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# ISSUES IN ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT IN A COMPLEX ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY

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## Objective

To report on the University of New Mexico (UNM) Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center's (HSLIC) experience in creating a culture of assessment through the regular administration of customer satisfaction surveys for its library and technology support services.

## Setting

HSLIC's organizational structure includes four major divisions, reflecting its responsibilities to deliver the following integrated services to the Health Sciences campus:

- Library services
- Technology support
- Educational development
- Biomedical informatics training and consultation

## Goal

To create a unified culture of assessment in which services are assessed regularly, contributing to a picture of the overall effectiveness of HSLIC.


Photograph by Barry Staver

## Methods

The management team committed to annual surveys, initially of library services and then of technology support.

- **2002** First library services survey developed in-house
- **2003** LibQUAL+™ survey administered for library services.
- **2004** A technology support survey was developed in-house after an unfruitful environmental scan for a national standardized survey appropriate for our environment.
- **2005** Second LibQUAL+™ survey administered.
- **2006** Second technology support survey administered after significant changes and another environmental scan.

Adopting or developing assessment measures for other services (educational development, biomedical informatics) is being planned.

### HSLIC Technology Support Survey*

| Question Category | 2004 Mean by Category | 2006 Mean by Category** |
|---|---|---|
| Technology Support | 2.95 | 2.72 |
| Public Computing | 2.95 | 2.82 |
| Learning Central | - | 2.65 |
| WebCT | 2.68 | 2.69 |
| General | 2.87 | 3.06 |

*Mean scores were derived from a 4 point scale, with 4 representing the highest possible score. **Survey was revised in 2006 to include new questions in each category as well as a section for the Learning Central course management application.

### Comparison of LibQUAL+™ Service Adequacy Scores, 2003 to 2005*

| Dimension | 2003 HSLIC Mean Adequacy Score | 2005 HSLIC Mean Adequacy Score** | 2005 Peer Libraries' Mean Adequacy Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Affect of Service | 1.08 | 0.91 | 0.66 |
| Library as Place | 1.07 | 0.98 | 0.56 |
| Information Control | 0.46*** | 0.05 | 0.18 |
| Overall | 0.80 | 0.59 | 0.45 |

* Adequacy Mean refers to the difference between the Perceived Mean (perceived level of service) and the Minimum Mean (minimum acceptable level of service). **Higher adequacy scores indicate a greater level of customer satisfaction. ***Score derived from 2003 Access to Information and Personal Control Dimensions.

## Results

- Separate surveys using different methodologies (gap analysis vs. Likert) limits HSLIC's ability to integrate survey data and assess overall strengths and weaknesses.

- Locally developed technology support survey does not afford the opportunity to benchmark against similar institutions.

- Using different survey tools to assess different types of services presents problems in consistency of data interpretation, benchmarking, and strategic planning.

- Development of a unified culture of assessment is impeded by compartmentalized assessment of service units.


Photograph by Barry Staver

## Conclusions

HSLIC will evaluate the cost-benefit of creating in-house surveys that better align with LibQUAL+™ versus accepting inherent discrepancies derived from using different methodologies. The result will be a unified body of assessment which contributes to a picture of overall effectiveness of HSLIC services, creating a unified culture of assessment in the organization.