Talking to University Leadership:
Utilizing Existing Data to Tell a Unique Story

Amalia Monroe-Gulick,
University of Kansas Libraries
Social Science Content Development & Collection Assessment Librarian
almonroe@ku.edu

ABSTRACT

Demonstrating the value of the library to an academic institution continues to be a difficult task. For a long time libraries relied upon traditional "counting" metrics, such as gate counts, number of volumes held, and circulation statistics in an attempt to show that the library is an integral part of a university.

Even with the more recent move toward the use "impact" metrics, such as student involvement, information literacy assessment, faculty/librarian partnerships, and scholarly communication initiatives, some academic libraries are still finding it difficult to penetrate university administration's need for quantitative, comparative data that looks more like the data that other departments on campus annually present.

Academic libraries have always been in the "other" category, but it is important to find ways to find ways to communicate with university administrators in their language as a step towards finding common ground and building a dialog that can lead to potentially more effective value and impact-based conversations in the future.

PROJECT

In the February of 2015, a small working group was formed to assist the University of Kansas Libraries' leadership team with the identification and preparation of data that reflected the value and challenges of the organization to prepare for the annual budget discussion with the Provost. By utilizing existing comparative data from a variety of sources, but analyzing it in multiple ways to tell a different story, a balanced perspective developed that the Libraries are essential, but still need additional funding to continue their work.

- Utilized comparative data from: ARL, IPEDs, Annual Academic Survey, and LibQual to show comparisons of institutionally-defined peers (not internally by the Libraries)
- Addressed concerns raised by the University administration, including:
- Over-staffing and inefficiencies (budget and personnel)
- Efficiency of collections budget
- Overall, the project utilized different data to show comparisons from a holistic perspective to a quantitative-focused university-leadership.

COMPARISON GROUPS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Office of Institutional Research and Planning

- Indiana University
- Michigan State University
- University of Buffalo
- University of Colorado
- University of Florida
- University of Iowa
- University of Missouri
- University of North Carolina
- University of Oregon
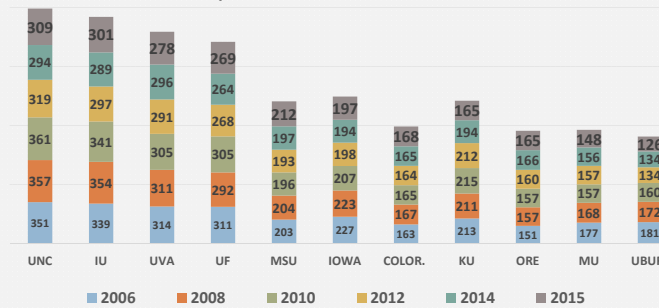- University of Virginia

VARIABLES ANALYZED

- ARL Index ranking
- Library budget trends
- % of budget spent on collections
- Staffing ratios
- Total Annualized Library Expenditures: KU & Peer Average
- Number of Degree Programs Offered
- Total Students Per Degree Programs
- # of PhD Fields Supported
- Number of PhD Programs by Disciplinary Grouping
- Total Number of Faculty
- Professional Staff per 100 Students
- Total Staff per 100 Students
- Total Library Salary Expenditures
- FTE Retention Rates
- LibQual results
- Local survey(s) results
- Electronic resource usage data
- Faculty publication citation analyses
- Instruction and research support
- Local community outreach
- Institutional repository usage

COMPARING LIBRARIES: ESTABLISHING CONTEXT
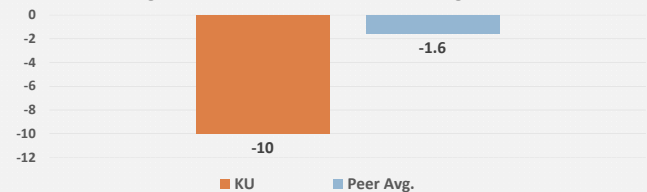### (ARL ANNUAL STATISTICS; IPEDS)

Total Annualized Library Expenditures: KU and Peer Avg., 2006-2015

KU — Peer Avg.
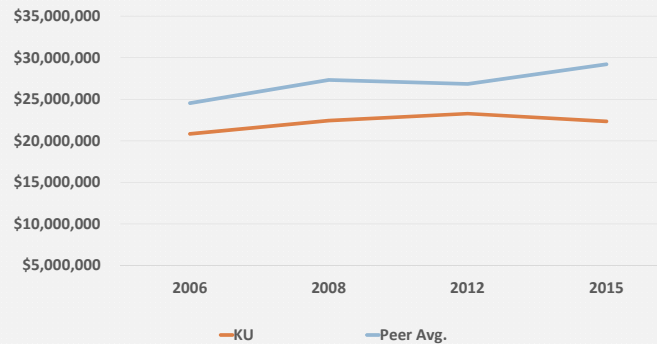
Total Library Staff, KU and Peers, 2006-2015

2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2015

Change in ARL Index Rank, KU and Peer Average 2005-2015

KU: -10 Peer Avg.: -1.6

COMPARING UNIVERSITIES: IMPACT ON LIBRARIES (IPEDS)

# of PhD Fields Supported, KU and Peers (2015)

MSU	KU	UBUFF	IU	UF	IOWA	MU	UNC	COLOR.	UVA	ORE
114	102	94	91	90	75	73	69	55	54	43

Full-time Retention Rate, KU and Peers 2006-2014

	2006	2010	2014
KU	80%	79%	91%
Peer Avg.	89%	90%	80%

COMPARING VALUE: BALANCING THE STORY (LIBQUAL)

The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work

KU — ARL
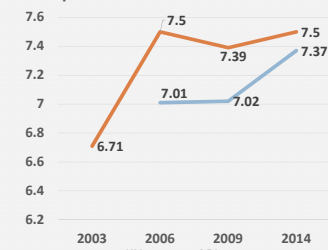
In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs.
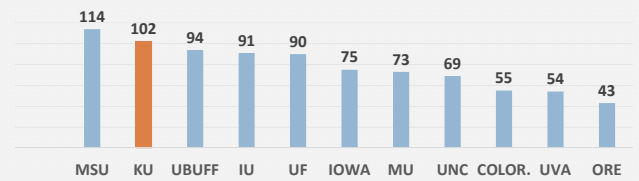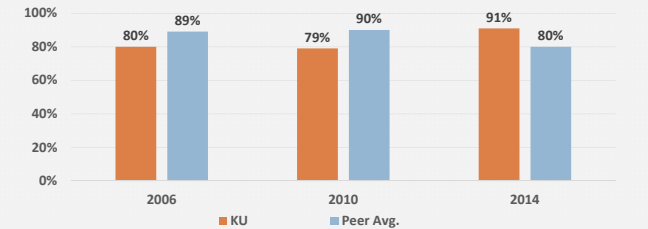

KU — ARL

WRITING THE STORY:

- Staffing:
  - Analyze with different variables & comparative data to show overstaffing is not an issue or solution.
- Budget Impacts:
  - Supports proportionally larger number of degree programs, specifically PhD programs that requires a collection dollars to cover more subject areas.
- Ranking or "Quality" Impacts:
  - KU has had a flat budget compared with peer libraries, contributing to its overall ranking; KU focused on research visibility & AAU.

- KU, retention rates & peers: opportunity to play a role in the university mission. It is important to acknowledge the Libraries' awareness of the broader issues/ problems and offer potential roles/solutions.
- Comparing Value:
  - KU, ARL average & user opinion: the users still recognize the importance of the Libraries role in their research and teaching at or above the ARL average. Thus, establishing a balanced perspective and context for an external audience trying to understand the needs of libraries.