Value of Academic Libraries
Research Agenda
Please sit at a table. Each is labeled with the topic for discussion taking place at that table: Student Learning, Student Retention, Student Success.
Welcome
To Do

• Review (briefly) ACRL's Value of Academic Libraries initiative to date.
• Facilitate discussions around a national research agenda.
• Develop/refine research questions.
• Discuss potential research approaches (study design, methodology, potential data sources, study sites) or funding sources.
• Key output: Research questions, fleshed out, for draft agenda.
Logistics

• 2 rounds of group discussion & report out
  – 1\textsuperscript{st} round, generate research questions and record ideas related to research methods, data, and partners
  – 2\textsuperscript{nd} round, envision specific studies aligned with research questions

• Table facilitators – Identify yourselves!

• Research agenda draft writers – Meg, Jen, Alice (will collaborate with Megan, Lisa, and Kara)

• Handouts, cards – use \textit{as needed}. We will collect.
Overview of VAL Initiative, 1 of 2

- July 2009 – Board Invitational “Value of Academic Libraries Research” Meeting
- Fall 2009 – RFP issued for comprehensive literature analysis; contract awarded in December
- February 2011 – Application for IMLS Collaborative Planning Grant Submitted
- March 2011 – Update forum and Vendor Summit at ACRL 2011 Conference
Overview of VAL Initiative, 2 of 2

- April 2011 – Plan for Excellence adopted
- May 2011 – Board charges Value of Academic Libraries Committee
- October 2011 – IMLS Grant awarded
- November/December 2011 – IMLS Funded Summits
- January 2012 – Update forum at Midwinter; Research Agenda Summit proposed
- February 2012 – IMLS Program Planning Grant submitted
- June 2012 – Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits released; Invitational Research Agenda Meeting; Update forum at Annual
Creating a Research Agenda, 1 of 2

• Determine profession’s major needs
• Develop a consensus on the parameters & specifics of “academic library value/impact”
• Identify key authors in the field
• Develop a literature review
• Describe strengths/weaknesses of existing research
• Identify key research questions
• Determine how they can be answered
Creating a Research Agenda, 2 of 2

- Identify issues related to study design, methodology, potential data sources, study sites
- Identify venues for dissemination of future research, including journals & conferences
- Recruit partners/collaborators for future research
- Secure funding
- Determine priorities for research
- Determine how to involve stakeholders in identifying & using research findings
- Draft an agenda, solicit comments, revise agenda
Creating a Research Agenda (all together!)

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Value of Academic Libraries Report

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Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits

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Today: Invitational Research Agenda Meeting

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The Future

• Determine profession’s major needs
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• Develop a literature review
• Describe strengths/weaknesses of existing research
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• Determine how they can be answered
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Priorities for Research

• Student Learning (Achievement)
• Student Retention (Persistence, Completion)
• Student (Career) Success
Value of Academic Libraries Report

• What we know
• What we don’t
• Are the “essential research questions” the right questions?
• Are they worth answering?
• How can we expand, develop, or refine them?
Small Group Break Out #1
6 groups = 2 learning, 2 retention, 2 success

First, reflect.
Consider your assigned topic (learning, retention, success) and reflect on your experiences, expertise, readings, research, etc.

• What do we know about library impact in this area?
• What library services or resources may impact this area?
• What do we need to know?
Student Learning Outcomes

We know...

• Libraries provide instruction, including face-to-face “one-shots”, credit courses, online learning objects.

• Students appear to acquire “information literacy” skills as a consequence of library instruction, but assessments are scattered and episodic, not coherent and longitudinal.

(p 37, 117)
Student Learning Outcomes

We don’t know...

• How much or how well do students learn information skills over time, across programs, before graduation?
• Do they transfer these skills to other contexts?
• What library interactions besides overt instruction make a difference in student learning?
• What might use of Assessment Management Systems reveal about student learning?
Grades/Marks & Testing

We know...

• Student grades/marks and professional/educational test scores are used to make high-stakes decisions.
• Library “check outs” appear to impact students grades positively. (Huddersfield, Wollongong)
• Library “visits” do not appear to impact student grades. (Huddersfield)
• Library “instruction” may impact student grades, or at least not make them worse. (Hong Kong Baptist)
• Library instruction after the first-year appears to impact GPA at graduation. (Wyoming)
• Library use (downloads, loans, reference) increases GPA and retention. Library instruction may decrease GPA, but increase retention. (Minnesota)
Retention/Graduation

We know...

• Most libraries support several high-impact practices.
• Some libraries support early warning/intervention practices.
• Some libraries proactively assign “research advisors” to support certain student groups.
• Library use, expenditures, and professional staff are correlated with retention, but no causative links.

(p 32, 106)
Career Success

We know...

• Employers care about student information skills (critical thinking, problem solving, locating/evaluating/using information).

• Libraries provide resources students can use during their internship work.

• Libraries provide detailed company profiles students can use to prepare for interviews.
Small Group Break Out #1
List additional questions.

What research questions can you think of for this topic?
• Consider more specific areas
• Consider related areas

RANK in order of interest or importance.
Small Group Break Out #1

For each question...

• Is the question worth answering? What is the purpose of answering it?
• What evidence/data will help answer the question?
  – How can you get that evidence/data?
• What research method would yield that evidence/data?
  – What are the ads/disads of those research methods?
• What partners/collaborators could be involved?
• What do you expect to result from this research?
  – Who will care about the results of this research?
Double check, if there’s time...

Are your research questions, research purposes, and research methods aligned?

Does the proposed research build on past research or fill research gaps?
Break
Report Out
Group Break Out #2

3 groups = learning, retention, success

Recheck questions.

Combine lists, if possible.

Any additional research questions to add?
Group Break Out #2
Anticipate the research.

What are the studies that we want to happen look like?
• How should they be designed?
• What should they include?
• What should their purpose be?
• What methods should be used?
The Best Research...

- Has an impact on individuals and populations
- Leads to decision-making, action-taking, practical tools/skills for library users
- Includes different sub-populations
- Addresses current gaps in research
- Uses rigorous research methods
- States limitations clearly and responsibly
If time...

What situations or sites might be good for conducting these studies?

What might be the best way to connect with partners/collaborators for these studies?

What else should we consider?
Ways to Assess the Agenda...It Should:

• Promote library users as partners in the design, deployment, and dissemination of research
• Respond to key research questions
• Use a variety rigorous research methods
• Focus on outcomes of interest to library users and stakeholders and measure value/impact in the context of those outcomes
• Lead to decision-making, action-taking, practical tools/skills for users
• Be transparent and replicable, possibly making data available for future study
• Investigate a variety/diversity of populations and environments
• “Emphasize efficient, innovative research and dissemination”
• Identify funding opportunities
• Network researchers for partnerships
• Develop a set of key measures that could be used for comparisons
Next Steps:
• Draft Research Agenda circulated for comments/suggestions
• Presentation of Draft Research Agenda
  – Library Assessment Conference, October 2012
• Possible presentations at ALISE, iConference?
• What else?
Closing...

and Thank You!