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[Review of] The Quality Infrastructure: Measuring, Analyzing, and Improving Library Services

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The Quality Infrastructure: Measuring, Analyzing, and Improving Library Services. Ed. by Sarah Anne Murphy. Chicago: ALA, 2014. 186 p. Paper \$60 (ISBN: 978-0-8389-1173-0).

Organized, comprehensive assessment of a library's infrastructure (broadly defined as its programs and personnel) is a necessity but one that can too easily fall by the wayside. Most libraries will run the occasional user survey, but how many gather assessment data with a focused, systematic plan? Lack of time, expertise, training, administrative support, and staff are common barriers that prevent libraries from engaging in assessment.

Sarah Anne Murphy, currently the coordinator of research and reference for the Ohio State University Libraries, has compiled eleven interesting and useful examples of how some academic libraries and information organizations have addressed these universal problems. There is certainly no shortage of useful materials on academic library assessment; see, for example, Joseph R. Matthews' *Library Assessment in Higher Education* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2007; 2nd edition forthcoming in Fall 2014) and *SPEC Kit 303: Library*

SOURCES

Assessment (Washington: Association of Research Libraries, 2007) by Stephanie Wright and Lynda S. White.

Murphy's collection of case studies is a worthwhile addition, especially because it emphasizes the need for libraries to devote the necessary staff and resources to their assessment programs. "A library can only continuously improve and effectively respond to the needs of the individuals it serves," writes Murphy, "by dedicating the human, financial, and capital resources required to support effective assessment" (viii). Each organization profiled in the book has allocated the resources necessary for assessment, and each one provides an overview and background of its existing assessment program, an explanation of its theoretical framework, a description of its staff roles, and examples of specific activities and programs that have helped effect lasting improvement and change.

It is clear from these essays that excellent assessment programs are not launched overnight. For example, authors Steve Hiller and Stephanie Wright shed light on how much time and effort was required to bring the University of Washington Libraries to its current "culture of assessment" (2). Activities of a "Task Force on Library Services" in 1991, including a faculty/student satisfaction survey, laid the groundwork for successively more systematic assessment programs. Today, the institution's Libraries Assessment and Metrics Team is comprised of a team chair, director of assessment and planning, and a part-time librarian, who implement a wide range of assessment tools that directly inform the work of the libraries' strategic planning.

Although most of the chapters include notes for further reading, a useful addition to the book would be an appendix listing assessment resources for those readers unfamiliar with the basic techniques and the formal systems mentioned by many of the chapter authors, such as the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, Lean Six Sigma, Balanced Scorecard, and Project Management Professional (PMP). Further, the title of the collection is a bit misleading about its scope: no public or K–12 libraries are included. The organizations profiled are primarily libraries at research-intensive universities, including University of Washington, University of Virginia, University of Arizona, Emory University, and Syracuse University. The University of Richmond, along with the Ontario Council of University Libraries and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Information Services Office, provide insights from the perspective of a smaller liberal arts college, an academic library consortium, and a special library, respectively.

In her introduction, Murphy does emphasize the primarily academic focus of this collection of essays; however, the book certainly offers key takeaways for librarians working in other types of institutions as well. The overall message in this interesting title is that an organized, thoughtful library assessment program is not a luxury but rather a necessity for the continual development of a strong library infrastructure that will serve library staff and patrons for years to come.—*Jennifer A. Bartlett, Head of Reference Services, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*