

**Washburn University Mabee Library
Service Assessment Focus Groups
March 31st, 2005
Report to the Steering Committee**

Purpose

Focus groups were conducted as part of the ongoing library service assessment regimen. Information gained from these sessions will be used in conjunction with the results of the previously-administered LibQUAL+™, SAILS and WOREP surveys to identify and plan enhancements to library service.

Methodology

Three focus group sessions were conducted, with each lasting approximately one hour. All three groups included faculty graduate students and undergraduates. Undergraduates comprised the majority of participants (34), with smaller numbers for faculty (10) and three graduate students.

Lines of Inquiry

Several areas of interest were identified prior to conducting the focus groups. Participants were encouraged to comment on these areas. Responses were recorded in both tabular and narrative form on worksheets completed by the participants, on easel charts written by a non-participant recorder, and in notes taken by the facilitator. Additional input was gathered from a digital recording of the proceedings. Where participants offered written responses the responses are recorded verbatim below. Tabulated data is provided wherever appropriate for the question and whenever offered by the participants.

“What is *most important* to you?”

Participants indicated their preferences on a handout that was submitted to the facilitator at the end of the session. Note that numerical totals will not coincide with number of participants, as some did not respond and some emphatically indicated more than one “most important.”

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|---------------------------------------|-------|-----------|------|
| • Someone sitting at a reference desk | 16 UG | 2 Faculty | 1 GS |
| • Books and journals in paper format | 12 UG | 1 Faculty | 1 GS |
| • Electronic resources | 11 UG | 1 Faculty | 1 GS |
| • Course reserve materials online | 7 UG | 2 Faculty | |
| • Easy to use library gateway | 4 UG | 2 Faculty | |
| • E-mail chat reference | 1 UG | 2 Faculty | |

Written Undergraduate Comments - “What is most important to you?”

- I think that awareness is a big issue. I think as incoming freshmans (sic) we should be more informed about what the library offers.
- To me the most important thing is having updated books and material! It’s frustrating when you are trying to write a research paper and can’t find updated material.

- I think the journals could be organized better. I get so confused finding stuff down there.
- ILL- I like the program but I get frustrated because I have to use it too much. Overall I think the library needs more volumes so that I can get my research now and not have to wait for it.
- I wish there were more new books because I went to do research on a relatively new health concern and the library did not have any books, and *our teacher wouldn't let us use the internet* (emphasis added)
- To have live contact is the most important thing for me.
- My first love is books and paper materials and the interlibrary loan.
- Reserves online
- To have somebody walk around the reading areas to make sure the noise level is reasonable.
- Important to advertise, let people know, use MyWashburn
- (I) Like online text (journals).
- My main concern for the library is that students are not informed about its potential. My suggestion would be literature sent to courses aimed at first time students.
- I appreciate the online indexes, but feel that more of them (journals) should be full-text.
- I would consider a monthly/weekly email "did you know we had this service?"

Written Faculty Comments - "What is most important to you?"

- It (Online course reserves) would take too much time out of the limited times faculty have-no, no, no!
- If everything is online, the library would be out of business very soon
- If a textbook is online would students buy their own?
(The preceding three comments are all from one individual)
- Add Elsevier online-full text journals.

Written Graduate Comments - (none offered)

E-mail/Chat Reference

There was limited awareness of these services, but noticeable enthusiasm on the part of those individuals who were aware. The difference between conventional email response and live chat was understood by a few participants, with speed of response being the primary factor in their preference. Only a small number of participants seemed to hold the belief that such a service would be offered during a broad range of hours, but it will be important to manage user expectations as this type of service develops.

Do you know what it is?

Undergraduates:	Yes=3	No=15	No Response= 15
Graduates			
Faculty	Yes=4	No=3	No Response=2

Would you use it?

Undergraduates	Yes=17	No=1	No Response=16
Graduates			
Faculty	Yes=5	No=2	No Response=10

Undergraduate Written Comments: Do you know what chat reference is and would you use it?"

- Yes if it makes library hours more flexible.
- Yes because someone can help you when the library hours are ended.
- Some...
- I'm not sure.

Faculty Written Comments (none offered)

Graduate Written Comments (none offered)

Do you prefer chat/email to these alternatives?

Face-to-face: favorite alternative with faculty			
Phone reference			
Undergraduates	Yes=6	No=10	No Response=18
Graduates			
Faculty	Yes=4	No=1	No Response=5

Undergraduate Written Comments: Do you prefer chat/email to these alternatives?

- If it was quicker then I would rather use email chat. But if it took a while for a response, then I'd rather have face to face or phone.
- I would rather do things in the library in person.
- I prefer chat but I would do email too.
- I prefer email reference
- Actually, email "chat" should be an additional resource.
- Prefer face to face because I can access immediate use (sic)
- (email) might work for me if I didn't wait until the last minute.
- I prefer chat email to phone reference
- I prefer (face to face) but chat would be useful when I can't come to the library
- It (chat) would be helpful when at home working on paper (sic) and not able to come to campus.

Faculty Written Comments:

- I only had a vague idea what it was before coming today.

- I would only use it rarely
- I don't really know what it is. I did not think I would use it. After hearing about it I may direct students to use it.
- I would, most likely, use it, if I knew what it was
- More likely to use it in the evening.
- Sounds interesting; useful!

If chat reference were added or enhanced, what service, in your opinion, could be deleted?

Undergraduate Written Comments

- Don't know because I don't go online to the library website
- Nothing

Faculty Written Comments

- Perhaps the face to face [could be deleted].
- I wouldn't want to lose their jobs over this, if that is what implementing this (chat) would mean.
- I think face to face is more important [than chat]
- Can't think of anything that can be deleted. All services seem indispensable.
- Perhaps delete phone reference (although not realistic). I do not know what could be deleted but the more services offered the more people will use them. I want students to love the library.

Graduate Student Written Comments (none offered)

Instruction

Several participants had had positive experiences with formal library instruction, and a few advocated a for-credit, and required course. Instruction offerings delivered as part of a particular course, and focused on that course, were well received. However, a majority of participants expressed a preference for having a "cafeteria" of choices for library instruction at the time of need.

Is instruction in the use of the library and its resources of value to your coursework and instruction? (no faculty left tabular responses)

Formal, for-credit course	UG=5
Individual, one-on-one instruction	UG=5
Small-group instruction	UG=6
Instruction requested by course instructor	UG=5
Online assistance	UG=1
Two or more of the above preferred	UG=8

Undergraduate Written Comments: Instruction

- For group projects we have often met at the library to work together. (comment made about small-group, ad-hoc instruction)
- I think this [a for-credit class] needs to be a required course for general ed.

- Instruction requested by the course instructor is helpful
- I find this (one on one) to be the most effective way to find material that I use.
- [Course specific instruction] is very informative not only for the class that you are in but for the future and even grad school.
- Instruction is not really useful.
- Free classes not for credit offered monthly.
- I have no problem in using the library.
- Set up meetings, not a formal or required class.

Faculty Written Comments: Instruction

- Would be a good gen. ed. requirement [for-credit class]-students should take it no later than sophomore year.
- An introduction to the library should be a requirement for all incoming students. The problem would be implementing it since students have said it is optional. [??]
- I think this [for-credit class] should be mandatory for all new students.
- More students would use the library if they had more knowledge. (sic).
- I plan to take students for a tour in the Fall. I think it would be useful for their knowledge in all classes.
- Not an instructor in the classroom. [??]

Graduate Student Written Comments: Instruction (none offered)

Electronic Reserves & Preferred “Gateway”

There was limited awareness of these services, but noticeable enthusiasm on the part of those individuals who were aware.

“Where do you think of going when you need electronic reserves?”

My Washburn	UG=11	FAC=1
Separate Web page (for each resource)	UG=1	FAC=1
Special Library Page	UG=3	FAC=1
Docutek	UG=0	FAC=0

Undergraduate Written Comments: Electronic Reserves & Preferred “Gateway”

- Have more courses use online reserves.
- I have not been informed as to what these are, seeing as how this is my first semester. I’m sure I’ll learn more about this and all of the other things I haven’t heard about so far.
- If I can’t find what I want on MyWashburn and the library web page, then I will search somewhere else.
- I’d just like easier links.
- I don’t think of MyWashburn for the library. I just use the library web page and search for it on washburn.edu when I need it.

Faculty Written Comments: Electronic Reserves & Preferred “Gateway”

- This [electronic gateway to library] is important to me but sometimes I have trouble accessing MLA from my home computer.
- Needs work-very important.
- I didn't know we had it [electronic reserves] but I would definitely use it.

Graduate Student Written Comments: (none offered)

General Comments from Participants - In response to “What needs Improvement?, What would you change first?”

Undergraduates -

- Thank you!
- I find the current setup meets my needs o.k. (sic)
- Overall I like the library
- Need more plug-ins on main floor for laptops

Faculty -

- Library lags rest of campus in carpet
- Obtain more journals
- Ambiance could be better