

**Institution Name**

Triton College

**Institution Characteristics**

Triton College, located in River Grove, Illinois, is a comprehensive public community college serving the near western suburbs of Chicago. It is a Hispanic- and minority-serving institution with high nontraditional enrollment.

**CARLI Counts Participant Name + Job Title**

Hilary Meyer, Triton College Library's Director of Library Systems and Technical Services, led the project. At the end of the project year, in December 2019, Ms. Meyer was promoted to Dean of Academic Success at Triton. The Library is one of several areas now reporting to her.

**Project Name/Title**

Understanding the Impact of the Library's Services, Resources, and Space on Student Learning and Success at Triton College

**Single Sentence Abstract**

Triton College Library conducted surveys of the Library's services, resources, and space using surveys designed and hosted by ACRL Project Outcome and found that students who completed the surveys were appreciative of and valued the Library's existing offerings, while desiring more of everything.

**Motivation(s) for Project**

Assessment is a top priority on Triton's campus this year, due largely to the HLC's planned Assessment Focused Visit in April 2020. The assessment focus is currently limited to credit-bearing courses, however, we are eager to show that the Library is a necessary and symbiotic partner in student success.

Library faculty and staff have taken on institution-wide leadership roles involving assessment, accreditation, and planning. We consistently assess the Library's impact on students, but we last conducted a formal survey several years ago, prior to making several improvements to our space, resources, and services. We are interested in measuring outcomes and using the data to support and promote future action.

As ACRL Project Outcome just launched this year, we were unable to benchmark against peer schools, however, we are proud to serve as early adopters, providing data for a nationwide repository available to all institutions of higher education.

**Partners and Stakeholders**

We fielded five different surveys, requiring the participation and cooperation of faculty and reference librarians and circulation staff.

**Inquiry Question**

What is the impact of the Library's services, resources, and space on student learning and success at Triton College?

### Study Participants/Population

We fielded five surveys, available in hard copy and online, to patrons who utilized the Library's resources, services, or space during the month of October 2019.

- Students who attended a library instruction session scheduled by their instructor were provided with hard copies of the *instruction survey* immediately after the session.
- Library event and program attendees were provided with hard copies of the *event survey* immediately after the event.
- Patrons using the Library were asked to complete a hard copy of the *space survey* by both circulation staff and reference librarians.
- Students participating in a one-on-one research session or in-depth reference interaction were asked to complete a hard copy of the *research survey*.
- Students enrolled in specific research-intensive courses were asked by their instructors to complete a *resources survey*.

### Method(s) of Data Collection and Analysis

We used five of the seven standard surveys provided by ACRL Project Outcome ("Library Technology" and "Teaching Support" did not apply). In addition to developing and testing the questions, ACRL Project Outcome also hosts a survey platform, making it easy to build reports and analyze data. We followed the site's recommendations for analyzing our qualitative data by coding the open-ended responses we received.

### Findings

We were pleasantly surprised by the number of surveys we collected (253) in a short time period (October 2019). We had anecdotal evidence that students were generally pleased with the Library and its offerings, but were heartened to see the universally positive quantitative and qualitative feedback across several areas.

While the quantitative data was of interest, the comments contained the most useful and actionable information for our purposes. The students who completed the surveys were appreciative of and valued our services, resources, and space. If anything, they want more of everything. More one-on-one and class instruction, more events and programs, more spaces to study individually and in groups, more physical and digital resources. We had several requests for napping areas, which supports our understanding of the comprehensive role of our Library in meeting our students' needs outside of the classroom.

Some of the verbatim comments we received from students when asked what they liked best about the Library include:

- I love the librarians! They are always helping me.
- Plenty of space to work on projects and being able to use electronic devices (chargers) when I forget mine or need one
- I can just chill when I'm not in class.
- I loved the workers. The environment is very welcoming and makes you want to learn.
- What I like most about this space is being able to get all my homework done in a calm environment. Also the staff at triton are very helpful!
- There is more help I can get than I thought
- Very helpful & went into detail to really make sure we grasp what we learned

- I liked how the librarian related researching to subjects outside of the classroom—that researching is not only for classes!
- I learned different ways of how we can research websites and databases and how we can make sure that the sources are credible.
- I like that the Triton college library has multiple ways of contact. Especially the live chat with a librarian.

### **Use of Findings**

The findings were shared with the Library employees to acknowledge their hard work and encourage continued stellar service. The student newspaper published an article featuring the results of the Library survey, which presented the Library as student-focused and student-responsive. Finding highlights were used as part of a Budget Hearing presentation for the Division of Academic Success to support the Library's operating budget request for Fiscal Year 2021.

### **Next Steps and Other Results**

The initial survey findings are being used as a template for additional research, both within the Library and across other academic support areas. The Library's focus was on seeking student feedback, and will now seek input from teaching faculty—a primary stakeholder and key to promoting usage among students. Findings will also be used in forthcoming resource and personnel requests and grant applications.

### **Additional Reflections**

The most difficult aspect of this project was realizing that we could utilize existing resources, such as ACRL Project Outcome to accomplish our goals (yes, it can be easy *and* the best way to go). Initially, we had investigated the possibility of tying individual student Library usage to course completion/success, which would have negatively impacted our students' experience, as we would have had to implement a tracking system. Others have already accomplished this type of work, so we felt comfortable moving forward with a more qualitative project that met our immediate local needs. ACRL Project Outcome was free and easy to use—an existing plug-and-play research project which provided the added benefit of benchmarking capabilities.

We made the survey available in hard copy and online. The vast majority of respondents opted to complete the survey on paper, with only a few preferring to complete the survey online. While data entry, and some deciphering of handwriting, took longer, it was the best way to capture feedback from the greatest number of participants.

Responses to the resources survey were most difficult to capture, as they required student reflection *after* having utilized Library resources. Continued collaboration with teaching faculty is necessary moving forward.

Participation in CARLI Counts, specifically the team-based structure and external accountability, provided interpersonal and institutional support that helped ensure project completion.

### Timeline

The key to the project planning was to set the time period for collecting the surveys. We settled on capturing one month of data, and chose October as a good proxy for typical usage. Preparation and data analysis could be accomplished in as little as one week each.

### Bibliography/Works Cited

<https://acrl.projectoutcome.org/>

### Appendix

The following handout was shared with the Library's public services employees (circulation staff and reference and instruction librarians) as part of their training for fielding the surveys.

#### Triton College Library Student Feedback Surveys: October 2019

##### Purpose:

As a participant in the inaugural statewide *CARLI Counts: Analytics and Advocacy for Service Development* initiative (<https://www.carli.illinois.edu/products-services/carli-counts>), we are interested in understanding the impact of the library's services, resources, and space on student learning and success at Triton. We are particularly interested in investigating how the library impacts student outcomes. We will be using student feedback to build on existing strengths and pursue areas of opportunity.

##### Project:

We are fielding five surveys in October 2019, which address various aspects of our three-tiered purpose (services, resources, and space). We are using standardized surveys designed and hosted by ACRL Project Outcome (<https://acrl.projectoutcome.org/>) (see sample surveys below). These surveys will provide us an opportunity to benchmark against our peers (based on Carnegie Classification and nationwide), as ACRL Project Outcome collects and codes institutional data. Our goal is to continue to solicit patron feedback in future semesters, with questions informed by the results of previous assessment projects.

##### Sample Surveys:

The response scale used for all questions, except open-ended questions, is as follows:  
Strongly Disagree/Disagree/Neither/Agree/Strongly Agree/N/A

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Library's **event** or program...

1. I learned something new from this event or program.
2. I feel more confident about using what I just learned.
3. I intend to discuss or share with others what I just learned.
4. I am more aware of the library's programs and services.
5. What did you like most about this event / program?
6. What other types of events or programs would you be interested in attending?

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Library's **instruction** program...

1. I learned something new that will help me succeed in my classes.
2. I feel more confident about completing my assignment(s).
3. I intend to apply what I just learned.

4. I am more aware of the library's resources and services.
5. What did you like most about this session?
6. What else could the library do to help you succeed in your classes?

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Library's **research** program...

1. I learned something new that will help me with my research.
2. I feel more confident about my ability to conduct my research.
3. I intend to apply what I learned to my research.
4. I am more aware of the library's resources and services.
5. What did you like most about this research service?
6. What else could the library do to help you with your research?

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Library's **resources** program...

1. I feel more knowledgeable about the topic supported by the resource I used.
2. I feel more confident about my ability to use this resource or collection.
3. I intend to apply what I just learned from the resource I used.
4. I am more aware of the library's resources and collections.
5. What did you like most about this resource or collection?
6. What else could the library do to help you better use its resources and collections?

Please take a few minutes for this brief survey and let us know if, as a result of participating in the Library's **space** program...

1. This space contributed to my ability to learn something new.
2. Using this space makes me feel more confident about my ability to achieve my goals.
3. I am likely to use this space again in the future.
4. After using this space, I am more aware of the library resources and services available to me.
5. What did you like most about this space?
6. What could the library do to improve this space?