How's the Weather Up There? Academic Library Value & the Summit(s)

Megan Oakleaf, MLS, PhD
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ALA Midwinter 2012 VAL Update

What do we mean by value?

Context for Value?

Few libraries exist in a vacuum, accountable only to themselves. There is always a larger context for assessing library quality, that is, what and how well does the library contribute to achieving the overall goals of the parent constituencies?

(S. Pritchard 1996)

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Data, Evidence, & Proof

Not only do stakeholders count on higher education institutions to achieve their institutional goals, they also require them to *demonstrate evidence* that they have achieved them.

The same is true for academic libraries; they too can provide evidence of their value.

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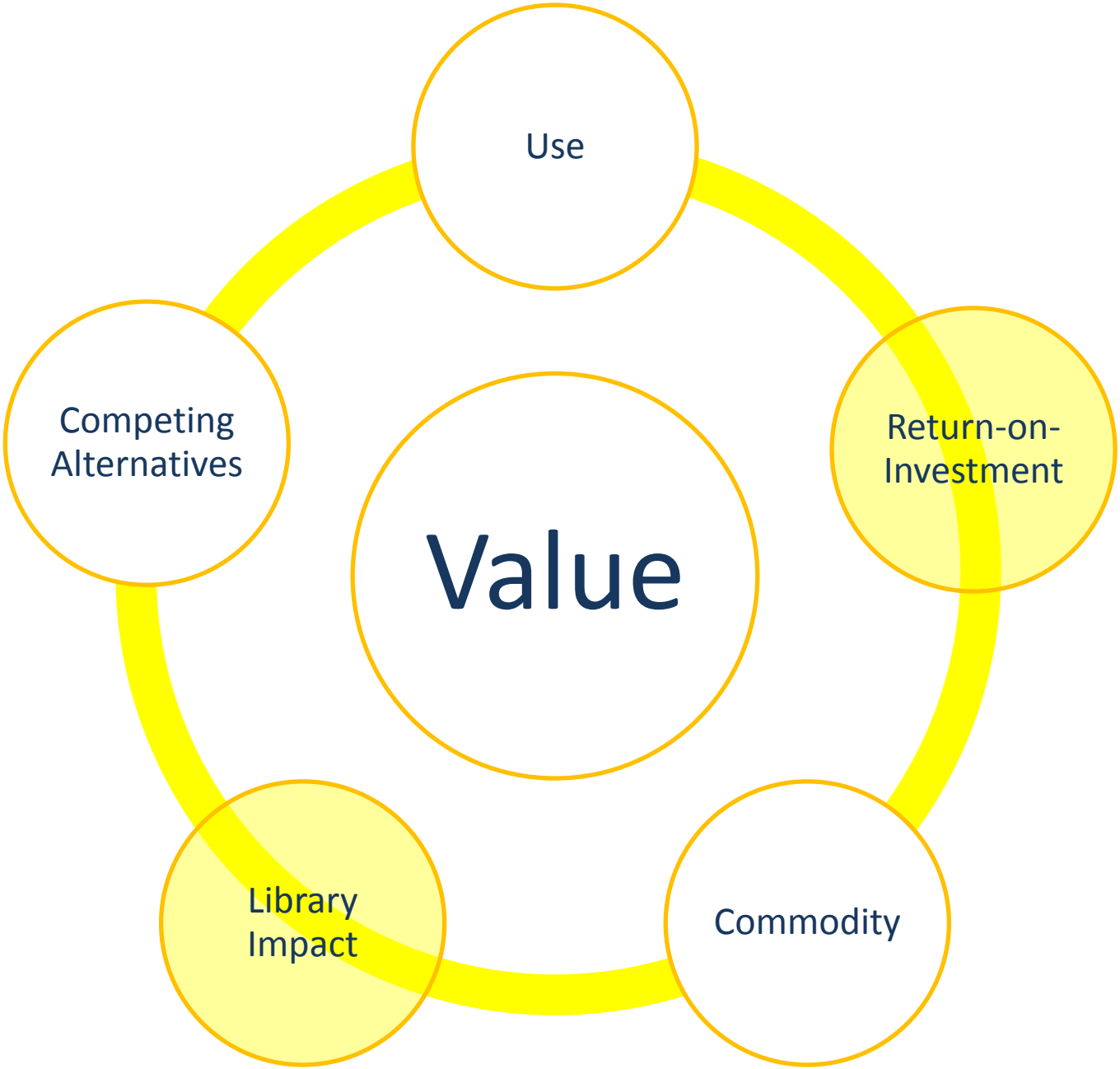

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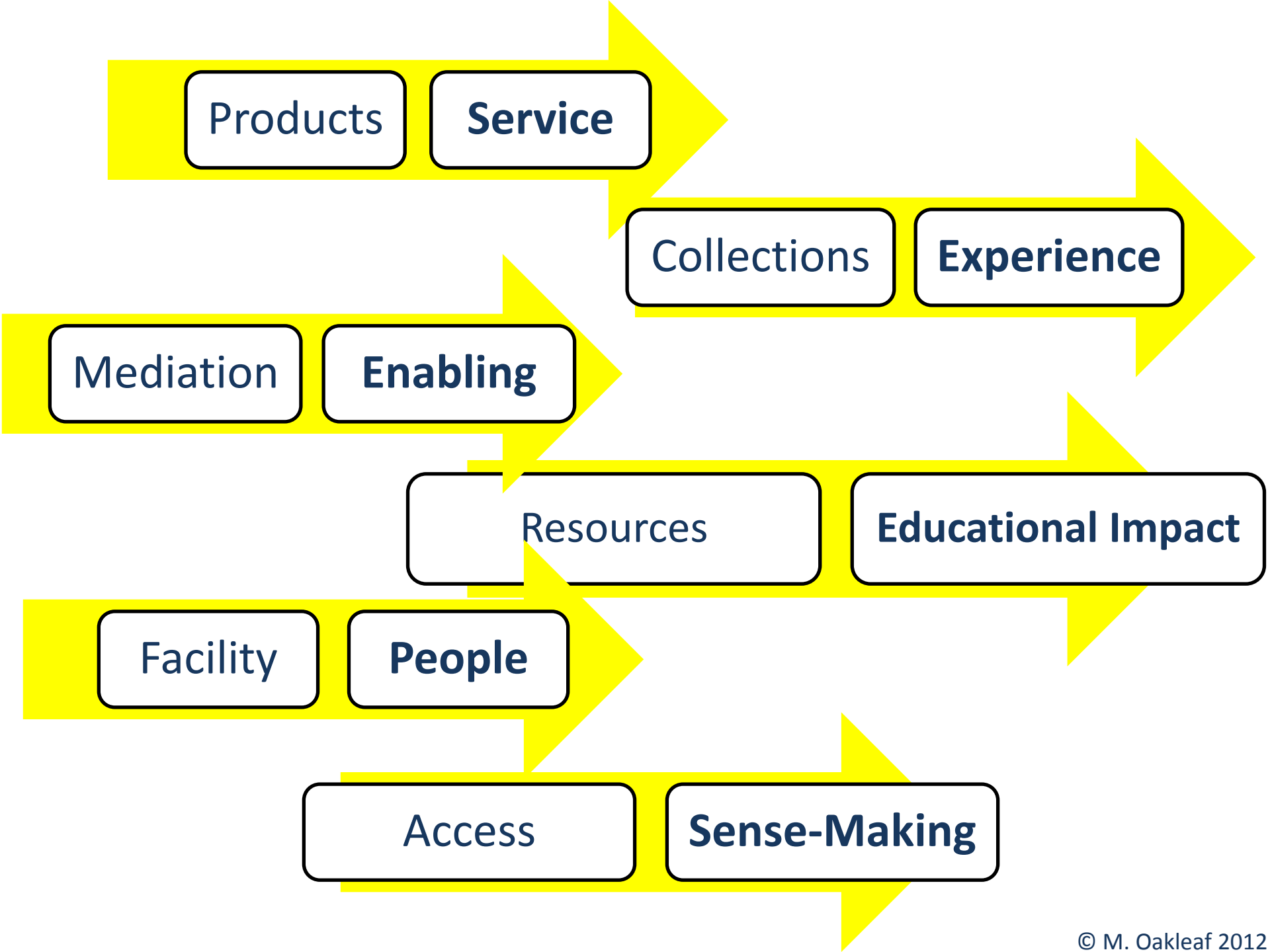

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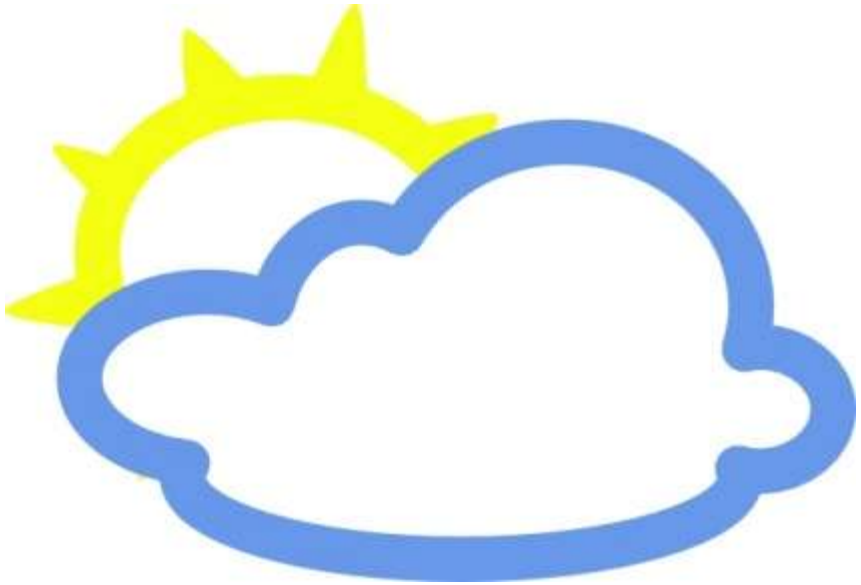
This is not business as usual.



national reframing
of academic library value.

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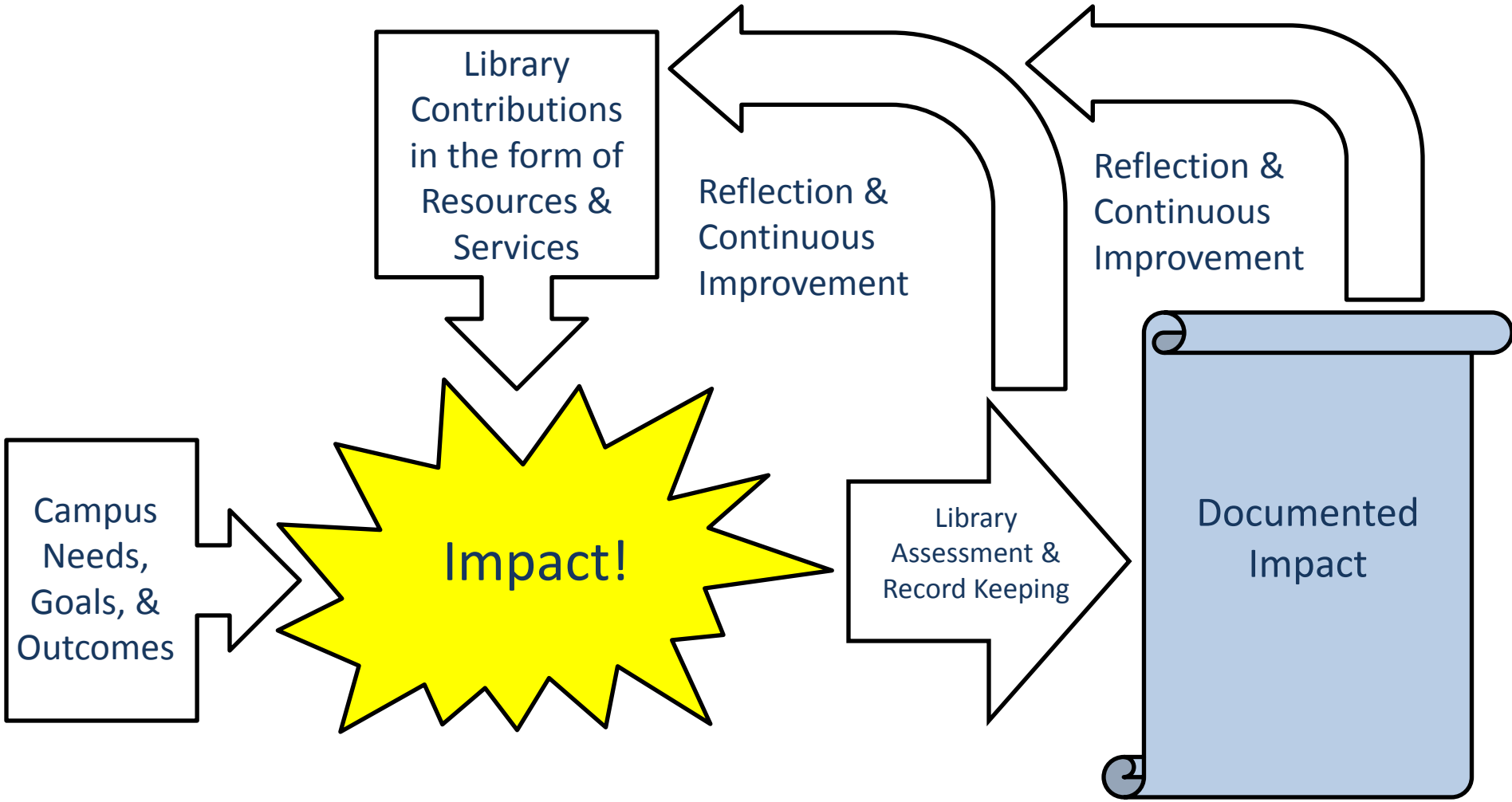

Oakleaf, Megan. "Are They Learning? Are We? Learning and the Academic Library." *Library Quarterly*. 81(1). 2011.

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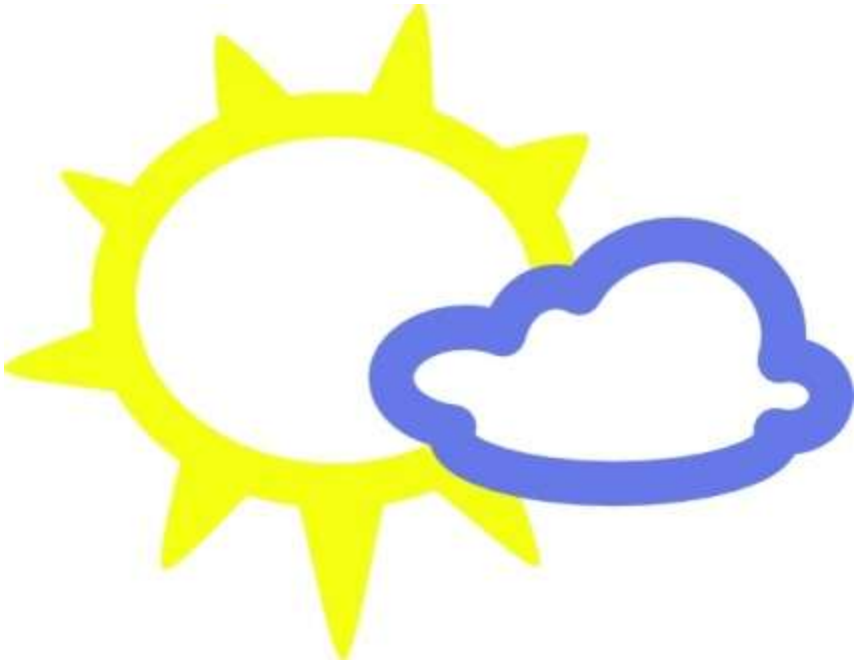
What is Valued?



- What's most important to your institution? Your faculty? Your students?
- What do you to contribute to it?
- What do your colleagues contribute to it?

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student enrollment
student retention & graduation
student career success
student GPA/test achievement
student learning
student experience
faculty research productivity
faculty grants
faculty teaching
institutional reputation

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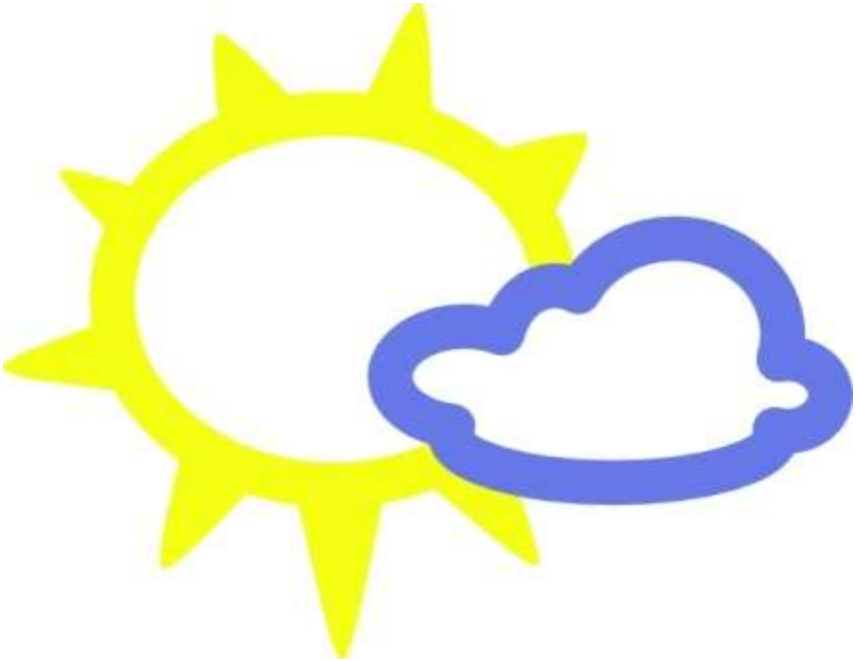
Student Enrollment

We know…

As in, at least one study indicates…

- Libraries are 2nd most impactful facilities for student admission decisions.



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Student Enrollment

We don't know…

- Why?
- What aspects of the library impact student decisions?

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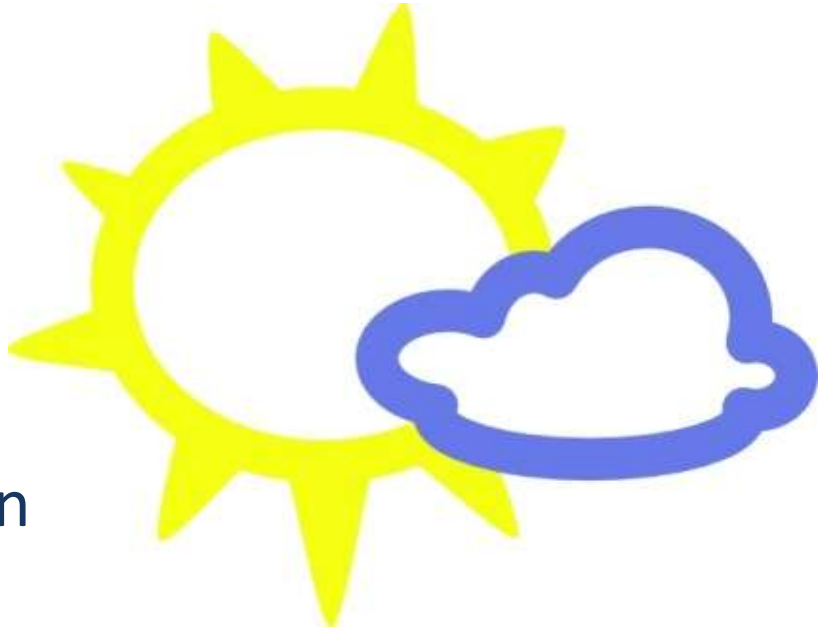
Retention/Completion/Graduation

We know…

- Most libraries support several high-impact practices.
- Some libraries support early warning/intervention practices.
- Some libraries proactively assign "research advisors" to support certain student groups.
- Library use, expenditures, and professional staff are correlated with retention, but no causative links.



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Retention/Completion/Graduation

We don't know…

- How do interactions with librarians impact students' feelings of connectedness?
- How much interaction with librarians makes a real difference?

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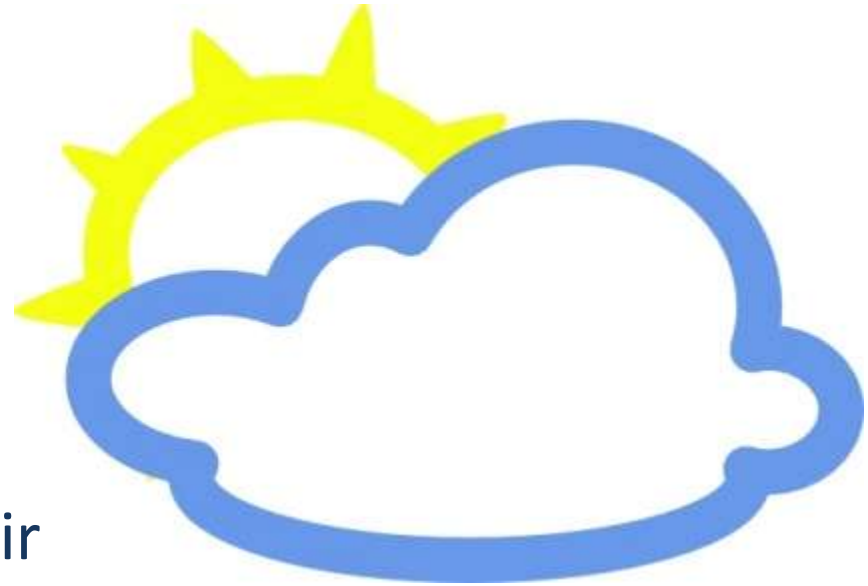
Career Success

We know…

- Employers care about student information skills (critical thinking, problem solving, locating/evaluating/using information).
- Libraries provide resources students can use during their internship work.
- Libraries provide detailed company profiles students can use to prepare for interviews.



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Career Success

We don't know…

- Do students use library resources during their internships and to what end?
- Do students use library-supplied company profiles? Do those students secure more jobs? Higher salaries?

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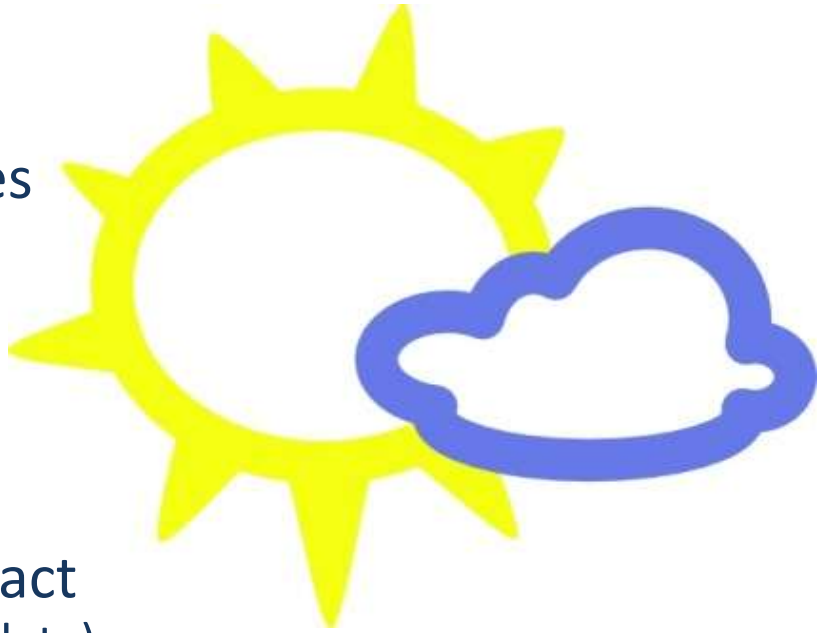
GPA & Testing

We know…

- Student grades and professional/educational test scores are used to make high-stakes decisions.
- Information skills questions are included on many tests including graduate school tests, CAAP, etc.
- Library "check outs" appear to impact students grades positively. (non-US data)
- Library "visits" do not appear to impact student grades. (non-US data)
- Library "instruction" may impact student grades, or at least not make them worse. (non-US data)



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GPA & Testing

We don't know…

- In the US, do library interactions impact student GPA?
- Do tests like the GRE, MCAT, LSAT, CAAP, CLA, and MAPP include information skill questions?
- Do library interactions impact student test scores?

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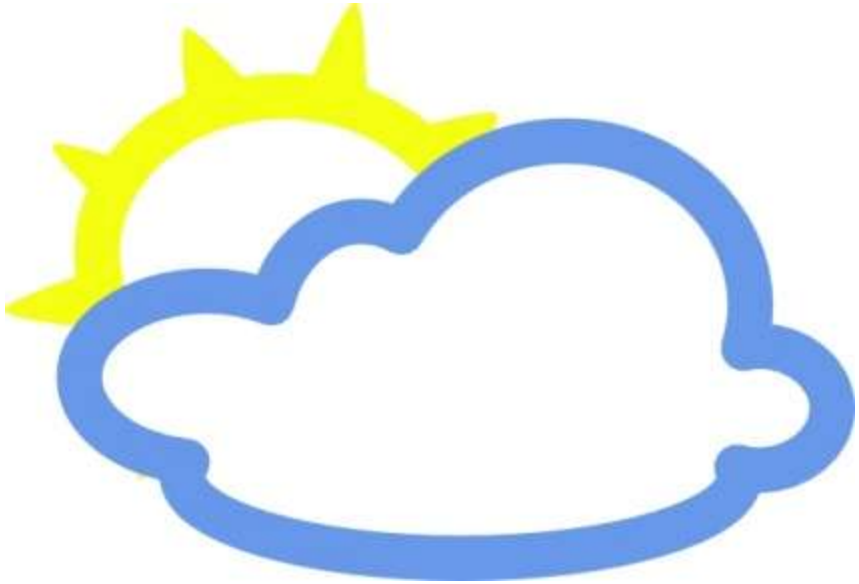
Student Learning

We know…

- Libraries provide instruction, including face-to-face “one-shots”, credit courses, online learning objects.
- Students appear to acquire “information literacy” skills as a consequence of library instruction, but assessments are scattered and episodic, not coherent and longitudinal.



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Student Learning

We don't know…

- How much or how well do students learn information skills?
- Do they transfer these skills to other contexts?
- What might employment of AMSs reveal about student learning?
- What library interactions besides overt instruction make a difference in student learning?

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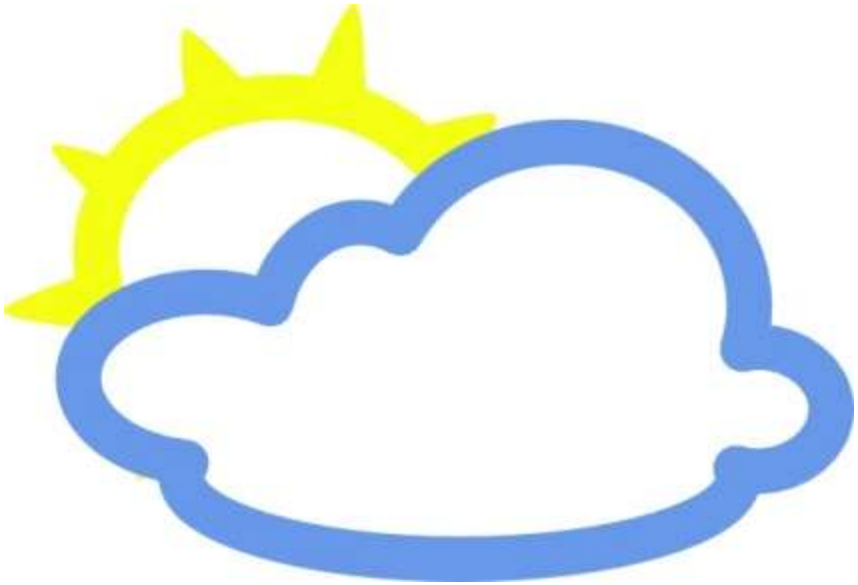
Student Experience/Engagement

We know…

- Student engagement surveys include many items that may capture library-related information, but almost none are directly linked to libraries.



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Student Experience/Engagement

We don't know…

- Do library interactions impact student experience/engagement?
- What interactions are most impactful?

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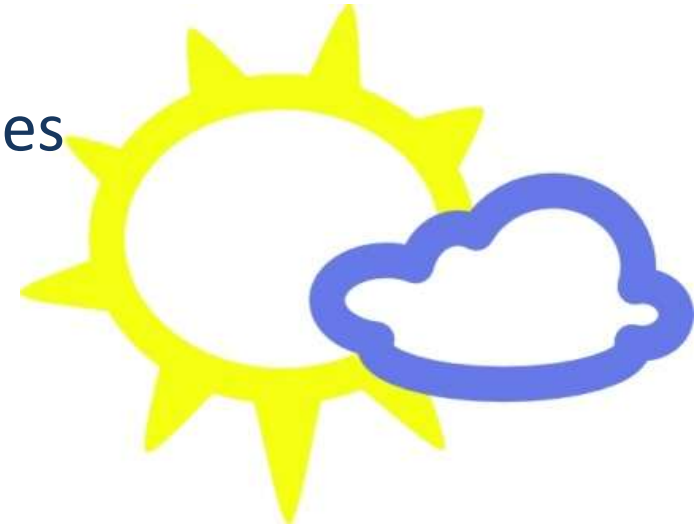
Faculty Research & Grants

We know…

- Libraries supply most of the resources faculty use in their publications & grant applications.
- Library ROI figures related to grants varies widely.
- Librarians support faculty preparing publications, grant proposals, patent applications, and T&P packages.
- Librarians often serve as research consultants, project managers, technical assistants, purchasers, and archivists.



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Faculty Research & Grants

We don't know…

- What is the financial ROI for supporting faculty research?
- What is the full impact of library support on faculty?

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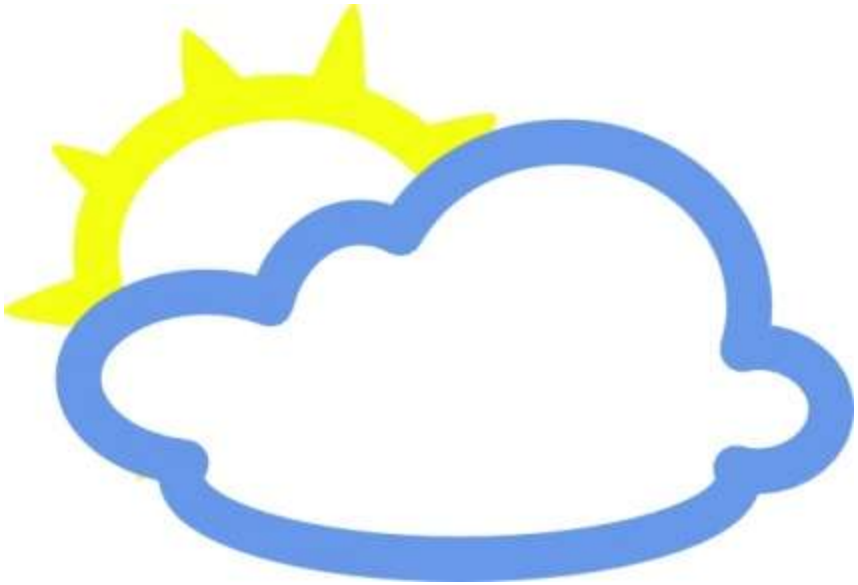
Faculty Teaching

We know…

- Librarians support faculty teaching by providing instruction, curriculum/assignment design, and resources for teaching.
- Faculty who receive this support cite more time for their research, ability to develop new teaching content, and improved teaching skills.



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Faculty Teaching

We don't know…

- What is the full impact of library support of faculty teaching?

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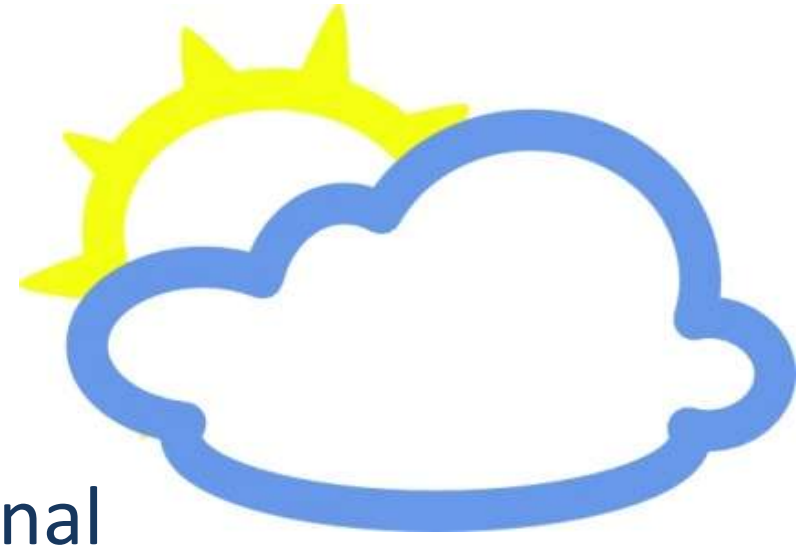
Institutional Reputation/Prestige

We know…

- Librarians help recruit star faculty.
- Library collections are included in some institutional quality measures.
- Renowned special collections bring prestige.



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Institutional Reputation/Prestige

We don’t know…

- What is the full impact of academic libraries on institutional reputation/prestige?

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Other Stuff

- Accreditation
- Affordability
- Contribution
  - Educated Populace
  - Community Engagement
- Funded Research
  - Economic Growth
  - Workforce Outcomes
  - Scientific Knowledge
  - Societal Outcomes
- Data Curation, eScience & Data Literacy
- TechTransfer, Patents, etc.

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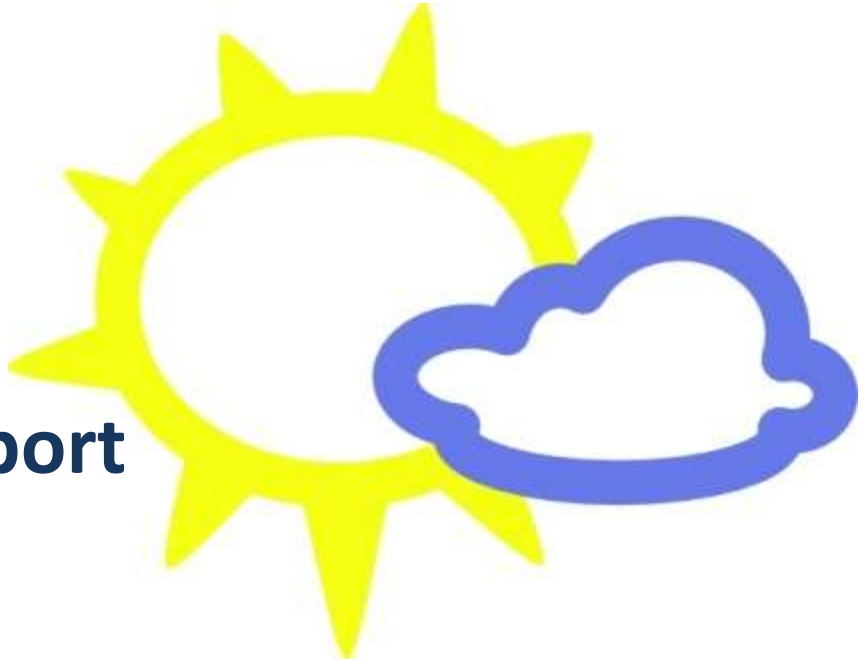
What are the most pressing needs at your institution?
Demonstrating Library Value: A National Conversation
ACRL
Association of College & Research Libraries

Impact Areas Identified at the Summits

- Student learning outcomes
- Student engagement
- Student success
- Retention/Efficiencies (getting students through faster)
- Affordability
- External funding
- Faculty research
- **Academic intimacy/rapport**



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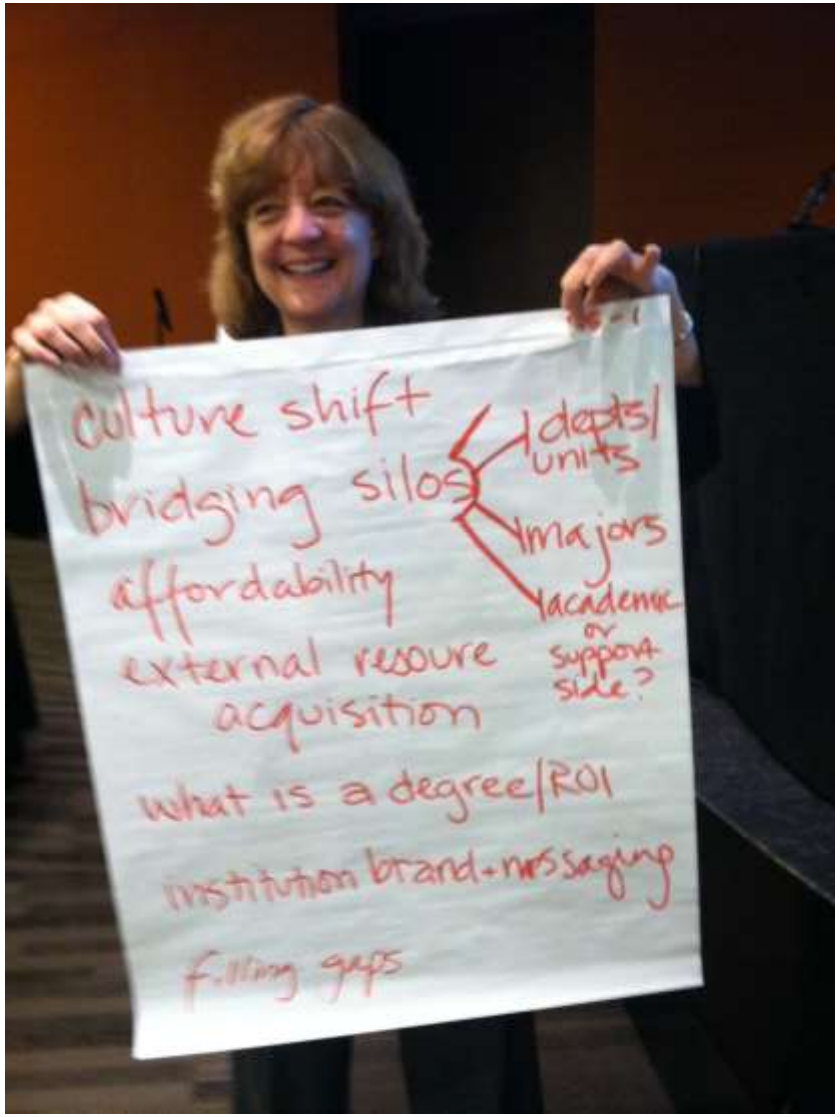
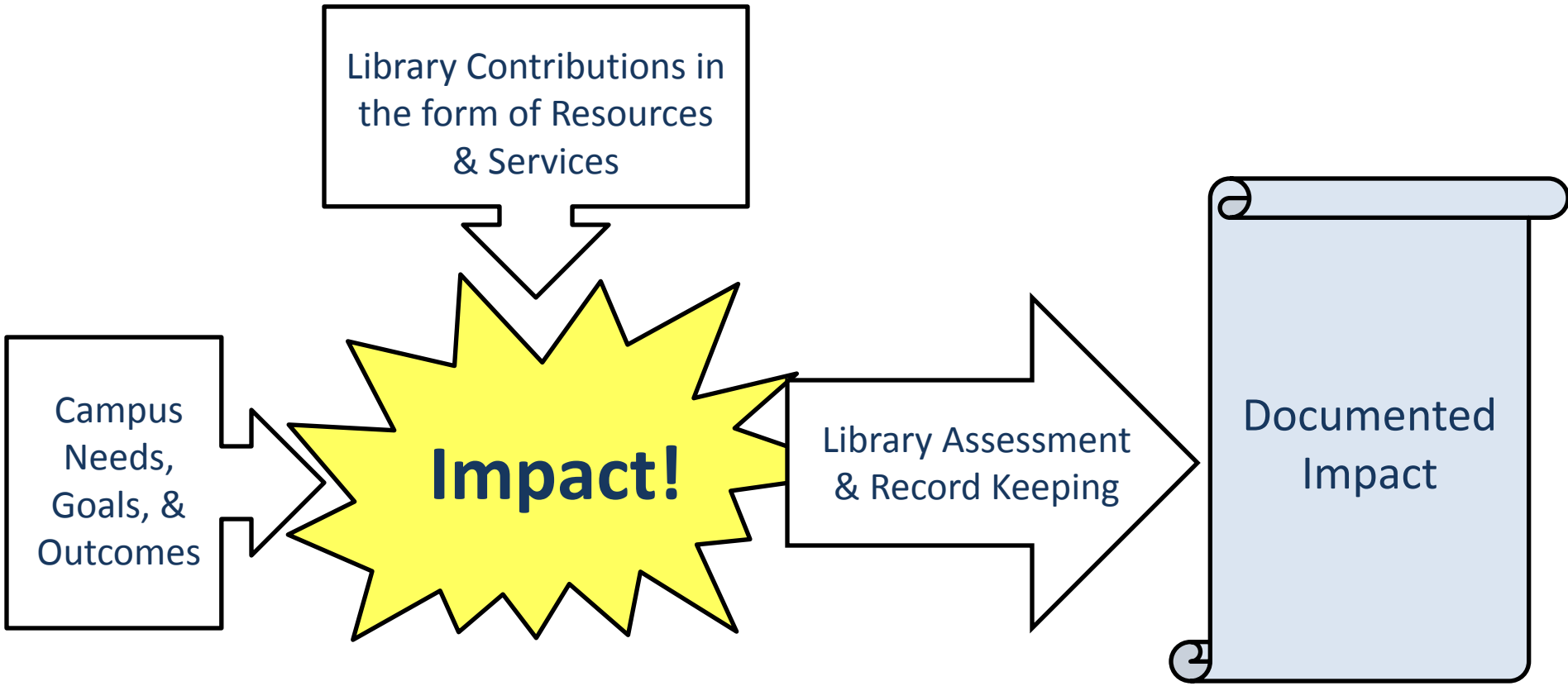

culture shift
bridging silos
depts/ units
majors
academic or support side?
affordability
external resource acquisition
what is a degree/ROI
institution brand + messaging
filling gaps

global impact
civic engagement
institution-specific lists - e.g. institutional distinctives
alumni connections
underprepared/ basic skills
accreditation

How can we **increase** impact?
How can we **document** impact?
How can we **partner** to do both?



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Recommendations

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Define outcomes.

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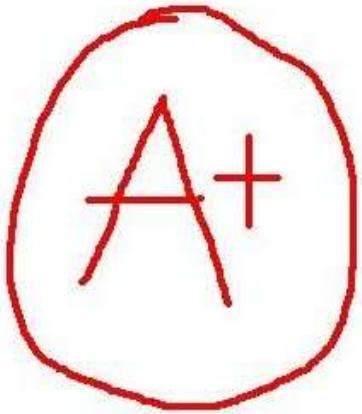
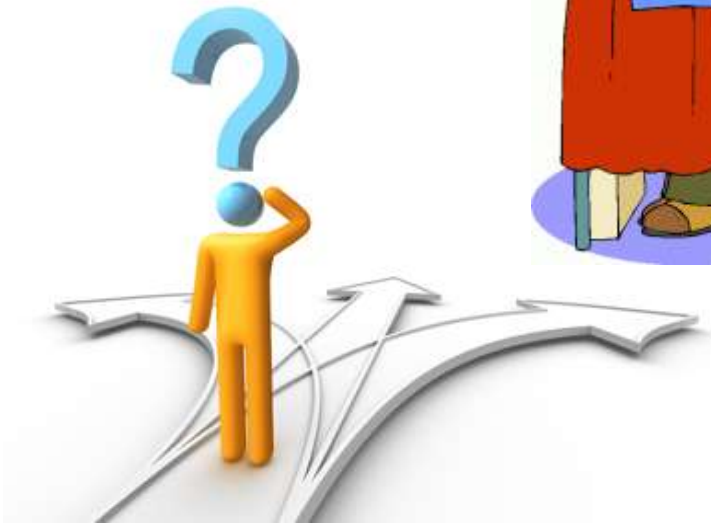
Determine what libraries enable students, faculty, student affairs professionals, administrators, and staff to do.





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Develop systems to collect data on individual library user behavior, while maintaining privacy.

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Participate in higher education assessment initiatives, including accreditation.

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What have you already done?

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Harness the capabilities of assessment management systems.

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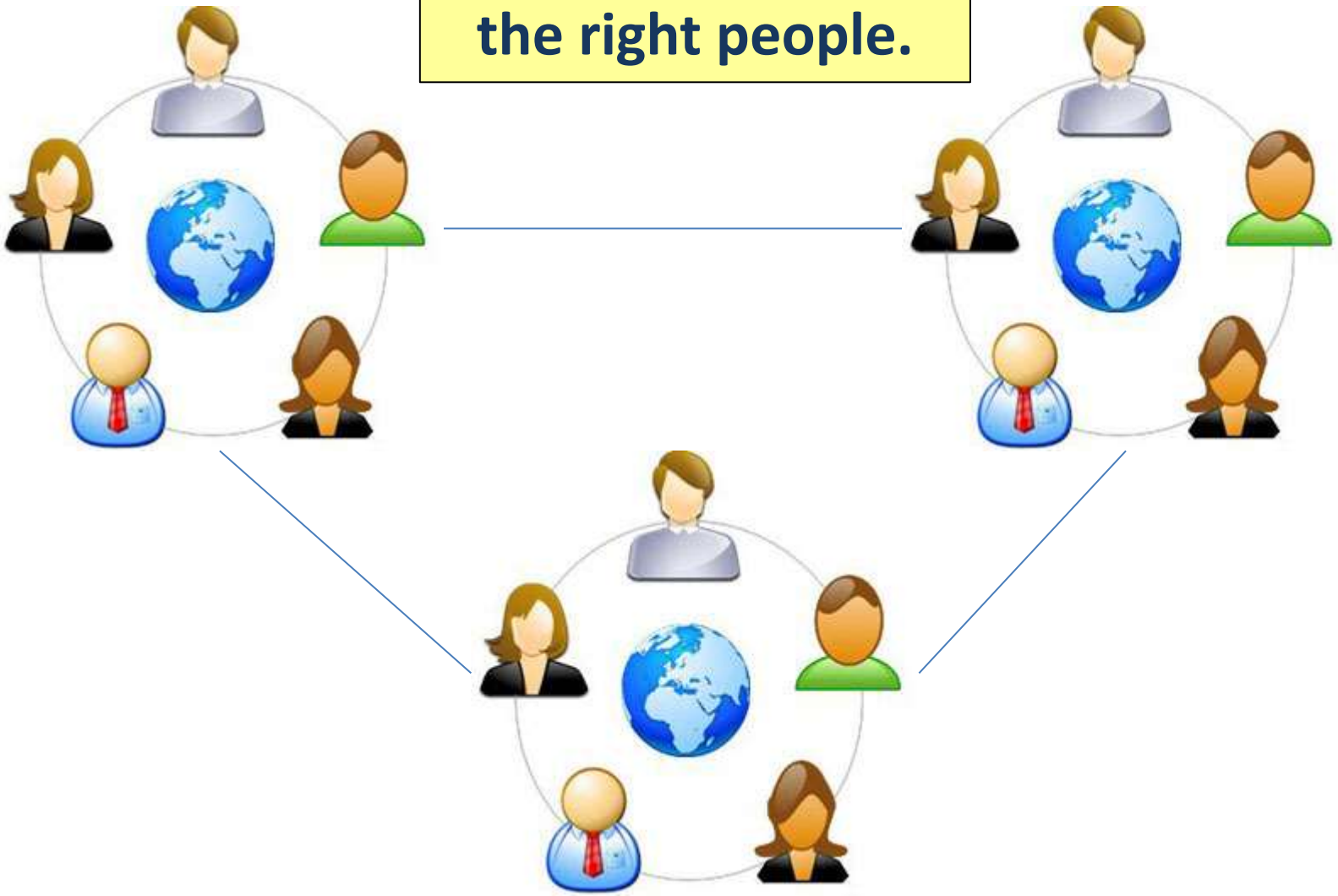
Hire
or become
or collaborate with
the right people.



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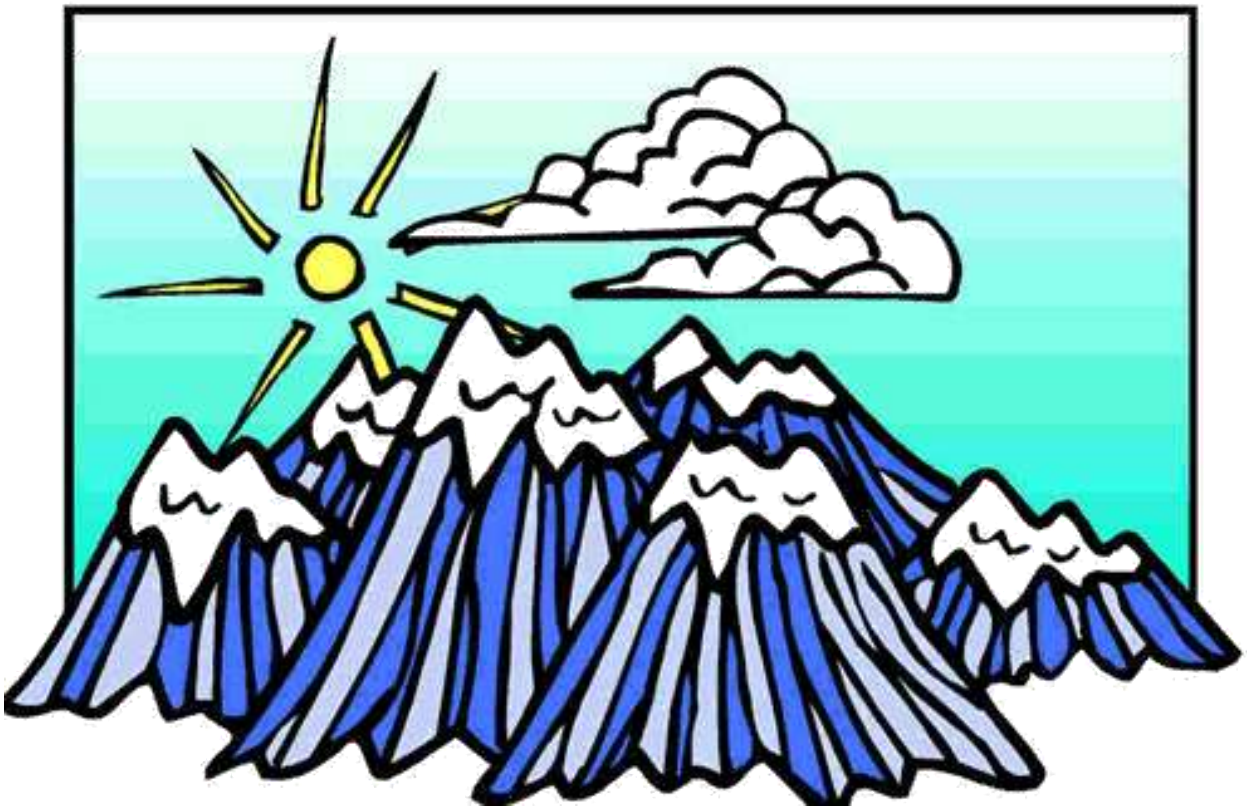

Towards that end…

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Summit Goals

- build and strengthen collaborative relationships with higher education stakeholders around the issue of library value,
- identify types and sources of data about library performance that higher education stakeholders need to advance their institution's mission and goals,
- determine the professional competencies necessary for librarians to document and communicate the value of their academic libraries in relation to their institution's goals, and
- increase awareness and understanding within the library profession and among higher education constituent groups about how academic libraries contribute to the overall goals and missions of their institutions.

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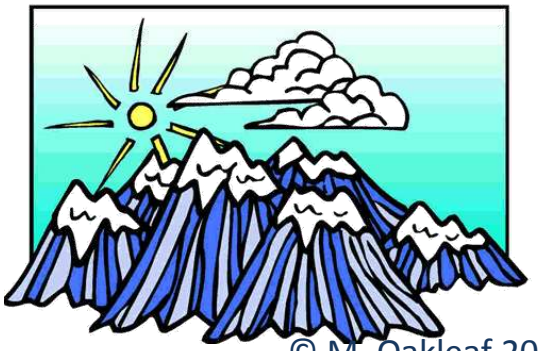
Summit 1

- 1.5 days with 22 institutional teams made up of chief academic officers, institutional researchers, senior librarians
- Reception, Welcome, Introductions
- Overview – VAL Report & Initiative & Response
- Chief Academic Officer Panel
- Discussion of VAL Report “Essential Questions”
- Accreditor Panel
- Case Studies & Best Practices
- Discussion of “Next Steps”



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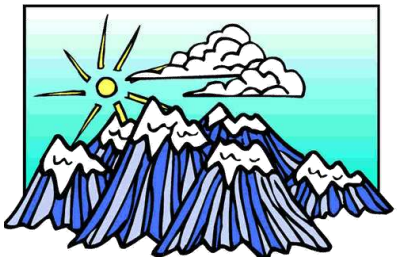
identify goal
11

Summit 2



- 1 day with 22 senior librarians
- Reflection/discussion/brainstorming

1. What are the institutional impact areas libraries contribute to and what does that contribution look like?
2. What data do librarians need to demonstrate their contribution?
3. What partnerships do librarians need to develop to establish/expand their contribution?
4. What skills/strategies do librarians need to learn to contribute to institutional impact areas and demonstrate that contribution? How should librarians learn these skills/strategies?

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Evidence and Data Sources
Washout student library use transaction data (not the book or reference question but a book/reference question
Large data sets with individual use/transaction data
Impact citation measures
Content analysis of student papers
Existing data (student and institutional)
Co-curricular activities
External surveys/data (NSSE, CLA, Wabash)
Department level assessment data (program, senior/exit surveys)
Outcomes data (but systems not set up well)
Impact of facilities
Survey data: usefulness and satisfaction
Diagnostic tool for learning outcomes
Data tied to strategic plan/outcomes (both institutional and library)
Faculty and staff exit interviews
Data about faculty librarian interactions
Student performance over time in courses with IL component
Competing requests/needs for data
Don't know what data is helpful
Ethnographic research
Grant data (info sources used/library assistance
Alumni survey
ACRL
Association of College & Research Libraries

Evidence and Data Sources

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Data by Steve

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Data by Steve

Evidence and Data Sources

Surveys on reasons for library visits
Syllabi for course requirement of library use and/or instruction specific resources
Catalog all library interactions for one month
Reference consultations by course
IL imbedded courses
Alumni surveys
Financial aid and library use
Consortial cost/benefit
Website analytics
Employer surveys
Framed data (did it make a difference)
Cost benefit analysis
Library/Faculty retention (exit interviews)
Student success impact
What students know/can do
Scholarly communication behaviors of grads/faculty
Cost benefit of collaborations
Qualitative data (focus groups, interviews etc.)
Externally requested or comparator data (rankings)
Rubrics

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Collaborations and Partnerships

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Internal

- Institutional research
- Assessment Office (if different)
- Research Office (grants & contracts)
- Student learning/affairs
- Key university committees & groups
- Extension
- Faculty members
- Advisors
- Institutional program reviews
- Information technology
- Center for teaching & learning
- Graduate School/College

Internal

- Learning support (tutoring services, writing center)
- Learning communities
- Undergrad research center
- Trustees
- Peer to peer groups
- Provost office

External

- Accrediting agencies
- Professional organizations/associations
- Other institutions/libraries
- Funding agencies

SKILLS/STRATEGIES LIBRARIANS NEED TO LEARN

1. Higher Ed Context - Understanding and participating in issues confronting higher ed especially related to assessment/standards/accreditation, practices, challenges
2. Institutional Context - Framing/communicating role of library on campus in terms of institutional mission, breaking silos, being visible
3. "Assessment 101" - Outcomes, practice, planning, project management, skills
4. The Data - Dealing with data, stats, what's available, what are the limits, how to integrate in enterprise systems, how to track individuals, how to understand, analyze, manage, mine, correlate, triangulate, use for change, communicate
5. Research - Design, methods, tools
6. Partnership Development - Determining key players, developing/managing partnerships, shared vocab, gaining entrance into discussions

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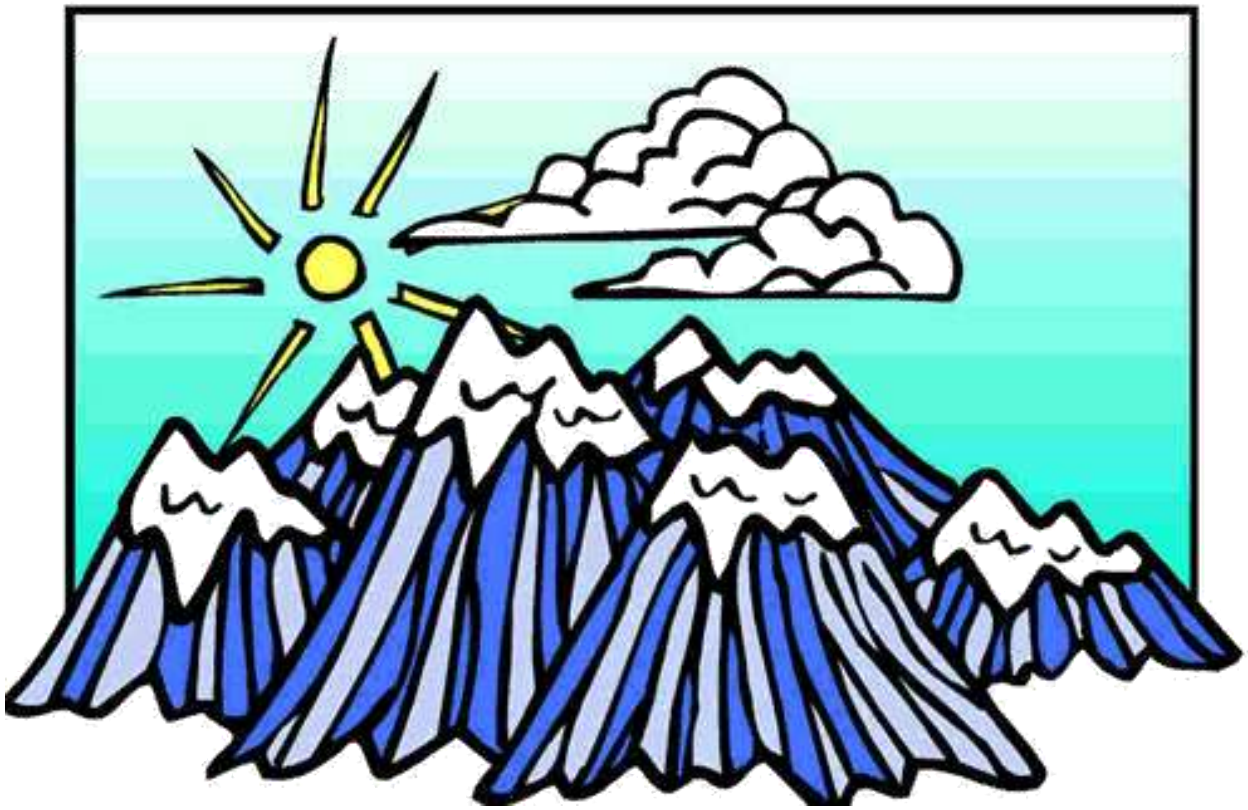

The View from the Summit(s)

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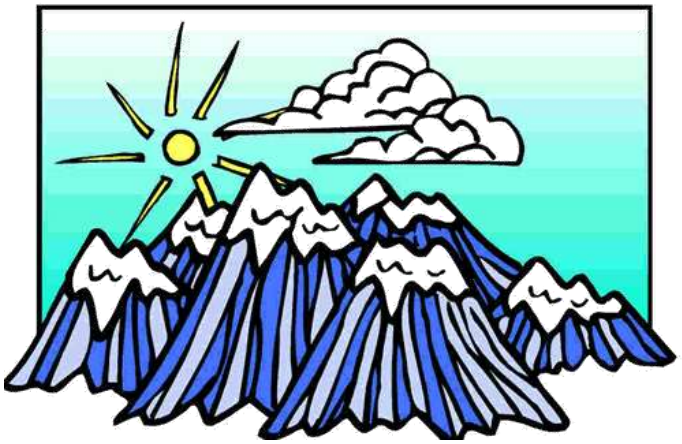

The View from the Summit(s)

- Stakeholder Perspectives
- Collaborative Synergies
- Expansion of Institutional Impact Areas
- Exploration of Data Challenges & Opportunities
- Identification of Skills/Strategies Librarians Need to Learn
- Suggestions for Professional Development Offerings
- Research Ideas

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