2013

Review of Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits

Martha E. Hardy

Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN, martha.hardy@metrostate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship>

Part of the [Scholarly Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hardy, Martha E. (2013) "Review of Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits," *Collaborative Librarianship*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 3 , Article 10.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29087/2013.5.3.10>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/collaborativelibrarianship/vol5/iss3/10>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ DU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Collaborative Librarianship by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ DU. For more information, please contact jennifer.cox@du.edu, dig-commons@du.edu.

Review of *Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits*

Martha E. Hardy (martha.hardy@metrostate.edu)
Metropolitan State University, St. Paul, MN

Association of College and Research Libraries.
Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits.
Prepared by Karen Brown and Kara J. Malenfant. Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 2012.
http://www.ala.org/acrl/files/issues/value/val_summit.pdf.

Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits, published in 2012 by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) and prepared by Karen Brown and Kara J. Malenfant, highlights the crucial importance of demonstrating and communicating the value of academic libraries and their impact on student learning, plus recommendations for action. A National Leadership Collaborative Planning Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) enabled the ACRL to hold two summits in late 2011 as part of its Value of Academic Libraries Initiative. Three external higher education groups with expertise in assessment and institutional effectiveness – the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) – collaborated with ACRL to produce the summits, which were facilitated by Syracuse University faculty member Megan Oakleaf. Teams representing twenty-two colleges and university libraries participated. *Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate* provides a useful summary of the themes pertaining to library value discussed at the summits and details the recommendations for further action distilled from these discussions.

Discussions at the summits repeatedly emphasized the usefulness of collaboration in creating effective, relevant, and compelling evidence-based assessments of library value in relation to the larger institution's greatest needs or

strengths. In the report, librarians are encouraged to collaborate with faculty members and academic departments, student affairs, administrators, and especially institutional research departments to design integrative assessments that span units of the institution. The composition of the library teams at the summits reflected this approach. Most teams consisted of a librarian or library director (or equivalent), plus an institutional researcher and senior administrator. This kind of collaboration can facilitate outputs that look at library data in combination with other data about student learning, retention, and success from units such as student affairs and academic affairs.

Several recommendations for further action emerged from the summits. According to the authors, there needs to develop a better understanding of how the value of academic libraries relates to student success and learning. We also need to create and offer professional development opportunities to assist librarians acquire the competencies and skills essential to creating effective assessments and articulations of library value. Furthermore, we need to partner not only with internal institutional stakeholders, but also with external stakeholders such as accrediting agencies, library vendors, and higher education organizations. Finally, we need to leverage and use existing ACRL resources in library value projects.

In the Forward to the report, ACRL Executive Director Mary Ellen K. Davis and Lisa Janicke Hinchcliffe, former President of ACRL, share their hope that librarians will use *Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate* to begin conversations within their institutions about library value and as a basis for instigating library accountability and assessment projects. The ideal project team would be comprised not only of librarians and library staff, but would also include members

from college administrations, institutional research departments, student affairs, accreditation teams, and faculty. Rather than conducting the project and then presenting the results to institutional stakeholders at the conclusion, this approach helps assure support and engagement from such people from the beginning. It reinforces the idea that academic libraries are integral and essential to institutions of higher learning.

While *Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate* is a useful resource and provides a good introduction to ACRL's Value of Academic Libraries Initiative, librarians will need to avail themselves of additional information resources before embarking on their own value projects. *The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report* by Megan Oakleaf, which reviews existing research about library value and includes a preliminary research agenda, is available as a hardcopy book or for free download as a PDF (see http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/issues/value/val_report.pdf). Also by Oakleaf, *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Toolkit* is available for purchase from the author (see <http://meganoakleaf.info/publications.html>) and provides tools and resources for libraries embarking on their own library value projects. The ACRL Value of Academic Libraries website provides up-to-date information about library value projects, research, and professional development opportunities. Librarians can also apply to join ACRL's Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success, a yearlong program of professional development and assessment activities.

Oakleaf, Megan, *The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2010.

_____. *Academic Library Value: The Impact Starter Toolkit*. Syracuse: Dellas Graphics, 2012.

Endnotes

American College & Research Libraries. "ACRL Value of Academic Libraries." Accessed June 20, 2013. <http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/>.

_____. "Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success." Accessed June 20, 2013. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA>.