Demonstrating the Value of Electronic Collections For Academic Libraries

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The Problem:
How can academic libraries demonstrate the value of electronic resources to key stakeholders, to ensure continued and expanded funding and support?

About UMUC and the Library
92,000 students worldwide
75% of total enrolments in online classes
Mostly non-traditional, adult students
Library collection almost entirely online: 125 library research databases
Library budget has remained flat for past 3 fiscal years

Project 1: Library Program Review
Goal: External evaluation of how well the collection supports UMUC’s curriculum
Procedure:
1. Conducted self-evaluation
2. Identified leading institutions in the critical areas of interest:
   • Cybersecurity/IT
   • Business and Management
   • Education and Community College Leadership
   • Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences
3. Hired librarians as consultants from four institutions to review database holdings and curriculum
4. Provided detailed information and instructions, held phone conferences with each consultant, who each produced a report
5. Analyzed findings and produced final report for Provost and key stakeholders

Project 2: Benchmarking
Goal: Evaluation of the database holdings of peer institutions and comparison with UMUC’s holdings
Procedure:
1. Identified peer group using Carnegie classification data on institution type and curriculum
2. Gathered and analyzed NCES data for the 11 institutions identified as peers
3. Gathered database holdings from peer institution Web sites
4. Created chart of holdings across peer group, with analysis:
5. Analyzed findings and produced spreadsheets w/charts for Provost and key stakeholders

Findings/Results
Project 1:
Consultants determined that holdings are solid for curricular support
Obtained funding for two IT E-book databases based on consultant recommendation
Maintained funding for electronic resources collection

Project 2:
Holdings form “long tail” pattern: ~1200 databases, most held by only one institution
Looked closely at databases held:
• only by UMUC (extra justification)
• by most others but NOT by UMUC (why not?)
Critical to carefully manage how the data is presented
Overall: External validation of UMUC’s database holdings and collection management.

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