Title: Research Library Impact: Pilot Models for Scalable and Sustainable Assessment

Summary: The project team, led by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), and in collaboration with stakeholders from ARL member libraries and aligned institutions, is requesting $244,811 for a two-year National Leadership Grant in the **Research in Service to Practice** funding category and the Community Catalysts project category. This project will address the needs of ARL member institutions to more exactly understand and better communicate the impact they have within their own institutions and in the broader research and learning ecosystems. In response to the absence of outcome- and impact-centric measures, ARL developed a Research Library Impact Framework to describe the impact of a research library's services and programs in support of typical real-world institutional mission and goals. The outcome of the pilot research projects will be a scalable model for creating impact-centric measures.

Statement of Need: Member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries identified the need to more exactly understand and better communicate the impact they have within their own institutions and in the broader research and learning ecosystems. These are common needs among all research libraries - academic, public and governmental. Historically, research libraries have identified quantitative measures without specifying the value and impact of those measures. In response to the absence of outcome- and impact-centric measures, ARL developed a Research Library Impact Framework to describe the impact of a research library's services and programs in support of typical real-world institutional mission and goals. The framework is built around four areas - all aligned with common institutional priorities: (1) Life Cycle of Research & Scholarship; (2) Teaching, Learning & Student Success; (3) Collections; and (4) Physical Space. These four areas were selected based on a series of leadership interviews and surveys conducted in 2017. Working with a diverse group of assessment practitioners and library directors, ARL members and staff identified, expanded, refined and prioritized a set of specific topics and research questions within each area in the Spring of 2018.

The framework consequently provides the scaffolding for deeper exploration across multiple library service areas, is designed to be flexible and extensible, and serves as the foundation for ARL's assessment research agenda. The framework sets the stage for the development of research library impact pilots that conduct in-depth explorations of priority issues. The pilots seek to address previously un-examined questions by investigating the nature of and evidence for the impact of library services and programs. Using robust and rigorous quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the outcomes and results of the pilots intend to understand library impact and as a result, provide evidence to demonstrate the value of the research library to its parent organization and the broader research and learning ecosystem, and to advance understanding of the public good research libraries provide as cultural heritage institutions. The pilots will test models for research projects and practice briefs that work across research library types, are scalable, and add new evidence and practices to the library assessment community. Based on the pilots, ARL seeks to identify a sustainable research model that libraries can use to implement their own investigations in support of the individual institution and for the collective community of libraries.

Project Design: Five teams will be formed to create pilots on prioritized topics that will help libraries address the following issues concerning assessing demonstrable impact: (1) increasing research productivity and impact for faculty and students; (2) facilitating innovative research, creative thinking, and problem-solving through library spaces; (3) contributing to equitable student learning outcomes and an inclusive learning environment; (4) supporting and promoting teaching, learning, and research through special collections; and (5) attracting and retaining top researchers and faculty to an institution through its library collections. ARL's Director of Research and Analytics, as the principal investigator (PI), will lead the five teams of up to eight individuals each from ARL member libraries and aligned institutions (e.g., archives, museums, public and

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federal institutions). An Advisory Committee will include the principal investigator, three members of the ARL Research & Analytics Committee, ARL Executive Director, ARL Deputy Executive Director, and a social scientist. ARL will lead the overall project, be responsible for all grant reporting, and support a project website. ARL will provide a forum for presentation and dissemination of results through its Knowledge Portal[1] and other means such as ARL's Association Meetings and Fall Forums and the 2020 Library Assessment Conference. ARL will also provide infrastructure such as conference calling capabilities. This proposal includes a data analyst that would provide support to all of the pilot project teams.

Each pilot team will be led by a visiting program officer[2]. A virtual collaboration space and shared tools and resources will be provided. Team members are expected to provide some combination of the following: domain expertise, analytical skills, access to research data, access to key decision-makers and partners, and project management. Over the course of two years, the principal investigator will meet in person four times with the full cohort of the five teams. The first time will be for a two-day kick off event. The second meeting will be for mid-project check-in and review with the Advisory Committee. The third time will be a review of results and in-depth discussion of preliminary recommendations, including sustainability and potential to scale. The last meeting will be for discussions and presentations regarding results and final recommendations with the Advisory Group and a broader set of stakeholders (e.g., ACRL, IMLS, IPEDS, COSLA, etc.). Each pilot team will produce a semi-annual progress report and produce or publish outputs such as templates, checklists, papers, practice briefs, guidelines for replicating research in the local context and evidence-based articulation of practical applications of the research. The PI will produce a report that includes updates to the Research Library Impact Framework and informs decisions related to scale, broader adoption, and sustainability.

National Impact: ARL member libraries and aligned institutions can begin to contribute to a larger assessment data collection pool in higher education, public institutions, and other stakeholder groups. The pilot projects and resulting models will foster a culture of assessment in libraries through participation in a formal, methodologically sound research projects. The new models will support the identification of data points for collection by libraries and distribution of information that substantiate library impact to institutional decision-makers and within the research and learning ecosystem. Libraries will be able to collaborate and compare data and methods with peers on topics highly-relevant to individual library and pool research expertise and resources for collective benefit. This project will develop staff skills, define what is needed for ARL to sustain this over time while serving local assessment needs, and contribute to support for building communities of assessment practice. ARL is a demonstrated leader in the field of assessment globally and has successfully implemented IMLS and other grants.

Budget Summary: ARL will coordinate a data analyst consultant ($50,000) and their travel to four meetings ($4,000) as well as a social scientist who will serve as a methodology advisor as needed ($23,000). ARL will also manage the travel stipends for the pilot teams to attend meetings ($120,000). Total, including indirect costs ($47,811, 26.67% of total modified costs) = $244,811.

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[1] Knowledge Portal - ARL's platform for access to information assets.
[2] ARL supports a Visiting Program Officer program, which provides opportunities for staff in member libraries to contribute to special projects and programs, either in whole or in part, in order to advance the agenda of the Association.