Fitting a Round Peg into a Square Hole
Dickeson’s Academic Program Prioritization and Libraries

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Boise State University & Prioritization

- Idaho State Agencies – Modified Zero Base Budgeting
- State Board of Education (SBOE) Mandated Prioritization - 2013
Prioritization Concept

Adapted from: Dickeson, Robert C. Prioritizing Academic Programs, Joseey-Bass, c2010. p.140
The Research

“The best laid schemes o' mice an' men... often go awry”

Robert Burns
Poem To a Mouse, 1786
Did Your Institution Prioritize?

- Yes: 23%
- No: 37%
- Not Sure: 28%
- In-House Process: 11%
Were Libraries Included?

- Yes 68%
- No 16%
- Degree Support 16%
What is a “Program”

“...any activity or collection of activities of the institution that consumes resources (dollars, people, space, equipment, time).”

Source: Dickeson, Robert C. Prioritizing Academic Programs, Joseey-Bass, c2010. p. 56
Other Program Definitions

• Operational budget lines
• Categories in the Strategic Plan
• A set of academic activities required for degrees, credentials, certificates
• A discrete function, service or unit that utilizes institutional resources
• Defined by each unit
Identifying Library Programs

- With Approval: 44%
- Autonomy: 56%
Library Program Considerations

One Program vs Many?
Departments vs Activities?
Interdependency of activities?
Later Impact of Questionnaires & Rubrics
The Hunger Games Effect

One professor, in an e-mail to faculty members, likened the project to The Hunger Games,...”

Program Choice Factors

Mission
Strategic Plan
Match Programs to Available Data
Departmental Structure
Complexity of allocating Resources
Primary Audience for Final Report
Staff time vs Benefit
Didn’t have a choice
Risk of Reviewing Library as 1 Program
Resulting Program Choices

- Other, 30%
- By Activities, 30%
- Library as a Whole, 30%
- By Department, 10%
Albertsons Library’s 5 Programs

• Campus and Community Engagement
• Content Creation, Discovery, Access and Delivery ("the monster")
• Instruction
• Library Administration
• Research Consulting and Collaboration
Other Libraries’ Programs
Other Institutional Criteria

- Cost or Cost Effectiveness
- Internal Demand
- External Demand
- Quality
- Opportunity Analysis
- Centrality to the Mission
- Importance, Relevance, Essentiality
- Quality Inputs
- Quality Outcomes
And then a miracle occurs
Most Valuable Aspects

• Illumination
• Reflecting on Library Operations
• Working with Campus Team
• Program Documents as Advocacy
• Comparison to Other Campus Units
• Learning about other units
• Opportunity Analysis
• Data Gathering
Most Challenging

• Proving Library Value
• Speed of Process
• Administration as a Program
• Trying to Quantify all aspects
• Limitations of Questionnaire & Rubric wording
• Lack of guidance
• Repetitive Questionnaire
Albertsons’ Library Results

• Metrics for Relevance
  – Mission, Accreditation, Core Curriculum, State Board requirements, Demand trends

• Metrics for Quality
  – LibQual+, Instruction Assessment, Usability testing

• Productivity & Cost Effectiveness
  – Ratios, cost/use, classes/FTE student, etc.

• Staff time on “value added” activities
Outcomes of Prioritization

- No Change: 8%
- Budget increased: 17%
- Budget Decreased: 17%
- Not Done Yet: 58%
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THANK YOU