Title: Tools to Change How We Work Together

Presenters: Elsa Alvaro, Department Head of Academic Engagement, Northwestern University Libraries (NUL)
John Dorr, Department Head of Research Services, NUL
Michael Perry, Department Head of Assessment and Planning, NUL
Elizabeth Hitchcock, Director of Facilities Planning, NUL
Jan Hayes, Department Head and Director of Organizational Development, NUL
Stephanie Simko, HR Training Specialist, Organizational Development, NUL

Abstract:

In July 2013, Northwestern University Libraries embarked on a multi-year project to transform our work culture. Through the initiative of Dean Sarah Pritchard, we were challenged to change how we worked together to achieve the University’s strategic goals. Instead of top-down, manager-directed workflows, we needed flexible project teams with multiple competencies to initiate, develop, manage and deliver complex projects. We sought to emphasize and improve collaboration skills, integrate ongoing assessment and analysis, build a climate of trust among all staff, and re-define customer service.

The presentation will describe key reasons for culture change as well as the schedule and framework for the project. We will show how we shaped a sequence of change initiatives based on inclusion and communication for staff to use as a model for their own development of new work styles. Assessment processes will be highlighted, using both existing organizational data and specific tools to collect new data. These processes allowed analysis of the effectiveness of our change initiatives and ongoing organizational evaluations.

Brief case studies will demonstrate how we used assessment outcomes and “learning organization” teams to direct a multi-departmental re-design in 2018, as well as ongoing organizational change. Methods for constant communication will be shared that can be utilized for any change project. The focus of the presentation will be broad approaches to staff development, assessment methodologies, phased change management, and team formation.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Create a framework, timeline, and assessment program for a strategic change initiative.
2. Develop techniques for leveraging organizational data to develop effective teams.
3. Implement a process of continual evaluation and improvement.