

Report on Faculty Survey of Northwestern State University of Louisiana Libraries from Fall Semester 2008

The members of the Library Planning and Evaluation Committee decided to resume doing library surveys as part of the library planning procedures. Abbie Landry and Gail Kwak, working with Ronnie Biscoe, University Planning, Assessment and EEO Director, developed two instruments to provide input on how faculty and students use library collections or services. After several revisions and approval of the final draft by the committee, Ms. Biscoe converted the instruments to Zoomerang, (a computerized survey program), and sent copies out on the university wide email program, Messenger.

Faculty and students had four weeks to respond to the survey. The surveys were launched October 20, 2008 and closed November 21, 2008. These dates were chosen since Midterm grades would already be turned in and prior to Thanksgiving break. The following is a report of the survey results. The first part of the report is a summary of the survey results, the second concerns the comments, and the third is a list of recommendations based on the surveys.

Faculty survey

Of the potential 634 faculty who received the survey, 227 responded for a response rate of 35.8% which is considered very good for an online survey.

Questions eleven through fifteen provide a profile of the faculty who responded to the survey.

Question eleven (Employment)

37 (16%) are part time
188 (84%) are full time
Total 225 (100%)

Question twelve (Academic Rank)

20 (9%) Adjunct
32 (14%) Full Professor
41 (18%) Associate Professor
48 (21%) Instructors
85 (38%) Assistant Professor
Total 226 (100%)

Question 13 (Teaching)

24 (11%) Teach Graduate Students
199 (89%) Teach Undergraduates
Total 223 (100%)

Question 14 (College)

12 (6%) Scholars' College
17 (8%) Business
31 (14%) Education
35 (16%) Nursing
41 (19%) Science & Technology
80 (37%) Liberal Arts
Total 216 (100%)

Question 15 (Length of Employment)

24 (11%) More than 25 years
49 (22%) 15-25 years
58 (26%) Less than 5 years
94 (42%) 5-15 years
Totals 225 (100%)

This information indicates that the majority of the respondents work full-time, teach mainly undergraduate students, hold academic rank of Assistant Professor, work for the College of Liberal Arts, and have worked at Northwestern State University from 5 to 15 years.

The first part of the survey, questions 1 through six was designed to provide insight into how the faculty actually uses the library.

Question 1 Location where faculty use the library resources (select one)

6 (3%) Other
43 (19%) in the library
46 (20%) from home
132 (58%) from office on campus
Total 227 (100%)

Question 2 Services used in past 12 months (multiple answers)

16 (7%) Other
25 (11%) place items on reserve
30 (14%) student/faculty reading room
33 (15%) wireless internet
53 (24%) email reference
57 (26%) meeting/research space
66 (30%) library instruction
97 (44%) reference/research assistance
97 (44%) Interlibrary Loan

101 (46%) checking out materials

Question 3 Library Resources Utilized past 12 months

8 (4%) Other
20 (9%) special collections/rare books/Louisiana Collection
21 (10%) university archives
23 (11%) a/v materials
24 (11%) best sellers/new books
36 (16%) e-books
43 (20%) government documents
73 (33%) print resources (books)
86 (39%) print periodicals
151 (69%) online catalog
179 (82%) online databases

Question 4 Library Website

8 (4%) Other
16 (7%) Research Center
30 (14%) email reference
32 (15%) other catalogs
34 (16%) library policies and services
46 (21%) correspond with liaisons
72 (33%) online resources
75 (35%) library hours, locations, services
90 (42%) ILL
146 (68%) library catalog
184 (86%) search databases

Question 5 Support of Instructional Plans

9 (4%) Other
44 (22%) plagiarism
72 (36%) help with new resources
78 (39%) purchase supporting resources
82 (41%) access to materials contributed to conceptual framework of courses
120 (59%) materials for lectures/reading assignments
140 (69%) access to subject databases/indexes

Question 6 Support teaching objectives

8 (4%) Other
26 (13%) archives/special collections for students
35 (17%) educate students about plagiarism
43 (21%) government information
49 (24%) print course reserves
53 (26%) independent study

85 (42%) ILL
101 (50%) library instruction
168 (83%) assist students in finding resources

Questions 7 through 10 use five item Likert Scale to determine faculty perceptions of the resources or services.

Question 7 Ease of locating books

29 (13%) No opinion
17 (8%) strongly disagree
18 (8%) disagree
66 (29%) strongly agree
95 (42%) agree
Total 225 (100%)

Question 8 Ease of locating periodicals

22 (10%) strongly disagree
22 (10%) disagree
31 (14%) no opinion
64 (28%) agree
87 (38%) strongly agree

Question 9 Electronic resources accessible

11 (5%) strongly disagree
14 (6%) no opinion
17 (8%) disagree
82 (36%) strongly agree
102 (45%) agree

Question 10 Interlibrary Loan

1 (0%) strongly disagree
6 (3%) disagree
43 (19%) no opinion
80 (36%) agree
94 (42%) strongly agree

Of the 227 faculty taking the survey 37 included comments. In order to protect the privacy of individuals, the comments were counted and summarized. Since more than one idea may be expressed in the same comment, those have been divided and placed in appropriate sections.

Note: Those comments, which mention a library faculty or staff member by name, will be shared with that individual.

Negative Comments

Need more resources and books (15)
Add Project Muse (3)
Cannot use library until funding if improved (2)
Library hours (2)
Campus mail ILL articles and copy articles
Need more help in Alexandria
ILL is okay but library needs more books
Return to cards so faculty can make own copies
Library has few books/journals needed
JSTOR is inadequate
Give some Shale money to the library
Library is inadequate
Replace NetLibrary with Questia

Circulation

Longer check out periods for faculty (3)

Positive Comments

Library staff good or excellent (7)
Shreveport library staff (3)
Interlibrary Loan wonderful (3)
Leesville library staff is helpful
Library has good collection (in faculty member's subject area)
Library Instruction Excellent
Reading room great
Separating books and journals very useful
Electronic Resources adequate
On-line books and journals save time
Satisfied with service and resources

Other

Instructions do not agree with buttons on Likert scale
Do not teach a full time course
All answers refer to my subject area
Teach half grad and half undergrad-toss out question # 13
Teach online from another location-do not use the library

Observations and Recommendations

A fairly large amount of this survey confirmed what the library faculty and staff already knew:

- Most faculty use the library from their offices
- Circulation is the most used service
- Online databases are the most used resources]
- Accessing database is the most popular use of the website
- Access to databases and indexes is the most important support to instruction
- The main support of teaching objectives is helping their students find resources

The sections of use of resources and collections showed an overall positive reaction:

- 71% either agree or strongly agree that they can easily locate books
- 66% either agree or strongly agree that they can easily locate periodicals
- 81% either agree or strongly agree that they can easily access electronic resources
- 78% either agree or strongly agree that they can get what they need from other libraries through interlibrary loan

The negatives “disagree “or “strongly disagree” were very small as were the no opinions. The highest “no opinion” 19% was on interlibrary loan suggesting the library may need to do more to publicize this service.

Recommendations:

Based on the survey, the two largest services used by faculty are circulation of materials and accessing online resources. This is where the library budget needs to be concentrated and increased. The comments reinforce this with over 15 observing that the library needs to add more resources and books. At least three faculty members recommended the purchase of the “Project Muse” database.

A second area of concern was the length of time faculty can check out materials. This is something the library can address without needing additional funds.

On the positive side, faculty are very complimentary of the library staff, especially in Shreveport which received specific mention.