The Library Science department does not offer a major, minor or certificate degree program. However we do teach Library Information and Research (LS 101X), which is part of the core curriculum. We have had a student learning outcomes assessment plan in place since 1997. The plan is posted on the Core assessment portion of the Provost’s web site.

The student outcome goals and objectives of the Library Science program (revised November 2013) are:

Goal: Students will develop successful library and information retrieval skills.

1. Objective: Students will be capable of developing, implementing, and reviewing search strategies.
   Student Learning Outcome:
   A. Students will construct logical search strategies.

2. Objective: Students will demonstrate their ability to use library resources.
   Student Learning Outcome:
   A. Students will identify and search databases and catalogs appropriate for specific assignments and topics.
   B. Students will demonstrate their ability to retrieve resources using online catalogs and multidisciplinary databases.

3. Objective: Students will be capable of evaluating the appropriateness of their resources and apply evaluative criteria to determine validity and veracity of information.
   Student Learning Outcome:
   A. Students will identify, evaluate, and select authoritative resources.

4. Objective: Students will be capable of citing sources appropriately and illustrate an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism.
   Student Learning Outcome:
   A. Students will appropriately cite subject/discipline related resources.
   B. Students will recognize what constitutes plagiarism.

Specifically, LS101 instructors teach students how to: formulate research strategies; identify and retrieve bibliographic records from library catalogs, periodical indexes, and web search engines; interpret the records and the citations they obtain; cite sources for a research paper; and apply evaluative criteria to determine validity and veracity of their search results.
A locally written entrance/exit survey (based upon samples of similar instruments at other institutions and a review of assessment literature) is used with several sections of LS 101X. Results are analyzed to measure differences in knowledge/abilities/confidence from the beginning to the end of the course. Data are collected in the Fall and Spring semesters. Response in the web-based sections has been low. Therefore most of the meaningful data comes from classroom based instruction. Attempts to increase participation from students in online sections have been moderately successful.

Since our last biennial report in August 2012, data were compiled from ten separate sections of the class taught by four different instructors. The test instrument was distributed to several other classes but the results were either not returned by the online software or reported in such a manner that made integration with other data too difficult.

A total of 178 students completed both the pre- and post-tests.

This report focuses on results showing an increase or decrease of 20 percentage points between the two tests. Using this as the benchmark for significance, improvement occurred almost universally in three areas:

- The selection of appropriate search instruments (library catalogs vs. commercial journal indexes, etc.).
- Correct means of determining library call numbers.
- Overall comfort with the research process.

Some sections showed additional significant improvement in the construction of search requests especially involving the use of Boolean logic to connect phrases. These results were very similar to those noted in the 2012 report.

Although not recorded statistically, a few additional patterns can be reasonably inferred. Students often opt for internet search engines instead of library catalogs and indexes and view this as a research default unless they are seeking a highly refined result. Fewer seem to have this approach after completing the class. Although most students do exit the class feeling more comfortable with the research process, a noticeable percentage do not. A few report being more comfortable with the research process, yet they answered several of the key questions regarding search procedures incorrectly.

In addition to the LS 101 class, the Library frequently conducts customized 1-2 hour instruction sessions integrated into the schedule of many different courses. For example, in the 2014 Spring Semester, 14 Library faculty and staff conducted 38 sessions in various subjects including Biology, English, Journalism, Northern Studies and Sociology that were attended by a total of 825 students.