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Library Survey 2017 Executive Summary

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Background and Methodology

Librarians created four similar surveys (for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) to evaluate the use and quality of the library’s collections, services, and facilities and to identify areas for improvement. The last such comprehensive survey was in 2006, using the LibQual+™ instrument. The 2017 surveys, using the SurveyMonkey software and taking less than 10 minutes to complete, were administered April 10-30, 2017, weeks 2-4 of the academic term. Solicitations to take the survey were multifaceted: emails to campus distribution lists and to faculty by divisions; postings to social media for the library and campus; slides on WOU Portal pages, postcards sent to employee and residential student mailboxes, and tabling with tablets at the Werner University Center. After completing the anonymous survey, participants were invited to enter their WOU username for a chance to win one of five $25 gift cards to The Press, the café inside Hamersly Library. The lead investigator was Janeanne Rockwell-Kincanon, Associate Professor & Public Services Librarian. IRB review was not sought since the purpose was internal program review.

Respondents

A total of 955 responses were collected across the four user groups, or 16.5% of WOU population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Respondents #</th>
<th>Respondents as % of overall survey results</th>
<th>Campus headcount</th>
<th>Respondents as % of campus headcount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduates</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>4,337</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>5,792</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Styles and Scoring

After the section to collect demographic information, one question was a yes/no-type response, to determine the respondent’s use of [x resource or service] in the past year. Several questions used a rating-scale format. These ranking questions used weighted responses, with the most positive assessment weighted as “1” and the most negative assessment weighted as “5.” In the resulting rating average scores, lower numbers are better than higher numbers. A series of ranking questions asked participants to indicate the importance of [x service] followed by an evaluation of the library performance of that service. Comment fields were available on all questions using a ranking scale. Finally, two open-ended questions were asked: “What change would most improve the library?” and “What does the library do really well?”

Use of Collections & Facilities

Databases were the most heavily-used collection, 73% of respondents having used them in the previous year. Half (50%) of the respondents overall had used items from the physical collections. Less than a third (30%) had used ebooks and equipment for checkout. Meeting and study space was used by 75% of the respondents, and 71% of them had visited The Press.
Level of Satisfaction
There was a high overall level of satisfaction with the library. With 1 being “Very satisfied” and 2 being “Satisfied,” the average scores for building and spaces was 1.4, for services was 1.5, and for collections was 1.7.

Areas for Improvement
From the responses to “What change would most improve the library,” the top 20 words:

Space availability was the largest concern. There were frequent comments about more study rooms and tables and about the reservation policies and system.

More open hours was another theme, particularly closing later on Fridays and Saturdays and earlier on Saturdays and Sundays.

There were many comments regarding inadequate collections, in particular print books. Respondents observed a limited selection in general, in specific disciplines (ex. music, sciences, etc.), and in categories such as recreational, juvenile and required textbooks. The age of the collection was also an issue.

Areas of Strength
From the responses to “What does the library do really well?” the top 20 words:

Library staff were celebrated as helpful and friendly and as providers of a welcoming environment.

While space availability was an area to improve, respondents liked the varied types of spaces and considered them organized, clean, and conducive to study and work.

1 Word clouds created with Wordle with maximum 20 words, after running the text through the NLTK Porter Stemmer to collapse variations of the same root word. (For example, “helpful” and “helps” became “help.”). Additionally, the words “library” and “student” were eliminated from the visualizations since they appeared prominently in all of them, as were very common English words.
Library Improvements since Survey

- Summit requests now arrive in 2-3 business days, on average. The Orbis Cascade Alliance switched couriers starting July 1, 2017.
- Made two additional rooms available for reservations.
- Added 33 Chromebooks for use by individuals or by classes within the library.
- Adjusted schedules for library faculty to be available at the Reference Desk during the busiest times.
- Began publishing Hamersly Library News, a once-per-term newsletter.
- Conducted a space-use census in Fall 2017 to assess where students chose—or did not choose—to study. As a result of that study, developed plans to extend electrical access into the two central seating spaces of the third floor and to provide additional mobile whiteboards for use in the open study spaces.
- The Press now opens at 8:00 a.m. Monday-Friday.

What’s Next

Using survey results, library faculty have created two lists of projects for improving collections, services, and facilities. One set of projects includes those that are manageable by library staff. The library faculty are discussing the prioritization, timing, and implementation of these projects.

- Perform collection analyses and articulate goals & priorities
- Develop signage and instruction regarding collections and call numbers
- Review room reservations policies and activity
- Pursue a different public interface for reservations
- Improve several aspects related to printing
- Ensure equipment is checked out ready for use
- Review book delivery service to students distant from campus
- Improve awareness of existing resources & services
- Make it easier for patrons to reach library faculty
- Review open hours during weekends
- Determine enforcement of quiet floor

The second list comprises major potential undertakings that are beyond the exclusive control of library staff, requiring funding and/or physical planning.

- Increasing and updating collections, particularly of print books
- Adding divider walls in the various alcoves
- Forming one or two study rooms in the space currently the 1st floor copy center
- Purchasing additional tables with whiteboard surfaces.
- Adding a public entry on the north end of the building

The survey results are informing the library’s response to campus-wide strategic planning. Furthermore, the 2017 survey will also serve as a benchmark for further assessments.
Frequency of library use
Undergraduate respondents were more likely to visit Hamersly Library (about weekly) than to access library resources online from elsewhere on campus or from off-campus. 44% (n=254 of 573) reported visiting in person twice per week.

Use of Resources, Services, & Facilities
With one exception, undergraduate use of library collections and services aligned closely with respondents overall. Undergraduates were less likely than average (17% compared to 27%) to have consulted with library staff through email, phone, or online chat. However, undergraduates used the physical facilities more intensely than average: 86% had used meeting & study spaces compared to 75% of respondents overall, and 78% had used The Press compared to 71% overall. 61% of undergraduates had used the 24-hour room outside of regular library hours.

Level of Satisfaction
Undergraduates had a high level of satisfaction with the library. With 1 being “Very satisfied” and 2 being “Satisfied,” the average scores for building and spaces was 1.4, for services was 1.5, and for collections was 1.6.

“What change would most improve the library?”
Undergraduates wanted more room, especially study rooms but also tables and general study spaces. They wanted an easier method of reserving rooms and additional open hours, including for The Press.

“What does the library do really well?”
Undergraduates considered library staff to be helpful and friendly and the environment welcoming. The sense of place was evident in their comments, as was the provision of various types of resources.
Frequency of library use

Graduate respondents were most likely to access library resources from off campus, doing so every few weeks. On average, they visited Hamersly Library monthly. About one quarter (23.5%) of graduate respondents took classes entirely online, with an additional 59.2% taking a combination of on-campus and online courses.

Use of Resources, Services, & Facilities

Except for physical collections, graduate students used all collection categories more heavily than did the other respondent groups: they led in use of databases (85.4%), ebooks (38.5%), equipment for checkout (39.6%), Digital Commons @ WOU (32.3%), and University Archives (27.1%). Graduate students consulted with library staff through email, phone, or online chat at a rate twice that of as undergraduate students (34.4% vs. 16.5%). About half had used the library’s meeting and study spaces (53.1%) and The Press (49.0%); almost one third (31.3%) had used the equipment and services of the Digital Media Center.

Level of Satisfaction

Graduate students had a high level of satisfaction with the library. With 1 being “Very satisfied” and 2 being “Satisfied,” scores averaged to 1.6 for all three areas of building and spaces, services, and collections.

“What change would most improve the library?”

Graduate students most desired expanded hours, particularly through the weekends. They also wanted improved access to the scanner and to various online services such as room reservations.

“What does the library do really well?”

Graduate students found librarians and staff to be available, welcoming, and helpful. They liked online resources for finding articles.
- Frequency of library use
Faculty respondents were more likely to access library resources via computer, either from offices or home. 84% did so at least weekly, but the average was about every few weeks. Faculty visited Hamersly Library about monthly.

Use of Resources, Services, & Facilities
Databases were the heaviest-used collection among faculty, with 81.9% having used them in the previous year. Physical collections was the next most used, at 58.7%. 38.4% had used ebooks and 29.7% Digital Commons @ WOU. Faculty consulted with library staff more than any other group, with 51.4% having done so in person and 58.7% through phone, email, or chat. Half had used the library’s meeting and study spaces (50.0%), and 56.6% had visited The Press. Roughly one third reported having used library exhibits (37.7%), the Digital Media Center (32.6%), and the instructional classrooms (28.3%)

Level of Satisfaction
Faculty had a high level of satisfaction with library services and spaces. With 1 being “Very satisfied” and 2 being “Satisfied,” scores averaged to 1.5 for services and 1.6 for spaces. The score for collections was noticeably less at 1.9, but still rated at “satisfied.”

“What change would most improve the library?”
Faculty wanted expanded access to online resources, updated book collections, and more time with physical materials. Comments noted the need for promotion of services and help for student researchers.

“What does the library do really well?”
Faculty observed librarians, staff, and student employees as providing responsive and helpful support. Specific services mentioned included research instruction, digital publishing, and exhibits.
Frequency of library use
Staff respondents (which included administrators and employees in The Research Institute) visited Hamersly Library about monthly. On average, they accessed library resources from campus computers every few months, and from off campus about quarterly.

Use of Resources, Services, & Facilities
69.4% of staff respondents had used meeting & study spaces and The Press during the previous year. 42.7% had visited library exhibits. Staff was the only group wherein more had used the physical collections (41.9%) than the library databases (39.5%) albeit only slightly. One quarter (25.0%) had used equipment for checkout. Roughly one third had consulted with library staff in person (29.0%) and via phone, email, or chat (33.9%).

Level of Satisfaction
Staff had a high level of satisfaction with the library. With 1 being “Very satisfied” and 2 being “Satisfied,” the average score for the library building and spaces was 1.3. Services and collections scored 1.6 and 1.7, respectively.

“What change would most improve the library?”
Staff wanted additional and better equipment available for checkout, as well as an updated collections. They wanted improvements in the room reservation policy and system.

“What does the library do really well?”
Staff noted that the helpful and friendly library staff provide great customer service. They loved the various library spaces and the assistance getting needed resources.