

Self-Assessment Rubric for Development of Service Learning Programs in Academic Libraries

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INTRODUCTION

The Self-Assessment Rubric for Development of Service Learning Programs in Academic Libraries is a framework for academic libraries to use as they build and assess service learning programs. The idea for a rubric emerged from research on the status of service learning programs in academic libraries in the United States (Kott, 2016). This research showed that while academic libraries were beginning to think about programmatic approaches to service learning, there were not yet tools for assessing service learning programs in academic libraries. A rubric based on emerging best practices such as those developed by Sweet (2013) for information literacy and service learning could help libraries understand what is needed to build a service learning program and assess the program within a broader institutional context.

The academic library rubric is modeled on two rubrics in use; one for overall institutionalization of service learning in colleges and universities by Furco (2002) and one for institutionalization of community engagement in academic departments by Kecskes (2008). The institutional and departmental rubrics are organized as matrixes with dimensions that have been identified as important to institutionalization of service learning in higher education evaluated along a developmental continuum. The institutional rubric includes three developmental stages for each component of the dimensions, while the departmental rubric includes four stages.

While Furco and Kecskes include faculty and student support for service learning as dimensions, core library functions as they support service learning are a more suitable choice for a library rubric. Table 1 compares the dimensions from the institutional and departmental rubrics with the proposed dimensions for the academic libraries rubric.

| Table 1: Comparison of Dimensions among Institutional, Departmental, and Academic Library Rubrics | | |
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| Institutional Dimensions | Departmental Dimensions | Academic Library Dimensions |
| Philosophy and Mission of Service-Learning | Mission and Culture Supporting Community Engagement | Mission and Culture Supporting Service Learning |
| Faculty Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning | Faculty Support and Community Engagement | Information access Support for Service Learning |
| Student Support for and Involvement in Service-Learning | Student Support and Community Engagement | Spaces for Service Learning |
| Community Participation and Partnerships | Community Partner and Partnership Support and Community Engagement | Programmatic Support for Information Literacy for Service Learning |
| Institutional Support for Service-Learning | Organizational Support for Community Engagement | Relationship with External Stakeholders for Service Learning |
| | Leadership Support for Community Engagement | Organizational and Leadership Support for Service Learning |

Kott worked with a group of librarians at an “Embedded Institute” on Libraries and the Public Purposes of Higher Education held in conjunction with the Campus Compact 30th Anniversary Conference in Boston on March 20th, 2016 to identify components and developmental stages within each dimension. The participants suggested alternative labeling—tier rather than stage—more consistent with the way instructional librarians in particular think about rubrics for learning and development. Participants contributed additional components and assessment measures for mission and culture, relationship with external stakeholders, programmatic support for information literacy, and organizational and leadership support. Based on this feedback as well as information from the literature on service learning and academic libraries, Kott completed the proposed rubric.

Next steps will be for libraries to test the rubric as they launch new service learning programs or build on successful service learning activities. The rubric will be revised based on feedback from libraries that use it to develop a programmatic approach to service learning.

DIMENSION I: Mission and Culture Supporting Service Learning

An academic library can fulfill its civic mission to “take up the role of preparing a new generation of informed, engaged citizens capable of addressing complex social problems” (Kranich, 2010, p. 10) by incorporating service learning and community engagement in its mission and culture.

| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
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| MISSION, VISION, VALUES, AND STRATEGY | The formal mission, vision, values, and strategy of the library do not directly mention or indirectly allude to the importance of service learning or community engagement. The library has not identified its “public purpose.” | The formal mission, vision, values, and strategy of the library mention service learning or community engagement as it pertains to a specific area such as information literacy. | The formal mission, vision, values, and strategy of the library make specific reference to service learning or community engagement as they pertain to several library functions such as information literacy and information access. | The formal mission, vision, values, and strategy of the library identify the public purpose of the library. Service learning and community engagement are integrated into the mission, vision, values, and strategy along various dimensions (information literacy, information access, space, community engagement, etc.) The library’s mission, vision, values, and strategy are aligned with service learning partners’ and the college or university wide service learning mission. |
| DEFINITION OF SERVICE LEARNING AND RELATED TERMS AND CONCEPTS | There is no shared definition of service learning or other related terms and concepts in the library. | Service learning is well defined in the context of some library functions such as information literacy. | There is a shared understanding of service learning and other related terms and concepts among all members of the library staff. | Library staff members understand service learning as well as related terms and concepts within the context of institutional programs. |

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| <p>CLIMATE AND CULTURE</p> | <p>Library staff members do not participate in service learning or community engagement at work. The culture is not supportive of participation in service learning. Service learning is not part of “what we do.” There is a general lack of understanding about why the library should be involved in service learning.</p> | <p>Some library staff members participate in service learning or community engagement in partnership with faculty or students. The culture is tolerant of this participation but does not encourage it by including service learning in position descriptions, goal setting, or performance reviews.</p> | <p>Library staff members are encouraged to participate in service learning and community engagement activities. The culture supports these activities through training and development, scheduling, including service learning in position descriptions, goal-setting and performance reviews, etc. Library staff members actively develop library service learning program outreach (faculty workshops, etc.).</p> | <p>The library actively promotes its public purpose and collaborates regularly on service learning projects. Contributions to service learning are included in position descriptions, performance reviews, and criteria for tenure and promotion. Library staff members may serve on campus committees related to service learning and community engagement and/or be involved in service learning and community engagement at the campus wide level.</p> |
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| <p>DIMENSION II: Information access support for service learning. Information access support for service learning includes purchasing, licensing, or linking to resources for service learning courses, creating guides for information on community organizations in the “gray literature,” ensuring that “real world” information is findable (Stark, 2014), and offering preservation and access services for knowledge resources that are generated through service learning and community engagement courses.</p> | | | | |
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| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
| SERVICE LEARNING RESOURCE ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY | Although the library may provide access to some resources related to service learning, there is no concerted or organized effort to provide access to material that supports service learning. | Information access policies mention the need to include service learning and community engagement resources when purchasing or licensing resources and creating resource guides. | Specific resources are set aside for obtaining and providing access to service learning and community engagement resources. Access to service learning and community engagement resources is taken into account when designing and evaluating discovery systems. | The library promotes access to service learning and community engagement resources to the campus community and beyond. |
| PROVISION FOR COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO ASSETS GENERATED IN SERVICE LEARNING COURSES | The library makes no provision for collecting, preserving, and providing access to assets generated in service learning courses. | Assets generated in service learning courses may be deposited in an institutional repository or otherwise preserved and made accessible on a case-by-case basis (e.g. when a librarian is supporting a service learning course). | The library offers and promotes a standard service for assets from service learning courses to be collected, preserved, and made accessible. | The role of the library in collecting, preserving, and providing access to service learning course assets is recognized and understood within the library and beyond. |

DIMENSION III: Spaces for service learning
 The library may offer space for individual reflection, group meetings that include community partners, exhibit space to showcase service learning and community engagement projects, and space for events that include community partners. Neujahr (2016) pointed out the value libraries offer to their campuses by providing a variety of spaces that can be welcoming and inclusive places for the broader community.

| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
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| COLLABORATION SPACES | While students may use library spaces for service learning activities, community members may be excluded from collaborating with student and faculty partners in the library. | Community members may be allowed to use library facilities for collaboration with service learning partners on a case-by-case basis. | Community members are welcomed into the library to collaborate with their service learning partners. | The library promotes its collaborative spaces for service learning and community engagement activities. |
| EXHIBIT SPACES | Exhibit spaces in the library do not feature service learning projects. | Library exhibit spaces may feature service learning projects that library staff have learned about through connection with the project. | The library offers and promotes exhibit space to share information about service learning projects. | Students and faculty are aware that library exhibit space is available for them to share information about and promote their service learning projects. |

DIMENSION IV: Programmatic approach to information literacy and service learning
 Academic library engagement with service learning often begins with individual librarians providing support to service learning courses but can be developed into robust service learning programs by applying best practices for integration of information literacy with service learning (Sweet, 2013).

| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
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| LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES | The information literacy program has not yet responded to or been influenced by service learning in terms of learning outcomes and objectives. | The information literacy program has defined learning outcomes and objectives for service learning courses—e.g. the ability to “incorporate nontraditional material into... research” (Stark, 2016, p. 56). | Service learning and community engagement have transformed the information literacy program. Students are expected to “question the ways in which information is constructed and valued by different communities” (Stark, 2016, p. 62) | Information literacy learning outcomes and objectives are integrated with campus wide service learning outcomes and objectives. Work together in harmony and advocate for enmeshed learning outcomes for service learning/information literacy |
| ROLE OF INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION LIBRARIANS IN SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS | Information literacy instruction librarians have not yet regularized their role in service learning courses or programs. | Some information literacy instruction librarians are involved in supporting service learning courses through serendipitous opportunities or liaison roles with individual faculty members. | Information literacy instruction librarians seek opportunities to collaborate with faculty on service learning courses across the curriculum and integrate support for service learning into library information literacy course offerings. | Faculty members are aware of information literacy instruction librarians’ expertise in service learning research and regularly collaborate with librarians when designing service learning courses. |

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| <p>ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN CURRICULAR GOVERNANCE PROCESS FOR SERVICE LEARNING</p> | <p>The library is not involved in curricular governance for service learning.</p> | <p>Members of the service learning team and/or information literacy instruction librarians are aware of the curricular governance process for service learning and stay informed about it through relationships with individual faculty members.</p> | <p>The library is invited to “sit in” on the curricular governance process for service learning.</p> | <p>The library has a standing membership role on the governing body for the service learning curriculum.</p> |
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| DIMENSION V: Relationship with external stakeholders for service learning | | | | |
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| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
| CAMPUS SERVICE LEARNING OFFICES | There is no awareness in the library of a centralized service learning function on campus. | An individual in a leadership position in the library becomes responsible for service learning/contacts the campus service learning offices to find out how to get involved/provide support. | Members of the service learning team work with the campus service learning office to define and develop points of intersection to connect the library to the campus-wide service learning program. | The library service learning leadership and team have a regular working relationship with the campus service learning office. Everyone in the library is aware of the service learning program and how their work supports it. Library resources for service learning are well understood and used at the campus level. |
| COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS | Library staff have no direct contact with community organizations that participate in service learning | Members of a service learning team in the library learn about which community organizations are involved in service learning programs or courses on campus. | Members of the service learning team work with members of community organizations and the community engagement office to provide resources (access to information, space, etc.) that supports the organizations' participation in service learning programs. | Everyone in the library is aware of the relationship with community organizations that participate in service learning and welcome members of the organizations into the library to use information resources and partner with service learning participants. |
| FACULTY MEMBERS | There is little awareness of and no programmatic collaboration with faculty members who include service learning in their courses. | Individual librarians begin to partner with faculty who include service learning in their courses. | Members of the service learning team provide information about service learning support to members of the faculty. | Everyone in the library is aware of the service learning program and reminds faculty members of the support that is available in their regular interactions. |

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| STUDENTS | Library staff members are unaware of student participation in service learning or community engagement. | Library staff may be aware of student participation in service learning and community engagement through specific activities such as library instruction. | Members of the service learning team provide information about service learning support to students. | All library staff members are aware of student service learning activities and support them through library instruction, information access, and allocation of space. |
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| DIMENSION VI: Organizational/leadership support | | | | |
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| COMPONENT | TIER ONE: Build Awareness | TIER TWO: Build Critical Mass | TIER THREE: Build Quality | TIER FOUR: Institutionalize |
| LIBRARY LEADERSHIP | Library leaders are not aware of library participation in service learning. Support for service learning is not built in to position descriptions, etc. | Library leaders are aware that some members of the library staff support service learning—e.g. through information literacy support for service learning courses. | Library leaders recognize the importance of service learning to the library’s mission and provide leadership for the library’s role in service learning by ensuring that a high level position in the library is responsible for the service learning program. The library allocates human and financial resources to service learning. | Library leaders ensure that the library is connected to university wide service learning and community engagement efforts through integration with service learning and community engagement programs. |
| ASSESSMENT | Staff in the library do not set overarching goals for service learning or community engagement, or assess service learning or community engagement outcomes. | Staff in some areas such as information literacy may set goals for service learning and assess these activities. | All service learning and community engagement activities are assessed. Library staff members have a shared understanding of service learning and community engagement goals. | Library metrics for assessing service learning and community engagement are linked to campus-wide outcomes for service learning and community engagement. |

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