Going Beyond the Numbers
The Benefits of Grass-Roots Assessment

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About Richard Stockton College

• Founded in 1969 on 2000 acres in the National Pinelands Reserve, Southern New Jersey
• A liberal arts college with 7,879 students & 284 faculty
• 64 undergraduate and 14 graduate degree programs
About the Library

• 3 administrators, 5 librarians, 17 FTE and 11 PT staff, serving 29,549 registered users
• 1.8 million physical items, 2,277 e-books, 75 databases, 41,000 e-journals and 615 print journals
• 97 computers and 31 laptops
• About 85,433 square feet with 2 study rooms
Assessment

• A necessary and important process in library operations
• Outcome-based
• Efficient way to demonstrate contributions to an institution’s mission
• Identifies areas of potential improvement
• Offers good opportunities to close gaps between a library and users’ needs
• Powerful vehicle for change
• “It’s not about us! It’s about customers”—Steve Hiller.
Challenges

From library staff:
- Entrenchment
- Territorialism
- Lack of time
- Work overload

From users:
- Survey fatigue
- Low motivation

From a technical aspect:
- Lack of assessment knowledge
- Lack of statistical expertise
How We Started Assessment

• Inspired by an assessment seminar sponsored by Faculty Resource Network, NYU in 2008
• Convinced colleagues of value
• Established Assessment Committee
• Centralized data
• Reviewed assessment literature
• Started with feasible projects
• Focused on LibQUAL+® results, 2005 & 2008
LibQUAL+® Survey

- A web-based assessment tool that collects and interprets library user feedback systematically
- Measures three dimensions
  - Affect of Service
  - Information Control
  - Library as Place
- Provides both quantitative and qualitative data in results
- Provides comparable data at different levels for benchmarking
## Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>6,579</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Staff</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,089</strong></td>
<td><strong>455</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2008</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>5,746</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Staff</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,507</strong></td>
<td><strong>411</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Data Was Analyzed

- A statistical correlation analysis
- User comments grouped by dimensions
- Qualitative results correlated with quantitative results
- Examined feedback by user groups
- Purposes of the analysis:
  - Detect trends
  - Identify areas of opportunity
  - Spotlight areas that shine
  - Obtain data to back up findings
  - Benchmark with other NJ state institutions
Finding I

Improved Ratings from Users in Services

Users’ Perceived Services, 2005 & 2008

Finding II

Rising Expectations

Minimum vs. Desired Expectations, 2005 & 2008

Finding III

Greater Demands

Expectations vs. Perceived Services, 2005 & 2008

Greater Demands
Information Control

Desired Expectations, 2005 & 2008
Users’ Demands

- More E-Resources
- Online Help
  - http://library
- E-Access
- Library Hours
  - Longer, Longer, ...
- More Computers & Printers
- More Seating & Group Rooms
- QUIET!
- Faster ILL
- Brighter, More Cheerful Library
Steps Taken

- Examined users’ needs and identified priorities
- Investigated library space and explored ways of reclaiming space
- Surveyed ILL users and planned ways of expediting the process
- Arranged and analyzed graduate students focus groups
- Evaluated signage and beautification effectiveness
Communication

• Presented findings to the Dean’s Council, the Provost, and the President
• Discussed survey results with library staff
• Provided feedback to students through student newspaper, library Web site, and student Senate
• Communicated with faculty
Follow-up Actions

- Created E-resources Coordinator position
- Created online video tutorials for database searching
- Dedicated more emphasis to the Web site and electronic resources
- Tackled space issues and rearranged furniture
- Installed new carpet and improved lighting
- Improved displays by collaborating with faculty and students
Second Phase Assessment

- Incorporated assessment with the library’s program review
- Updated library’s mission and goals
- Updated/established library’s policies and procedures
- Participated in 2011 LibQUAL+® survey
- Conducted follow-up assessments on periodicals, information literacy and online catalog usability
Future Plans

• Implement a library-wide assessment plan
• Incorporate assessment process into the library’s operations
• Measure library services in student learning outcomes
• Create a marketing plan to effectively reach users
• Redesign the library’s Web site and improve accessibility of e-resources
• Strive to be a true user-centered library
Librarians’ Roles

• Gentle prodder
• Patron advocate
• Investigator
• Creative problem solver
• Catalyst for change
• Assessment educator
• Learner
Questions?

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Thank You!