ULMS Survey Responses – Oct/Nov 2019

# Executive Summary

Over the fall, we conducted a set of surveys to assess current satisfaction with Ex Libris as a vendor and Alma and Primo products currently in use systemwide. Surveys were sent to CSU library deans, to library staff in general, and to the chairs of the various working groups in ULMS governance. The summarized results of these are contained in the document. We plan to share these results with COLD and with Ex Libris in December and January to support our contract renewal discussions later in 2020.

Three years into production, it is clear that CSU satisfaction with Alma and Primo is past its peak. Scores across the board are lower when compared to the last round of surveys from the spring, and the gap between CSU expectations and what Ex Libris currently delivers is widening, if only by a little. Ex Libris must be made aware of these issues as well as where the expectation gaps are widest during the contract renewal discussions. Their ability to address the issues should, in turn, be measured to properly inform our approach to the next contract renewal opportunity.

The library deans feel satisfied with Ex Libris as a vendor and with Alma and Primo in general. There is awareness of some of the major issues reported – the click-heavy nature of Alma and the need for continued training chief among them. Support receives fine marks, although there is awareness of increased response times. In terms of the contract, COLD is most concerned with staying aware of the cost implications and the opportunities to pursue adding other Ex Libris products such as Leganto to the contract.

The ULMS working group chairs give Alma and Primo decent marks overall, with Primo running slightly behind Alma in terms of satisfaction. This matches our perception of product satisfaction. Ex Libris support also receives a decent score from the chairs, although they note that responses can take a long time and waver in terms of quality. They also note that it takes longer for fixes for bugs to appear in the product than a couple of years ago. All groups report serious issues that need to be addressed by Ex Libris to improve satisfaction.

The staff survey responses score Alma, Primo, and Ex Libris support much lower than the working group surveys. Given the open-ended nature of the survey, reported issues spanned the breadth of Alma and Primo and were more general in nature. Staff who work directly with the ULMS often express high levels of frustration with the system, and it is surprising that frustration has increased to some extent instead of decreasing as CSU employees have become more familiar with the ULMS. It will be important to understand and communicate the underlying issues that generate frustration to Ex Libris during our contract negotiations. Ex Libris needs to demonstrate that they can progressively address staff concerns if we are going to have a long-term relationship that is mutually beneficial the CSU and Ex Libris.

Although Ex Libris still seems like the best choice of library management system for our needs, we continue to scan the marketplace for alternative as we work with Ex Libris to address system weaknesses, improve their responsiveness to the needs of the CSU, and examine different methods of gathering feedback from CSU librarians, staff and patrons for system improvements.