Assessment: Is it really worth it?
The UT Austin Fine Arts Library: a case study

Laura Schwartz
Head Librarian, Fine Arts Library
May 5, 2008
Fine Arts Library Assessment Project: a summary

- Why perform assessment?
- Purpose of this assessment project
- Evaluation Plan for the Fine Arts Library
- Instructional Assessment Resources (IAR)
- Findings & Action Plan
- Is it really worth it?
The Project: To transform the Fine Arts Library into a cutting-edge integrated learning center that accommodates collaborative and independent study.

- Develop a media and technology center supporting new and old formats including viewing, manipulation, and editing
- Create seminar rooms outfitted with new furniture and technology
- Upgrade the library with a new layout, furnishings, and computing technology
- Add new services to enhance the user experience
Motivating factors for assessment

• We live in a culture of assessment
• Accountability and wise spending
• Ensuring the success of the project
• Create buy-in for change
• Use as a marketing tool
Evaluation Plan for the Fine Arts Library

• Define the purpose of the assessment project
• Create a timeline
• Develop components of the plan
Purpose of the Fine Arts Library Assessment Project

• To determine how current patrons use the Fine Arts Library

• To determine the needs of the students, faculty and staff in the College of Fine Arts

• To determine the needs of our other constituents

• To develop ideas for improving the FAL facility, equipment, and services
Components of the Evaluation Plan

• Gather observational data
• Conduct focus groups
• Conduct a survey of current and potential patrons
• Conduct a survey of College of Fine Arts faculty
• Work with classes on projects specific to the FAL renovation
• Evaluate existing usage data
Assess students
Assess teaching
Assess technology
Evaluate programs
Conduct research

EVALUATE PROGRAMS

Program evaluation is the holistic examination of an instructional program including its environment, client needs, procedures, and instructional outcomes.

Begin your program evaluation with careful planning, followed by data gathering and then analysis and reporting.

Get started with planning steps.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3rd floor</th>
<th></th>
<th>4th floor</th>
<th></th>
<th>5th floor</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lobby</td>
<td>av camels</td>
<td>computer</td>
<td>terminals</td>
<td>microfilm</td>
<td>readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 4/4/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, 4/5/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 4/6/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 4/7/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 4/8/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, 4/9/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, 4/10/05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome: We are seeking your help in finding ways to improve the Fine Arts Library facility and services. The purpose of today’s discussion is to explore the ways you currently use the library and generate ideas for improvement. We are looking forward to hearing your ideas.

- About the FAL
- Purpose: we will be upgrading facility
- Results: your ideas and opinions will help us shape our vision for this space
- Questions before we get started?

Ground Rules: everyone will contribute, all contributions will be valued and remain confidential, and the session will be tape-recorded.

Introduce self/staff:
- Beth Kerr
- Laura Schwartz

Participants introduce themselves [first name/department]

Questions:

1. What do you like most about the Fine Arts Library? (have each person respond)
2. What do you like least about the Fine Arts Library? (have each person respond)
3. Thinking about the thing you said you like least, what could be done to address the problem? (have each person respond)
4. What else would you like to do in the library that you can’t currently do?
   Prompts:
   a. What additional equipment would you like to have available?
   b. What additional software would you like to have available?
   c. What additional services would you like to see us provide?
5. What would make the library easier to use in general?
6. What could be done to get people to come to the library more frequently?
7. If you had an unlimited budget, how would you change the library?

Conclusion: Do you have questions for us?
Fine Arts Library (FAL) Facility Use Survey

interested in understanding how you currently use the Fine Arts Library (FAL) and how we
serve you better in the future. Your responses will be used in the planning process, but will
anonymous. We appreciate your assistance.

1. How often do you use the FAL?
   o Daily (at least 5 times/week)
   o A few times a week
   o A few times a month
   o A few times a semester
   o A few times a year
   o Never → Skip to # 8 on reverse

2. On average, how much time do you spend in the FAL per visit?
   o Less than 1 hour
   o 1-2 hours
   o 2-3 hours
   o 3-4 hours
   o 4-5 hours
   o 5 hours or more

3. What equipment do you use in FAL? (Check all that apply)
   o Cassette player
   o CD player
   o Computer
   o DVD player
   o Laser Disc Player
   o Microfilm reader/printer
   o Photocopier
   o Record player
   o Scanner
   o Slide projector
   o Video Cassette players
   o Other
   o Do not use FAL equipment

4. Which type of computer do you prefer to use?
   o PC
   o Mac
   o Either

5. How do you use FAL computers (not Fine Arts Microcomputer Lab/FAML computers)?
   (Check all that apply)
   o MS Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
   o Search databases
   o Email
   o Internet access
   o Do not use FAL computers

6. Do you use your own computer/PDA in FAL to access electronic reserves?
   o Yes
   o No

7. During the current semester, in which of the following ways have you used the FAL?
   (Check all that apply)
   o As a quiet study space
   o Attended class sessions
   o Attended a library tour
   o Listened to CDs
   o Read current journals/magazines
   o Read FAL books
   o Relaxed/slept
   o Socialized
   o Studied in a group
   o Used FAL computers (not FAML)
   o Used FAL materials for course-related study
   o Used FAL sets of music works
   o Viewed exhibits
   o Watched DVDs
   o Other

Please continue survey on reverse →
Faculty survey questions

- How do faculty use the Fine Arts Library?
- How often do faculty use the Fine Arts Library?
- How can we encourage the faculty to use the library more often?
- What changes would the faculty like to see at the Fine Arts Library?
- What equipment or resources would faculty like their students to have access to?
- Additional comments or suggestions?
Involvement in class projects

• Great ideas are generated
• Win-win for all parties
Using existing usage data

- Circulation
- Attendance
- Room reservation requests
- Reference
- Instruction
EVALUATE PROGRAMS

Reporting survey results

STEP 7. Analyze the data
The complexity of data analysis required for survey results depends on the depth and formality of the program evaluation being conducted. [more]

STEP 8. Make conclusions
Your conclusions should be based on the findings of your data analysis. Conclusions for program evaluations should inform any recommendations. [more]

STEP 9. Report results
How you report findings depends on the purpose of your evaluation and the requirements of stakeholders and sponsors. The results of program evaluations may be reported informally to stakeholders as part of a working session or more formally in a presentation or written report. [more]
Summary of overall findings

• Physical items (print and media) AND electronic access to items via more computers

• Laptop checkout and computer access AND electrical outlets for their own personal computers

• Macs AND PCs

• Existing services AND new services

• Quiet, independent study spaces AND collaborative, group study spaces

• Open views AND places to hide
Measures of Success

- Recognition
- Publicity
- Fundraising
- Increased usage
- Regular compliments
NEW CONSTRUCTION

Jacksonville Public Library
Jacksonville, Florida
ROBERT M. SMITH ARCHITECTS
WWW.RAMSA.COM
Size: 297,510 sq. ft.
Cost: $102 million

Among the last of 19 projects completed over the previous four years for the Jacksonville Library system was a new main library to replace a 1963 facility. Highlights of the new building include a vibrant 5,508-square-foot teen area on the ground floor and a 25-foot eagle sculpture by artist Larry Roland (below).

University of Texas Fine Arts Library
Austin, Texas
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
HARRIS AND GUY, PHYSICAL PLANNING
Size: 12,000 sq. ft.
Cost: $900,000

The University of Texas’s Fine Arts Library was transformed into a cutting edge, integrated learning and research center by adding new computing and multimedia technology, streamlining print archives, and generating visual interest through the display of student and faculty art, along with a grand piano suspended overhead.

PHOTO BY SHAWN BROWN.
If you want to talk theater, breathe music, drink in dance or immerse yourself in art, you might think you need a ticket to New York City or Los Angeles. Not so. At the Fine Arts Library on The University of Texas at Austin campus, the creative takes center stage.

The library boasts a compact disc collection numbering more than 40,000, one-of-a-kind art books, musical scores (complete with pianos for those who want to plot right down and give them a spin), exhibition catalogs and one of the largest historical sound recording collections in North America.

And it’s populated by an eclectic group of cool and artsy librarians who make sure that the arts don’t simply stay tucked in the stacks. They permeate the very vibe of the place.

“We want people to communicate about the arts as much as possible,” says Laura Schwartz, Fine Arts head librarian. “One of the qualifications we look for when we hire people is that they have a fine arts background as well as a library background.”

The result is an assortment of creative types who paint, sculpt, play rock music, animate films, mount operas, write dance reviews, direct early music concerts and perform in theater festivals.

For the university and the community, this means they throw open doors to the arts.

“I rely on these artistic sensibilities to keep up the energy by playing great music and for reference questions, because they care enough about the collections to remember what’s in them,” Schwartz says. “It’s such an interesting place.”

It’s been so since 1979, when the library opened, bringing the disciplines of visual arts, music, drama and dance into one space. In the Deyt Fine Arts Building just across the street from the Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium, the library’s floor-to-ceiling windows offer fabulous views of the Tower and the stadium. What happens inside just keeps getting better.

Libraries are an evolving entity, and the days of hushed seriousness and buttoned-up cardigans, if they ever existed, are in the past.

“What’s that you’re playing?” a patron at the Fine Arts Library may ask a librarian when he hears the music coming from the processing area behind the front desk.

He might be answered by Adam Hatley, a founding member of Those Reabodys, an Austin-based rock band that has toured the country and Europe and has released two popular albums. Hatley keeps the music fresh on the road and in the library, too. More often than not, when someone asks about the music, he or she then checks out the CD shortly thereafter.
University of Texas Libraries News

$1 million gift to University of Texas Libraries is largest single grant in its history

AUSTIN, Texas (March 9, 2006) — The University of Texas Libraries has received the largest single gift in its history, a $1 million grant from University of Texas at Austin alumna Jan J. Roberts, who has established an endowment in honor of her late husband, Richard T. “Dick” Roberts.

The endowment will upgrade and maintain the Fine Arts Library facility, acquire new library materials and support readings or lectures by renowned playwrights, poets, composers and authors.

The reading room at the Fine Arts Library will be named The Richard T. and Jan J. Roberts Reading Room.

Roberts, an avid traveler and philanthropist, credits her husband with opening her eyes to the world outside tiny Hunt, Texas, the Hill Country town where she grew up.

In the early 1970s, a friend asked to sponsor Jan Roberts as a docent for the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, an experience she says played a major role in the development of her interest in the arts.

“I began to audit art history classes to learn more about the works we were presenting to visitors,” says Roberts. “The impression made on me by the studies encouraged my desire to travel to museums where I could experience first hand what I had only seen previously in books. I’ve since been traveling pole to pole, visiting museums and libraries and growing ever fonder of the arts.

“We love to read, so the house was always full of books,” Roberts says. “The written word provides an entrée into worlds we might not otherwise experience, so the support of a library dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the arts and culture seemed a natural beneficiary of our gratitude. I see the endowment as an honor to my husband’s legacy and a way that others can benefit from his interests as I have.”
Increased Usage

- Attendance has increased by 17%, from 129,000 in 2004/2005 to 151,000 in 2006/2007

- Circulation has increased 3%, from 247,000 in 2004/2005 to 255,000 in 2006/2007
Is assessment really worth it?

- Outcome will more likely be a successful project
- In service professions, user input is essential
- You cannot do everything your users want you to do
- It takes time, lots of time
- But it is worth it!
Websites and contact information

Fine Arts Library
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/

Instructional Assessment Resources
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/

Final Report
http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/programs/plan/examples/

Questions? Contact me. Laura Schwartz, Fine Arts Library, UT Austin, lschwartz@austin.utexas.edu, 512.495.4476