effectiveness.**

**Sample Outcome**

The campus administration demonstrates library support through appropriate resource allocation.

***Principle 3. Educational Role***

**Performance Indicator 3.1 Library personnel collaborate with faculty and others regarding ways to incorporate library collections and services into effective education experiences for students.**

**Sample Outcomes**

Faculty seek the input of librarians on course and assignment development.

Students increasingly use library collections for both curricular and cocurricular information needs.

Students engage with librarians in a variety of ways and contexts.

Students and faculty value libraries, the expertise of library personnel, and the importance of lifelong learning.

Students and faculty articulate the value of the library in the student's educational experience.

Students and faculty consult with librarians on work requiring information resources.

Faculty convey the importance of lifelong learning to their students and in their syllabi.

Faculty convey the importance of lifelong learning to their students and in their syllabi for all programs that lead to certificates, applied associate degrees, and transfer degrees. (Sample for a community college.)

**Performance Indicator 3.2 Library personnel collaborate with faculty to embed information literacy learning outcomes into curricula, courses, and assignments.**

## Sample Outcomes

Faculty include information literacy learning outcomes in their syllabi.

Faculty introduce and reinforce information literacy learning outcomes through assignment design and scaffolding.

Faculty require increasingly sophisticated demonstration of student information literacy learning outcomes as students proceed to graduation.

Faculty evaluate program curricula for effectiveness in supporting the learning of information literacy skills.

Students demonstrate information literacy skills and abilities.

Students achieve a passing score on a standardized test like *iSkills*.

Students include a variety of appropriate resources in bibliographies.

Students articulate rationale for evaluating resources.

Students demonstrate ability to define problems, access and evaluate resources, and use information ethically.

### **Performance Indicator 3.3 Library personnel model best pedagogical practices for classroom teaching, online tutorial design, and other educational practices.**

#### Sample Outcomes

Students evaluate classes given by librarians as effective and interesting.

Students rate online tutorials as educational and engaging.

Faculty value librarian input on teaching and learning techniques.

### **Performance Indicator 3.4 Library personnel provide regular instruction in a variety of contexts and employ multiple learning platforms and pedagogies.**

#### Sample Outcomes

Distance education students have instruction available virtually and/or in their class software.

Students can select among multiple options for instruction, choosing their preferred method.

Faculty find instruction in information literacy skills that meet the diverse learning styles of their students.

**Performance Indicator 3.5 Library personnel collaborate with campus partners to provide opportunities for faculty professional development.**

**Sample Outcomes**

Faculty participate in workshops and other professional opportunities provided by librarians in collaboration with other campus partners.

Faculty recognize the ways to evaluate information literacy skill levels as a consequence of library-involved professional development.

Faculty put into practice techniques to embed information literacy as a consequence of library-involved professional development.

Faculty choose critical steps in research assignments that are needed for student understanding as a consequence of library-involved professional development.

Faculty judge that their students have improved after applying skills from library-involved professional development.

Faculty judge that their research assignments have improved after applying skills from library-involved professional development.

Faculty judge librarians to be collaborators in educating students.

Faculty describe librarians as sources of help to their students.

Campus partners recognize the value of collaborating with libraries to design faculty professional development opportunities.

Faculty positively rate their experiences in workshops and other professional opportunities provided by librarians in collaboration with other campus partners.

**Performance Indicator 3.6 The library has the IT infrastructure to keep current with advances in teaching and learning technologies.**

**Sample Outcomes**

Students evaluate the library as cutting-edge in technology.

Students engage technology to learn and communicate with library personnel.

Faculty judge the library's pedagogical methods using technology to be sufficient for their purposes.

### ***Principle 4. Discovery***

**Performance Indicator 4.4 The library creates and maintains interfaces and system architectures that include all resources and facilitates access from preferred user starting points.**

#### **Sample Outcomes**

Faculty and students can access collections needed for educational and research needs from all user locations.

Users choose the library web interface as one of the first steps in their finding activities.

Users demonstrate effective access to library resources no matter what their starting point.

Users characterize the library interface as easy to find and intuitive to navigate.

Users integrate library interfaces and architectures into their daily search behaviors.

Users judge the library as up-to-date in methods provided for access.

Librarians use library interfaces to find all components of the library collection.

Users choose library interfaces to find materials for their information needs.

Users judge integration of library interfaces and resources found through the library as one reason for their success.

**Performance Indicator 4.6 The library provides one-on-one assistance through multiple platforms to help users find information.**

#### **Sample Outcomes**

Users enhance their research skills through one-on-one consultation with librarians.

Users expand the types of sources (e.g., multiple formats—books, journals, primary sources, etc.) consulted when doing research as a result of a one-on-one consultation with librarians.

Users readily transfer the skills learned through one-on-one consultation with a librarian to other research contexts/assignments.

Users recommend the one-on-one research assistance to their classmates and/or friends.

### ***Principle 5. Collections***

#### **Performance Indicator 5.1 The library provides access to collections aligned with areas of research, curricular foci, or institutional strengths.**

##### **Sample Outcomes**

Faculty and students judge access to collections sufficient to support their educational and research needs.

Faculty, students, and community users are satisfied with the collections provided by libraries for their educational, business, and research needs. (Sample for a community college or joint use public/academic library.)

Students discover the appropriate library resources needed for their coursework.

Faculty locate data sets needed for their research. (Sample for research libraries.)

#### **Performance Indicator 5.5 The library educates users on issues related to economic and sustainable models of scholarly communication.**

##### **Sample Outcome**

Faculty choose to deposit their scholarly work in the institutional repository. (Sample for research libraries.)

### ***Principle 8. Personnel***

#### **Performance Indicator 8.1 Library personnel are sufficient in quantity to meet the diverse teaching and research needs of faculty and students.**

##### **Sample Outcome**

Faculty and students consider library personnel sufficient in quantity to meet their research and instruction needs.

#### **Performance Indicator 8.2 Library personnel have education and experience sufficient to their positions.**

## Sample Outcome

Faculty and students consider library personnel sufficient in quality to meet their research and instruction needs.

### ***Principle 9. External Relations***

**Performance Indicator 9.1 The library contributes to external relations through communications, publications, events, and donor cultivation and stewardship.**

## Sample Outcomes

The community demonstrates its appreciation of the library.

The community demonstrates active use of the library.

### ***Notes***

1. Clemson University Office of Institutional Assessment, "Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs," accessed October 24, 2011, <http://www.clemson.edu/assessment/assessmentpractices/referencematerials/documents/Blooms%20Taxonomy%20Action%20Verbs.pdf>.

## APPENDIX 2

# BENCHMARKING AND PEER COMPARISON

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### Use and Value of Institutional Peer Comparisons

Benchmarking is commonly used as an evaluation and self-improvement tool in higher education. Many academic institutions use benchmarks to compare themselves with similar institutions in order to identify their comparative strengths and weaknesses. Benchmarking is widely used as a strategy to enhance institutional quality and effectiveness.

Internal comparisons from one year to the next within the same institution, while useful for tracking internal progress, are limited. External comparisons reveal how an institution is performing with respect to similar schools (peers). The judicious selection and use of metrics can be used to develop a more informed picture of institutional standing within the higher education marketplace. For example, benchmarking could be used to demonstrate whether an institution or its library is funded or staffed at levels comparable to similar institutions in a geographic area or within a particular Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) classification.<sup>1</sup>

Libraries are encouraged to use existing institutional peer groups for comparisons. If such a group is unavailable, it is highly advisable to develop one or more peer groups in consultation with senior institutional leadership. Many institutions have two peer groups: actual (truly comparable institutions) and aspirational (what the institution aspires to become in five years). This information may be available from the registrar's office, office of institutional research/advancement, etc.

A peer group can be identified using criteria such as the institutional mission, reputation, selectivity for admission, size of budget, size of endowment, and so forth. IPEDS provides a wealth of information to facilitate the selection of peer institutions as well as a process for testing institutional characteristics (such as pricing and tuition, retention, enrollment, budget, etc.). The new IPEDS approach to classifying postsecondary institutions offers many more defining characteristics than earlier editions. For true “apples to apples” comparisons, one will have to manually add more specific and descriptive parameters such as institutional governance, subcategories of general classifications (such as size of master's institution and type of baccalaureate institution), and level of research for doctorate universities. Note, however, that the more parameters (or characteristics) specified, the less likely it is that a sufficiently large peer group of institutions will be identified.

Once a peer group has been determined, points of comparison can be made to compare the strength of the library with its peers. Professional associations, government agencies, and other organizations collect and provide access to academic library statistics that can be used for benchmarking. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)



publishes data from the biennial Academic Library Survey, which provides “descriptive statistics on about 3,700 academic libraries in 50 states and the District of Columbia.”<sup>2</sup> Free access to the peer comparison tool is available online.<sup>3</sup> The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) collects quantitative and qualitative data for 126 of the largest research libraries in North America that “describe the collections, expenditures, staffing, and service activities for ARL member libraries”<sup>4</sup> and offers access via online subscription.<sup>5</sup> The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) conducts an annual survey of academic libraries and offers an online service providing access to the ACRL and NCES survey data starting from 1998 and 2000, respectively. ACRL*Metrics*<sup>6</sup> provides turn-key benchmarking templates based on ratios recommended in *Viewing Library Metrics from Different Perspective: Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes*,<sup>7</sup> including

#### **Staff Expenditures per Student**

- Total staff expenditures per full-time undergraduate student
- Total staff expenditures per part-time undergraduate student
- Total staff expenditures per full-time graduate student
- Total staff expenditures per part-time graduate student

#### **Salary and Wages Expenditures per Enrolled Student**

- Salaries and wages professional staff per enrolled student
- Salaries and wages support staff per enrolled student
- Salaries and wages student assistants per enrolled student

#### **Enrolled Students per Staff Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)**

- Full-time undergraduate students per staff FTE
- Part-time undergraduate students per staff FTE
- Full-time graduate students per staff FTE
- Part-time graduate students per staff FTE

#### **Staffing Percentages**

- % professional staff to total staff
- % support staff to total staff
- % student assistants to total staff

#### **Total Collection Expenditures per Student**

- Total library materials expenditures per full-time undergraduate student
- Total library materials expenditures per part-time undergraduate student
- Total library materials expenditures per full-time graduate student
- Total library materials expenditures per part-time graduate student

#### **Total Operating Expenditures per Student**

- Total operating expenditures per full-time undergraduate student
- Total operating expenditures per part-time undergraduate student
- Total operating expenditures per full-time graduate student
- Total operating expenditures per part-time graduate student

## **Process Metrics (Cost per Hour Open)**

### **Selected Holdings Ratios**

- Holdings per circulation
- Circulation per holdings
- Average cost of current serials

### **Circulation per Student**

### **Participants at Group Presentations**

- Participants at group presentations per full-time undergraduate student
- Participants at group presentations per part-time undergraduate student
- Participants at group presentations per full-time graduate student
- Participants at group presentations per part-time graduate student
- Participants at group presentations per enrolled student

Benchmarking templates are also available to calculate other ratios, including

### **Other Expenditure Ratios**

- Total library materials expenditures per instructional faculty
- Total expenditures per instructional faculty
- Other operating expenditures per instructional faculty
- Staff expenditures per instructional faculty
- Total library resources expenditures per faculty
- Serial expenditures as % of total library materials expenditures
- Monograph expenditures as % of total library materials expenditures
- E-book expenditures as % of monograph expenditures
- Salary and wages expenditures as % of total library expenditures
- Other operating expenditures as % of total library expenditures

Additional ratios that can be derived using *ACRLMetrics* include

- Volumes per full-time students (undergraduate and graduate)
- Volumes per part-time students (undergraduate and graduate)
- Volumes per full-time faculty
- Volumes added per year per full-time students (undergraduate and graduate)
- Volumes added per year per part-time students (undergraduate and graduate)
- Volumes added per year per full-time faculty
- Ratio of electronic serial titles to print serial titles
- Ratio of reference transaction to student enrollment (full- and/or part-time)

## **Notes**

1. National Center for Education Statistics, "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System," accessed October 24, 2011, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>.
2. National Center for Education Statistics, "Academic Library Survey Design," accessed October 24, 2011, [http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/aca\\_survdesign.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/aca_survdesign.asp).

3. National Center for Education Statistics, "Compare Academic Libraries," accessed October 24, 2011, <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/compare/>.
4. Association of Research Libraries, "ARL Statistics," accessed October 24, 2011, <http://www.arl.org/stats/annualsurveys/arlstats/index.shtml>.
5. Pricing for the ARL Statistics® Interactive Edition is available at <http://interactive.arlstatistics.org/>.
6. Pricing for ACRLMetrics is available at <http://www.acrlmetrics.com>.
7. Robert E. Dugan, Peter Hernon, and Danuta A. Nitecki, *Viewing Library Metrics from Different Perspective: Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes* (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2009).

## APPENDIX 3

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## APPENDIX 4

# HISTORY OF THE STANDARDS

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These standards were approved by the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and the ACRL Board. They supersede all earlier separate library standards produced by the College Libraries Section (CLS), Community and Junior College Libraries Section (CJCLS), and University Libraries Section (ULS) of ACRL, as well as the 2004 *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*.

The first edition of the college library standards was published in 1959; subsequent editions were published in 1975, 1986, 1995, and 2000. Standards for two-year institutions were first published in 1960 and revised in 1979, 1990, and 1994. Standards for university libraries were first issued in 1979 and revised in 1989. In 1998, on the recommendation of the Task Force on Academic Library Outcomes Assessment, the ACRL Board mandated that all future standards incorporate outcomes assessment. The 2000 edition of “Standards for College Libraries” was the first to incorporate outcomes assessment and was considered a model for the other two library standards. Representatives from the standards committees of the CLS, CJCLS, and ULS sections met and eventually recommended that the new College Library standards be adapted as a single comprehensive standard for use by all academic and technical libraries. ACRL formed a task force in 2002 to accomplish this task. In June 2004, the ACRL Standards and Accreditation Committee and the ACRL Board approved the 2004 document, and the three extant library standards were rescinded.

In 2009, then-ACRL President Lori Goetsch charged a task force to review and revise the standards. A survey of academic library directors was conducted in the spring of 2010. In March 2011, a draft of the standards was published on the ACRL website and made available for comments through a blog. A hearing at the ACRL 2011 Conference in April 2011 provided members with an additional opportunity to provide comments and feedback.

The 2011 *Standards* differ from previous versions by articulating expectations for library contributions to institutional effectiveness. These *Standards* differ structurally by providing a comprehensive framework using an outcomes-based approach, with evidence collected in ways most appropriate for each institution.

## **APPENDIX 5**

# **MEMBERS OF THE ACRL *STANDARDS FOR LIBRARIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION* TASK FORCE**

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Mary Reichel  
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Joan Ruelle  
Hollins University

Lisa Stillwell  
Franklin & Marshall College

Mary Jane Petrowski (Staff Liaison)  
Association of College & Research Libraries

Lori Goetsch (Board Liaison)  
Kansas State University





# CITING THE STANDARDS

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## **American Psychological Association (APA Style)**

*Standards for libraries in higher education.* (2011). Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.

### *Online citation*

Standards for libraries in higher education. (2011) Retrieved [insert month-day-year accessed] from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>

## **Chicago Manual of Style**

*Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.* Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011.

### *Online citation*

Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011; <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries> (accessed month-day-year).

## **Modern Language Association (MLA Style)**

*Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.* Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2011.

### *Online citation*

“Standards for Libraries in Higher Education.” 2011. Association of College & Research Libraries. [Day-month-year accessed] < <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries> >



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