

**NCES Academic Library Survey  
2012 Advisory Committee Meeting  
Dallas, TX**

**Minutes**

Friday, January 20, 2012 9:00am – 11:00  
Dallas Convention Center, Room A124

Attending: Kit Keller (Chair, ALA), Norman Rose (ALA), Cindy Sheckells (Census), Jamie Hug (Census), Laura Hardesty (Census), Cathleen Bourdon (ALA), Bill Miller (FAU), Mary Jane Petrowski (ACRL Liaison), Rita Pellen (FAU, 4-yr institutions), Tai Phan (NCES), Denise Davis (former ORS Director and committee chair), Joan Giesecke (ARL), Charles (Chip) Stewart (Chair, Ed. Adv. Board/ACRL Survey)

1. NCES update (Tai Phan)
  - a. Budget: In 2011 -2012, we have same budget, and this is expected to continue through 2013. NCES is being asked to do more for the federal government, with the same budget. Staff numbers are currently down due to retirements.
  - b. Structure changes: NCES is no longer working with Education Statistics Services Institute (ESSI). ESSI was created about 15 years ago and NCES worked with them on special projects. Now that company is gone the surveys are distributed among many different companies. Large surveys are assigned to the Census Bureau. NCES is going through extensive reorganization and one of the goals is more timely release of data. NCES will be moving to a new building in 2014, closer to the headquarters (Department of Education). For the 2010 ALS Survey, the results were published four months ahead of schedule. The Commissioner now wants other data publications made available more quickly. The Commissioner wants the CCD (Common Core of Data) released in 6 months instead of 18 so the process will be retooled. The CCD is the basic information from school districts that is collected every year.
  - c. ALS transfer to IPEDS: The reorganization of NCES may impact this process. Jack Buckley (Commissioner) wants to reorganize everything and it's possible that with this major overhaul, the reintegration of the Academic Library Survey into IPEDS might not go forward, or could go in a different direction. There will be 2 or 3 new associate commissioners and this could also have an impact. The message now is to continue planning to transfer ALS into IPEDS for 2014 and NCES has a contract with ALA through December 31, 2012. (Note: These contracts are issued on an annual, calendar basis.) This process is in the hands of Tom Weko, head of post-secondary education at IPEDS, and Commissioner Jack Buckley. If Tom is reappointed he will be

involved through the reorganization. The Associate Commissioner will be the person who makes that decision.

- d. Responsibility changes: Prior to shifting ALS to IPEDS, Tai has taken on some new assignments. One major project is to establish the boundaries of all schools in the United States, 105,000 of them. They will try to get the American Community Survey data from those boundary files and use them for research. He's currently working with data from the nation's largest school districts. While this survey does not include data from school libraries, the boundary and CCD and the study of conditions of schools in the US will be the basic document for policy development, looking at school conditions and how they influence education. They are waiting for new definition of *rural* based on 2010 census. This will serve as the basis for the new school staffing survey, which includes school library questions. This will affect how a school is coded, which has a longitudinal impact. On the ground the impact is funding, at the state level.
  - e. Future meetings: NCES's travel budget has been cut and this may be the only ALA meeting Tai is able to attend. The Census Bureau has sufficient funding for staff to attend in June but Tai will only be available to call in for the June meeting. **Action item:** Schedule phone bridge for June meeting. We should know by the June meeting what the future is of the Academic Library Survey, based on the reorganization. Once the reorganization is complete, they want every institutional survey to become one division. When ALS becomes part of IPEDS, and new associate commissioner is appointed, that person will decide what happens in that division. Ross Santy, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Data and Information, will be involved in selecting the new associate commissioner of that division. Tai will keep us posted so we might invite the appropriate person to June ALS meeting.
2. Census update (Laura Hardesty, Cindy Sheckells, Jamie Hug)
    - a. 2010 Survey Update: There have been enhancements in this online tool. There are now no limits to selecting variables. It's possible to 'select all' or select groups of data elements for comparison. The *First Look* publication was released December 13<sup>th</sup> on the Web and print copies were mailed to library representatives, special coordinators, and members of this committee. Let Laura Hardesty know if you did not receive one. The review process was problematic but the bottom line is the data did not change; wording may have been revised but not the data or the content.
    - b. 2012 Survey Update: Started planning for the 2012 survey process; an updated calendar was distributed to the group. The collection will open November 6 with a close out date of February 26. A question was raised about the information literacy questions. Mary Jane Petrowski noted that the 2010 ACRL survey test-bedded revisions to

the information literacy questions and received useful data so the future of these questions was discussed. If the questions are deleted from the 2012 survey, OMB clearance is not required. If the questions are substantially revised, then OMB clearance **is** required. A new question would require clearance. That process takes five months but if we get it on the desk by February we could get it done. Mary Jane will provide the questions as tested so that the change can be presented to OMB. We will need to provide justification for this change. **Action item:** Develop justification for changes to these questions, to be presented for OMB clearance. Jamie will work with Mary Jane to provide the necessary information for presentation to OMB. We want to keep #800, change #801, and delete #802, 803 and 804. Justification must also be provided for deleting questions.

- c. Delete detail for information services to individuals (items 511-516). Rationale: In 2010, these did not get a good enough response rate to be published by NCES. Numerous respondents indicated that they could not report this break out. Table 3 in *First Look* is where this data appears, but it only shows number of presentations to groups and number of attendees. The reference question was changed from weekly to annual. The weekly figure probably was not accurate, and the way people manipulated and reported was highly varied. Census staff followed up with respondents when there was a big difference between the 2008 and the 2010 responses to this question. Denise offered to send to Mary Jane an explanation of the collection process and reporting issues associated with this question, which she developed for another article. It was decided that the detail questions be deleted for these questions (511-516).
- d. Current Serial Titles (item 404) and Electronic Reference sources and Aggregation Services (item 405). Rationale: Many respondents had trouble reporting these items. A major issue is that what is collected in ALS differs from what ARL collects and respondents don't want to count these two different ways. The suggestion is to move to what ARL collects, using those definitions; essentially that's the number that is being reported. Joan Giesecke indicated that ARL is discussing a revision of their definitions and trying to decrease the number of items counted individually. ACRL is already using these definitions, with permission. No OMB clearance required for this since it's a definitional change. **Action item:** Ask Martha K. to send the new definition and question for counting current serial titles, if it is approved in February. Denise pointed out that this adoption will modify state academic library surveys, because some states use the ALS instrument to do annual data collection (PA, NY, TX, and others). **Action item:** Notify all state coordinators about this change so that they can change their state instrument. This is a major change and they will have to de-duplicate for duplicate titles and this will have to be pointed out in the definition. Eighty percent of follow-up questions

were for these two questions. The other option is to come up with a master list (FAQ) that lists major examples for each category but this is not a good option. The fall-out of changing this question is that it will affect other elements. Also, there are many libraries (i.e., community colleges, technical schools) that are not using the ARL definition, and are not likely to do so. Larger libraries use a contract service to provide a de-duped total of titles. One consideration for OMB clearance is the burden placed on the respondent. Census reports that more respondents currently want to use the ARL number, because they already have that number available. The decision was made that to provide that (the ARL) number is not more of a burden. Denise recommended asking Library Representatives (LRs) what number their respondents can provide more easily, and ask them quickly. **Action item:** Send message to state LRs asking about this issue. Community colleges and technical schools have less control over their agreements. They tend to have the least response rate, and this will increase the burden on this constituency, which also saw the biggest budget reduction. Ask LRs if they think adopting the ARL definition will present a problem.

3. IPEDS reintegration discussion (Kit Keller, Mary Jane Petrowski)
  - a. Review of the TRP process and meeting: Tai reported that he's been involved in TRPs in the past, but it's generally a small group. This group was about 40 people, and it was too large a group to reach consensus, which is why Tom Weko is the only one who can make decisions. Many decisions seem to already have been made. OMB clearance is coming out very soon in the *Federal Register* for the IPEDS survey, and we should watch for this. OMB will provide notification that the IPEDS survey package is available for review and that there is a 30-day public comment period. We will let the committee know when this is available so that we can see what was proposed. We expected to see the comments but these were not made public. Tom provided very little information about the comments. Tom also reported that there would not be an opportunity for an advisory committee to have input. Many participants expressed the opinion that no other university department had a survey with this level of detail, and this was the rationale for jettisoning many of the data elements that make up the ALS. The Academic Library Survey was part of IPEDS until 2000. Since sporting departments were often late in reporting, changes were made because sports groups lobbied for changes. At the time the library survey was one of five surveys within IPEDS but was one section separated during that revision process. The proposal for reintegration is to embed the questions across the different sections of the existing survey. The data will come out at different times. Census does not think the quality of the data will be as high, because while IPEDS has screen edits, they do not do

follow-up edits. Tai reminded us that the reintegration is not yet decided.

- b. Future of ALS: We don't have to assume that the reintegration to IPEDS will take place. No decision has been made yet. Would a viable option be a reduction in size of our instrument, and keeping it separate from IPEDS? We were in process to do that already. If the university community wants to keep the survey separate, then that can happen. The question would be, how important is the survey to university administrators. If it's not important, then it won't matter. We could send a message directly to Jack Buckley and his boss, John Easton, and to Jeff Owings, recommending that we want to maintain a separate academic library survey and reject the transfer of this survey to IPEDS. While we don't know what questions were decided on, we do know that they're much fewer in number, and drastically changed. They have been submitted for OMB clearance, but are not yet available for public comment. They have to respond to every comment made and it will be public. Denise reported that she posted a substantive comment to the TRP. Her comment was, leave the survey alone and do not move it to IPEDS. Some expressed the opinion that the people included in the TRP were chosen strategically. In the CCD and schools and staffing surveys there is information about K through 12 libraries, so having a few questions about academic libraries in IPEDS is not out of line with how the agency operates with other institutions. And there are also separate surveys about school libraries. **Action item:** The will of the group present is that we poll the committee about taking the position described above about maintaining a separate academic library survey. Tai advised that there are three possible outcomes of this position. One is that the survey will still move to IPEDS. The second is that you can continue with the survey as we've done in the past; the third is keeping the survey separate and moving to an annual survey, with the revisions we started drafting. All of this will require justification. The move to annual data has budget implications. But the rapid change in the environment is a good rationale for collecting annual data.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kit Keller  
ALA Consultant for Academic Library Survey