LIILA is a one-year National Forum grant designed to increase academic library involvement in institutional learning analytics and develop a detailed plan to prepare academic libraries to engage in this emerging and important use of data to support student learning and success. The lead applicant, Syracuse University, is joined by Advisory Group members from EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative, ACRL, CNI, OCLC, IMS Global, DePaul University, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Because higher education exists to educate students, academic librarians have engaged in learning assessment efforts for many years. Now, as institutions of higher education commence and commit to learning analytics initiatives, librarians need to explore and embrace emergent institutional learning analytics tools, systems, and strategies as well. Learning analytics “is the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for the purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs.” Essentially, learning analytics employ data to improve learning contexts and help learners succeed. Learning analytics help educators discover, diagnose, and predict challenges to learning and learner success and point the way to successful and active interventions to benefit students. The LIILA project will spearhead the creation of the vision, strategies, and concrete plans required to ensure that librarians initiate involvement in institutional learning analytics and continue to serve as anchors of higher education communities focused on ensuring student learning and success.

LIILA seeks to achieve four goals: 1) increase librarian awareness of and engagement in learning analytics; 2) craft a detailed plan for integrating academic libraries into learning analytics initiatives that support student learning and success; 3) develop sustaining learning analytics partnerships and collaborations among academic librarians, educational technology lynchpins, institutional and library IT professionals, and library vendor communities; and, 4) explore, design, and develop library use cases and data profiles based on learning analytics standards that can be used to integrate library data with institutional data stores.

Project activities include: 1) A literature and environmental scan will increase understanding of the role of academic library data in institutional higher education learning analytics initiatives. 2) A National Forum will be convened over three meetings. Participants of the first meeting will discuss, envision, spearhead, and articulate the role of learning analytics in discovering, describing, analyzing, predicting, and ensuring student success and the value that academic libraries can demonstrate by integrating library data in learning analytics. Participants at the second meeting will discuss, investigate, and plan the underlying technology and data structures necessary for integrating library data into institutional learning analytics initiatives and articulate issues related to library data ownership and methods for sharing vendor data with libraries and institutions. At the third meeting, participants will discuss and find solutions for implementing and integrating existing educational technology interoperability standards into library systems. 3) Findings and conclusions from the meetings will be disseminated to the academic library and higher education community via rapid informal means, a formal white paper, and conference presentation proposals; feedback on each will be solicited.

The LIILA project coalesces academic library and higher education leaders and experts around common goals: articulating a vision for library inclusion in institutional learning analytics, devising strategies for bringing the vision to fruition, developing use cases that lead to increased library value and impact on student learning and success, and creating the technical plans necessary to initiate action. Through these actions, LIILA will:

- advance the role of libraries as anchors within their higher education communities,
- enable libraries to provide indispensable data to augment institutional understanding of student learning in higher education, and ultimately,
- facilitate student learning and success by contributing to the identification, development, and assessment of the curricular and instructional improvements resulting from learning analytics initiatives.