NCES Academic Library Survey
Advisory Committee Meeting
Midwinter Meeting 2003
Philadelphia, PA
Minutes

Meeting: Friday, January 24, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Marriott, Room 301

Present:
Committee Members: Susan Anderson, Lynn Chmelir, Denise Davis, Brinley Franklin, Martha Kyrillidou, Bill Miller, Carolyn Norman, Leland Park

Ex Officio: Mary Jo Lynch (ALA), Bob Molyneux (NCLIS), Patty O’Shea (Census), Hugh Thompson (ACRL), Jeff Williams (NCES), Kaleen Vaden (Census), Kat Bork (ALA)

1. Preliminaries
a. Introductions
   Brinley Franklin is a new member of the committee, replacing Stanley Wilder. Bob Molyneux replaces Denise Davis as the NCLIS representative. Kaleen Vaden is the new survey director for ALS at Census.

b. Logistics (breaks, other)
   Mary Jo noted that one of her goals for this meeting was to involve the committee in promoting registration for the survey in their respective states and elsewhere.

c. Minutes of Meeting in Atlanta
   The minutes were approved by consensus. Jeff Williams reported on two matters raised in those minutes. Re data suppression on the Peer Tool, Jeff reported that data on salaries was suppressed if privacy was a problem. Re having data from prior years in the Peer Tool, Jeff reported that it was not possible for cost reasons at this time. Carolyn Norman asked if earlier years could be available in Excel. Jeff agreed to investigate. He also reported that ALS data files for some past years are currently NOT available because suppression of private information is not complete.

Information Items

2. Status of 2000 data report (Jeff Williams)
   The 2000 data was added into the peer tool in November 2002. He already has first full draft of the E.D. TABS report, and is expecting the release of the final version to be in March 2003. Usually someone from this committee serves as a reviewer of the report. Any interest in this position should be directed to Jeff.

3. Status of 2002 data collection (Patty O’Shea – Census)
   • Patty noted that almost ½ are not registered and reminded the committee that the deadline for libraries to report their data via the Web is February 14th.
   • Mary Jo asked committee members to help get libraries to enter their data promptly.
   • NCES needs at least an 85% response rate. In the 2000 survey, there was a big rush of libraries reporting data in last two weeks, so hopefully that will happen again. Jeff said he plans to extend the survey deadline rather than let the survey fail should an 85% response rate not be achieved by February 14th. But he advised the committee to not tell the libraries that.
Mary Jo noted that states such as Washington and Florida are in financial trouble and the LRs need extra help.
Patty asked the committee to focus on registration. Once the key holders register, she can prod them into completing the survey.
Discussion ensued of the possibility that NCES email messages reminding key holders about the survey are being labeled as SPAM and deleted. Bob Molyneux (NCLIS) mentioned several ways to get around SPAM label when sending out reminders via email.
Committee members were encouraged to employ any method to get responses to the survey and to go after the public institutions first. Some private institutions do not respond because they do not have to.
Kaleen Vaden then passed out a list of non-registered libraries for each member’s state and sample screen printouts so members could see what the survey is like. If there are any questions, call Patty or Kaleen for any help at 1-800-451-6235.
Patty and Kaleen reminded members to have people register, even just to say “No” to one or more of the eligibility questions. Census doesn’t know which libraries are not eligible until they say so on the survey.
Members were told to ignore the University of Phoenix libraries on the list; there is a coordinator to handle all those libraries.
Leland Park (Davidson College) questioned if he should contact people if the LR would be contacting the same people also. Patty and Mary Jo encouraged any overlap because personal touch of the individual members might convince some library directors to respond. Jeff suggested contacting the state LR.
Mary Jo asked Jeff if the institutions, reported ineligible in 2000 were still on the list. Jeff answered that it takes two survey cycles to drop an institution from the ALS.

4. Other surveys and projects that do or could have an impact on ALS

a. ACRL (Hugh Thompson)
The ACRL survey goes out end of February 2003. This year the “trend” questions are on use of space in libraries. As before, results will be in a three-volume set in print and also posted online. The last survey achieved a 52-53% response rate. About 300-400 respondents are Canadian. Someone asked if it was possible to know whether respondents to the ACRL survey have responded previously or are first time respondents. Hugh said that they simply go after everyone they can. He had never thought of checking what percent of previous respondents completed the survey this year. Mary Jo suggested a way to increase the survey response rate; give them the same questionnaire they just got from NCES.

b. ARL (Martha Kyrillidou)
Brinley Franklin is chairing a subcommittee of the ARL Statistics Committee focusing on the quality of data. Also, ARL is considering asking libraries to report what goes to common storage facilities. Martha mentioned that 39 libraries are trying to collect the e-metrics data elements. She is meeting with them on Saturday morning. ARL is promoting the COUNTER initiative that involves vendors and the statistics they report to libraries. The LIBQUAL project had 316 libraries participating this year, up from 164 last year. People are finding the data useful. There are even 4 public libraries in the group, which is new. A French translation has been created for testing in Quebec and 21 libraries from U.K. have agreed to test British version. One Dutch library is even willing to test the American version.
Brinley noted that there is a Kent State project to develop a survey instrument called Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS). This tool will enable librarians to measure information literacy skills, gather national data, provide norms, and compare information literacy measures with other indicators of student achievement.

Brinley stated that the traditional questions on the ARL survey would not change because they are the longest running data collection questions in the library world. ARL has frozen the criteria on the main survey, and then uses supplemental surveys for any addition information. Mary Jo said that she uses the supplemental survey results often. She suggested that if ARL sees some new element coming, they should tell this committee so it can be considered for inclusion on the NCES survey. Brinley suggested that the issue of shared storage facilities is the next issue likely to be addressed.

c. Oberlin Group (Leland Park)
Leland stated the plan is to leave things as they are this year. Changes will be discussed for the next cycle. The data is not available to non-members, but an aggregate report is available on the Web. The Oberlin Group will meet in Indiana in October of this year.

d. NCLIS (Bob Molyneux)
Bob has some ideas about ways to make data easier to use.
e. NISO (Denise Davis)
The draft standard on library statistics is now on the Web. The review period is through July 2003. Within 6 months of close the committee will have a final draft standard. They will then restructure searching in the database.

Action Items

5. Problems with ALS 2002:
   a. FY2002 ALS Issues for Edit & Imputation
      Patty has moved ahead with editing based on Mary Jo’s suggestions. Bill questioned the answer to question C5 (Items 13&26). It was explained that the answer is okay for Patty’s use, as she is just checking for the presence or absence of activity, not making any calculation.

      Non-zero (Part B). Patty does not think many situations will come up, but she wants to make certain that any zeros are valid zeros. The committee noted that staff refers to paid staff, and religious groups have staff that are not paid in this life, but work for reward in the next. The question was brought up about how to handle libraries where there is no paid staff at all. It was noted that the eligibility criteria specified that staff has to be trained, but payment is not mentioned.

      Items 37&38 (Hours open and gate counts). How do they apply to virtual libraries? Are hits on website considered gate count? We need to clarify these issues for 2004.

   b. Emails to NCES
      This was a packet of questions that was sent to either Jeff or Census and answered by Mary Jo. The committee discussed the following issues:
1. Pittsburgh State question on expenditure for renovation: Denise expressed concern about not capturing data about renovation expenditures. This led to a discussion that considered several issues:
   - Could some of the expenditures listed in the email be reported in other expenditures, e.g., computer hardware?
   - How and where should a library report expenditures made by the parent institution?

   It was agreed that the matter needs to be resolved and clarifying language added to the 2004 instructions.

2. McLennon Community College question on counting microforms. The committee said Mary Jo had made good comments in her email response and there was general approval of this answer.

3. LSU questions on staff development and system upgrade. There was general approval to this response. This survey can’t capture expenditures on automation because of the complexity of campus arrangements for IT.

4. Towson University questions on Part G on consortial service. Denise disagreed with Mary Jo’s response. The decision of the committee following a discussion was to tell libraries: If at any time during the fiscal year it was yes, then put yes.

5. R. Murray question on CD-ROMS. This response was met with general approval at first, but then there was discussion that covered several points:
   - Susan asked what a reading CD was and someone stated that reading CDs should go under audio books.
   - Brinley asked what should go under electronic serials.
   - Lynn said that Part D needs to cover volumes of serials that used to be bound but are no longer so, because a great deal of archival access is no longer paper. The electronic archival access will continue to grow in future as libraries drop paper.
   - Brinley is still hung up on the issue of CD-ROMs. He feels that there is no option in Part D to express what is collected. The number of CDs doesn’t translate into exact number of volumes that were formerly bound. These matters will need to be revisited as we prepare for ALS 2004.

6. Canasius College questions (ebook, serials, JSTOR). There was some discussion of counting JSTOR subscriptions as “current” when JSTOR is a backfile service. Martha noted that ARL counts JSTOR as current subscriptions; each title is counted because the library is paying for the journal twice. The committee agreed to clarify instruction for 2004.

7. Discussion of more questions, as read by Mary Jo to the committee:
   a. Should library that is virtual be included in NCES/ALS survey? The committee’s answer is that almost all academic libraries have some virtual collections, so yes, a totally virtual library can be included if it meets the other requirements.
   b. Imputations. How should libraries that do not keep gate counts because they share space with other offices compute the library gate count? Mary Jo suggested that they leave that question blank. NCES could calculate an appropriate gate count by using statistics from libraries of similar size. If the
libraries wanted to, they could physically count the number of people entering in an average week.

c. What is meant by a unit? The answer: a unit is a thing you can hold, one thing.

d. Line 27, definition of titles, individually titled papers within collectively titled books? Answer: they are counted as titles when they have their own bibliographic record in your catalog.

6. Changes needed in 2004
Patty brought up the issue of items 34a and 34b (general circulation and reserve circulation), whether to use 1998 split for imputing in 2000. She said they can use the split for imputation, but it looks like there are reporting problems and editing cleanup is needed. Some cases are still combining the two types of circulation. Patty and Kaleen will have a better idea of what to do as they proceed with editing. If a library only reported reserve, they will call the library in question for clarification or just divide using the 1998 split as a guide. Someone asked, “Will data on this item be published if it’s very messy?” Jeff can’t say yet, but is considering it. Is there a logical way to edit this? Patty says they are going to try. If they do not get responses, assumptions will have to be made. Electronic access concerning faculty reserve materials is hard to count. This matter will need attention as we prepare for the 2004 survey.

7. Other matters raised at this meeting.
   a. Peer Tool-Susan liked the peer comparison tool and finds it very valuable, except in format because she has to scroll a lot and the item doesn’t print well. Her Webmaster figured out a way to create an easy-to-print version. Other users can do the same or export to Excel. Committee members also complained that there is no data before 1998 available on the peer tool. Jeff says it would be quite expensive to have several years posted. Mary Jo noted that NCES money should be spent on getting the most current information out there instead of posting old data. Carolyn asked if the older data could be available in an Excel format. Jeff said that once the current file is up, he will find out what can be done about making the old data available in Excel.
   b. Carolyn Norman reported that California has large deficit and will be suspending library standards and removing two positions in the future. Carolyn will still be employed, but her position will change. The state is looking at layoffs. The elimination of library standards is in Governor’s budget. Carolyn may have a different job by summer, but will help find a liaison for the committee.
   c. Denise Davis informed the committee that Oregon is getting a budget increase of 6.6%, unlike other states whose budgets are getting slashed.