

The University of Memphis Libraries Undergraduate User Survey Fall 1999 Executive Summary

The University of Memphis Libraries has initiated a series of surveys to learn about library usage and satisfaction with services, and to determine the needs and expectations of library users. The data are being analyzed and will serve as the basis for planning future library services. Undergraduate students were the first to be surveyed in Fall 1999. The sample that included sophomore, junior, and senior students yielded a response rate of 77% with 1085 completed surveys. Analysis of the data indicates an overall positive perception of the McWherter Library and the five branch libraries (Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Mathematics, Music, and Audiology and Speech Pathology) by the undergraduate students responding to the Fall 1999 survey.

Note: Percentages reported are drawn from the numbers of undergraduate students responding to each question.

Libraries' use:

- 94.7% report using McWherter Library:
 - once a week or more: 38.6%
 - once a month: 30.8%
 - once a semester: 25.3%

Libraries' resources:

- Frequency of use: Most library resources are used between once a semester and once a month
- Satisfaction: rated average to very good by 93.6 – 98.7% of respondents
- Reported using:
 - Books: 85.3%
 - Periodicals: 80.6%
 - Electronic databases: 73.0%
 - Also indicated using:
 - Internet: 73.1%
 - Email: 55.9%
- Availability of materials:
 - Satisfaction: rated average to excellent by 90.9% of respondents
- Ease of finding materials:
 - Satisfaction: rated average to excellent by 87.2% of respondents
- Electronic resources — In-library use versus use from remote locations:
 - Satisfaction with electronic resources: rated average to very good by 93.7% - 95.6% of respondents
 - Higher rate of in-library use over use from remote locations:
 - In-library use reported:
 - Use of tomCAT (UofM catalog): 73.7%
 - Never used tomCAT: 26.3%
 - Use of electronic databases: 67.0%
 - Never used databases: 33.0%
 - From remote locations use:
 - Use of tomCAT (UofM catalog): 42.4%
 - Never used tomCAT: 57.6%
 - Use of electronic databases: 38.9%
 - Never used databases: 61.1%

Libraries' instruction:

- Have attended a Libraries' instruction class: 42.8%
- Would like to attend a Libraries' instruction class: 41.2%
- Preferred location for class: McWherter Library

Libraries' facilities:

- Most heavily used: McWherter Library
Music Branch Library
- Responded favorably to: operating hours, cleanliness, temperature, lighting, safety, signage, and computer workstations

Libraries' services:

- Frequency of use: A majority of undergraduate students use Libraries' services between once a semester and once a month
- Satisfaction: rated moderate to very high by 86.3% - 97.2%
- Reported using:
 - Reference services: 75.2%
 - Periodicals services: 68.6%
 - Copying services: 64.8%
 - Circulation services: 56.6%
 - Reserve Room services: 45.2%
 - Microforms/AV services: 36.4%
- However, those undergraduate students who reported never using specific Libraries' services should be noted:
 - Never used Reference: 24.8%
 - Never used Periodicals: 31.4%
 - Never used Copying services: 35.2%
 - Never checked out a book: 43.4%
(Circulation)
 - Never used Reserve Room: 54.8%
 - Never used Microforms/ AV: 63.6%

Libraries' future needs:

- Undergraduate students indicated that their five most important needs are:
 - increased numbers of current books 58.7%
 - increased numbers of online full-text journal articles 56.8%
 - increased numbers of electronic databases 47.1%
 - longer library hours on the weekends 46.4%
 - increased numbers of journal titles 45.2%

Comments: The top three comments gleaned from content analysis of qualitative statements made by undergraduate students pertain to:

- complexity of finding materials
- facilities — the library is great
- staff — helpful, friendly, great

Areas recommended for attention: Statistical analysis and comments from undergraduate students suggest that improvement is needed in the following areas:

- locating materials, i.e. better instructions, improved catalog accuracy, improved reshelving, additional staff
- customer service
- copy services
- increased resources (mainly books and journals)
- encouraging greater library use

The series of surveys continues:

- Spring/Summer 2000: Students (both graduate and undergraduate) at off-campus sites were surveyed in April 2000 and analysis of data is now in progress
- Fall 2000: Faculty will be surveyed
- Spring 2001: Graduate students will be surveyed

- *This summary was prepared by Perveen Rustomfram, Chair, and Jane Qualls, member, of the Libraries' Survey Committee.
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