ACRL, a division of the American Library Association, is a nonprofit professional organization representing more than 12,000 academic and research librarians and interested individuals. It is dedicated to enhancing the ability of academic library and information professionals to serve the information needs of the higher education community and to improve learning, teaching, and research.

We are responding to the request for feedback on the College Scorecard because libraries and librarians are actively engaged in the educational process at universities and community colleges throughout the country. We have stepped up to the challenge of demonstrating the value of academic libraries for teaching and learning. ACRL has established a multi-faceted initiative to support this work (http://acrl.org/value) and recently issued the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries), which utilize outcomes and evidence-based approaches to demonstrating library impact.

We are concerned about the value of a college degree and wish to prepare our students not just for their first jobs out of college, but for lifelong learning and active participation in civic life. To that end, academic librarians work to foster information literacy skills in students in cooperation with college faculty members, both in the library and in the classroom. By ensuring that college graduates possess the intellectual abilities of reasoning and critical thinking, and by helping them construct a framework for learning how to learn, colleges and universities provide the foundation for continued growth throughout students’ careers, as well as in their roles as informed citizens and community members. Information literacy is a key component of, and contributor to, lifelong learning. Information literacy competency extends learning beyond formal classroom settings and provides practice with self-directed investigations as individuals move into internships, professional positions, and increasing responsibilities in all arenas of life. (http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency)

ACRL is offering comments on the first two questions posed on your website, as we would most like to express our position regarding the information we believe is critical for students and families in selecting a college. It is our hope that the following recommendations will help the College Scorecard to analyze institutions at a deeper level in order to help students to determine which institutions are best positioned to provide an education that will leave students prepared to adapt to a rapidly-changing information landscape.
What information is absolutely critical in helping students and their families choose a college?

**Learning outcomes.**
Higher education is not just about attending and paying for college; one of the most important things to consider is what students learn and how well they learn it. Learning outcomes, statements that describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that learners should acquire following the successful completion of an educational experience, are a powerful way to examine student learning at an institution. The college scorecard might ask, “What are the learning outcomes emphasized at this institution?” and “How well do students achieve those outcomes?”

Students and parents can find out about learning outcomes and the assessment of student learning at colleges in which they are interested by asking these questions:
- Does the university list learning outcomes for the general education program?
- Do colleges or academic departments within the university list learning outcomes for each major that is offered?
- Is lifelong learning emphasized within these outcomes?
- Will this university prepare students to adapt to a rapidly changing economy and workplace?
- How are students expected to show evidence of successful learning?
- Are rubrics, capstone projects, student portfolios, internships or other performance measures used to assess student learning articulated alongside the learning outcomes?
- What is the accrediting body for this institution and do the accreditors have standards for assessment of student learning?

What other information would be helpful?

**A consideration of library facilities, resources and services.**
In addition to considering learning outcomes, it could be useful for students and parents to examine the library facilities, resources, and services at the institutions they are considering in order to determine how well the library will help the student succeed in this increasingly complex and often chaotic information age. According to some researchers, the amount of information available is doubling every few years, which illustrates how vital it is for students to develop information literacy skills such as locating and evaluating information in order to become and remain educated individuals. ACRL’s “A Student’s Guide to Evaluating Libraries in Colleges and Universities” ([http://www.al.org/acrl/issues/marketing/studentsguide](http://www.al.org/acrl/issues/marketing/studentsguide)) can guide students and parents in assessing an institution’s library.

The following are specific questions that can be asked in order to compare the library facilities, resources, and services at different institutions:
- Does the library develop outcomes that are aligned with the institutional mission or accreditation guidelines for the institution?
- Does the library provide safe, secure, and easy-to-navigate physical and virtual spaces that are easy to access?
• Do the library’s physical and virtual spaces invite collaboration, learning, and the creation of new knowledge through access to programs, exhibits, pedagogical spaces, and adequate IT infrastructure?
• Does the library provide regular instruction, partnering with faculty and others, in order to help students learn to use information?
• Do library personnel collaborate with faculty to embed information literacy learning outcomes into curricula, courses, and assignments?
• Are resource guides available to help students identify ways to access information?
• Is one-on-one research assistance through multiple platforms available?
• Does the library organize information for effective discovery and access
• Does the library provide access to collections that are aligned with areas of research, curricular foci, or institutional strengths?