

Section Header	Description
Institution Name	Northern Illinois University
Institution Characteristics	Medium-sized, regional, public, doctoral granting university. FTE 15,000 students/ FTE 66 in the University Libraries
CARLI Counts Participant Name + Job Title	Leanne VandeCreek, Associate Dean for Public Services
Project Name/Title	The Role of the Learning Commons in Student Success
Single Sentence Abstract	To assess the impact of using one or more student learning services on student success and retention, and to determine to what extent the colocation of those services matters.
Motivation(s) for Project	<p>In recent years, the University Writing Center and ACCESS / PAL Tutoring services have moved into and Founders Memorial Library, the main library on Northern Illinois University's campus. The co-location of these services has led to increased communication, referral, and collaboration between the various service providers. On the administrative side, these services are working to come together under the umbrella identity of The Learning Commons. Though the student learning services are located in the same building now, they are on different floors. We believe that moving them to the 1st Floor of FML in a true Learning Commons model will further increase their visibility to our students and create even more synergy between the providers. Such a move requires the relocation of some materials currently housed in the 1st floor space, and a floor re-design and buildout to accommodate a variety of staff offices and student learning spaces. Through data collection and analyses, we hope to demonstrate the impact utilization of these services, and their ease of access, has on student success and retention (both are tied to current University Presidential goals). We further hope to leverage these findings to attract fiscal support from the University and/or donors.</p>

Partners and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate Dean of Public Services will facilitate and oversee the overall project • Director of the University Writing Center and PALS / ACCESS Tutoring (to provide data) • Institutional Data Office (to provide data on student retention rates, GPA, time to graduation) • Library Systems staff to implement means to collect student information and consent via our online chat reference system • Faculty Reference Librarians to collect student information and consent for data use from interactions at physical reference desk or one-on-one research consultations
Inquiry Question	What is the impact of co-located student support services on student success and retention?
Study Participants/Population	Northern Illinois University students
Method(s) of Data Collection and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data will be collected and analyzed from consenting students via activity and appointment logs. These data will relate to the students' use of one or more Student Learning Services (not the specific content of their queries or consultations) • Existing institutional data from this same population will be examined to compare retention and other measures of success such as GPA and time to graduation
Findings	Due to COVID-19 shutting down campus, data collection has not yet begun.
Use of Findings	Once data has been collection and analyzed, we hope to demonstrate the value of the Libraries and other student support/student learning services and their colocation's impact on student success.
Next Steps and Other Results	When we are able return to campus, we will begin the data collection. We anticipate data

	<p>collection will continue long-term and may evolve over time.</p> <p>One of the most valuable outcomes of participating in CARLI Counts is the confidence gained in designing and executing a data-driven project of this nature, and the relationships I've been able to build with my new colleagues.</p>
Additional Reflections	<p>The pandemic and subsequent shut down of our campus brought this project to an unfortunate screeching halt. At the same time, we were already down one administrator due to a retirement, we lost another administrator due to a long-term illness. All of this work had to be absorbed by me and our Dean. Though I still feel very well-prepared to execute this project, I know the project would be that much better had my experience not been curtailed the way COVID demanded.</p>
Timeline	
Bibliography/Works Cited	
Appendices	

Note: Submit report as a single PDF to Michelle Haake (mjhuls@uillinois.edu).