

**Recommendations from the Services Advisory Committee
Based on the Graduate and Professional Student Survey
University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign
November 23, 2004**

Results

<http://g118.grainger.uiuc.edu/gradsurvey/analysis/>

Recommendations

The graduate and professional student survey was conducted in spring 2004. It is the first time this survey has been conducted by the University Library and was developed to further explore issues touched upon in the previous LibQUAL+ surveys. The survey is based on surveys conducted at the University of Washington. The comparison of the distribution of respondents across departments to campus enrollment patterns revealed that the two are a close match, making these survey data particularly useful for making “Library with a capital-L” recommendations.

The Library should be pleased that almost 98% of graduate and professional students who completed the survey used the library this academic year – and used it heavily both in person and remotely – and overall graduate and professional students indicate high levels of satisfaction with library collections and services. The Library should seek to continue this high level of engagement and attractiveness to graduate and professional students.

The Services Advisory Committee makes the following recommendations based on its review and discussion of the survey results.

- The Library should recognize and incorporate into its planning that many graduate and professional students use many of the libraries and do not rely solely on their specific departmental library. For example, selecting “Sociology” as the students’ home department shows that students in sociology indicated Applied Life Studies, Education & Social Sciences, Latin American & Caribbean, Main Stacks, Reference, Undergraduate, and Women & Gender Resources libraries as their primary or secondary libraries. We recommend that each unit head examine the data and that units serving common groups seek out collaborative ways of meeting the needs of those heterogeneous groups of students.
- With respect to library hours, setting aside those libraries with so few responses as to be problematic for interpretation, there is no clear indication that the hours of any particular unit library are consistently inconvenient for those who indicate it as their primary library. Taken as a whole, dissatisfaction is increased significantly for time periods of decreased hours (e.g. summer and weekend) and so the Library should consider very carefully the user implications of any further reductions in hours. Data from the survey show that during weekends and evenings the services most needed are access to

collections (63.3%) and check-out materials (61%) and 25.7% also indicate a need for reference assistance. Should hours be further reduced, a potential strategy to pursue would be a centralized retrieval service in the Main Library and aggressive referrals to the central chat reference service from departmental library webpages. We task ourselves as members of the Services Advisory Committee with incorporating these data in our future discussions of service points and library hours. We recommend that the Library Budget Group and the Budget Implementation Team also incorporate these data in their deliberations.

- Given that, on a weekly or more often basis, 45.7% visit the library in person and that the top reason for visiting the library weekly or more often is individual/study work, “library as place” remains an important component of services to graduate and professional students. The Library should continue upgrading and remodeling user spaces in the libraries with careful attention to the need for study and work spaces. We recommend that the Director of Library Facilities incorporate these data in space planning decisions.
- With 25% of the respondents indicating they use the library on behalf of someone else at least quarterly and with 4.3% doing so weekly or more often, the Library should offer a workshop titled, for example, “Doing Someone Else’s Research: Tips and Strategies” on a regular basis. We recommend that the Reference Library (in consultation with other units – particularly Central Circulation and IRRC) develop and offer this workshop as it would be aimed at students in many disciplines and likely focus on common information discovery and access tools, strategies, and issues.
- The Library Gateway was ranked as very important by 71% of respondents and more than somewhat important by 18%. The Gateway thus ranks as the most important Library service offered. Given that the most often reported remote library uses weekly or more often are: search the UIUC online library catalog, look for full-text journal articles, search library-provided electronic article indexes, and look for other full-text (e.g. reserves, reference works), the Library Gateway website is extremely important and thus deserves ongoing development and attention as the Library’s “front door.” 65.1% indicate they use the library from an office computer and 51.4% use the library from a home computer on a weekly or more often basis. Thus, we recommend that the Associate University Librarian for Information Technology Policy and Planning create a Gateway Development and Oversight Committee that includes both technical staff and librarians with expertise in graduate student information seeking and retrieval. We suspect that future surveys will show similar – if not stronger – patterns of remote use by undergraduates and faculty and so librarians with expertise in undergraduate and faculty information seeking are also recommended as committee members.
- With respect to collections, given the importance of online content and resource discovery tools, we encourage continued and increased acquisition of electronic content and resources. The online content of greatest importance to graduate and professional students are electronic journals, the online catalog, and electronic article indexes and abstracts. Finally, it is also worthwhile to note that in indicating priorities for the Library, more than two-thirds of the respondents selected provide electronic access to current

articles (78.7%), provide electronic access to older articles (73.6%), and deliver full-text documents to your computer (69.2%). We recommend that the Associate University Librarian for Collections and the Collection Development Committee incorporate these data in discussions about electronic resource collection development and budget allocation.

- Finally, it is interesting to note more students indicate that having online information resources makes them more likely to consult reference librarians than those who indicate it makes them less likely, though overall half indicate they are less likely to visit the library in person. As such, continued attention to provision and extension of electronic reference service is warranted. Given the connection between online resources availability and increased likelihood of consulting reference librarians, we recommend that the Electronic Resources Librarian, the Library Systems Office, and the Electronic Resources Work Group work aggressively to create links to Ask-a-Librarian from within electronic database. We also recommend that the incorporation of Ask-a-Librarian be a high priority in implementing SFX and WebFeat. Finally, we recommend that all library unit websites incorporate both mechanisms for electronic communication with subject specialists and a link to the Ask-a-Librarian service.