

## LibQUAL+™ Executive Summary: UW-L Murphy Library

*“The staff at our library are the best. I have never had a negative experience....What a great bunch of people to work with and share in the same community.”*

*~ UW-L Faculty Member*

### **Introduction**

Prompted by our commitment to understand user perceptions, ideals, and minimal expectations, nearly all UW System libraries conducted a survey of their faculty, staff, and students during spring 2004.

LibQUAL+™ is a web-based assessment instrument that is based on SERVQUAL, a popular tool used to evaluate service quality in the private sector. Managed by the Association of Research Libraries, LibQUAL+ has been used by over 700 libraries since 2000. LibQUAL+ measures three dimensions: Library Collections & Resources, Physical Space/Environment, and Service. Additional results gauge perceptions of information literacy instruction, and use of non-library web portals.

UW-La Crosse’s survey population included random samples of Freshman, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors, all Graduate Students (excluding learning communities), all Faculty and Academic Staff (excluding librarians), and a random sample of classified staff (excluding library employees). 3,092 invitations to participate were sent to the survey population via e-mail; of the 483 surveys submitted, 461 surveys were valid and used for these analyses.

### **Responses & Representativeness**

By status, response rates were disproportionately high for Graduate Students, and disproportionately low for 4th year seniors. All other population groups responded proportionately to their population sizes.

Consistently, responses from the Health Professions discipline were disproportionately high compared to population counts. Exercise and Sports Science Faculty and Graduate Students responses were disproportionately low. Graduate Students in Management also under responded to the survey.

Compared to discipline counts received from the registrar’s office, undeclared populations under responded. However, this may be due to students already identifying with a discipline without an official declaration on file with the registrar’s office.

Women were disproportionately more likely to complete the survey compared to men, relative to population sizes.

Depending on how the demographic options of the survey were interpreted by participants, academic staff feedback may be reflected in both Faculty and Staff results.

## **Results**

In general, most user perceptions of the library fell roughly halfway between their minimum expectations and their ideals. For those questions related to library Space/Environment, user perceptions were closer to their ideals. Of all population groups, Graduate Students were least likely to have their ideals met.

## **Collections & Resources**

Survey participants, particularly Graduate Students, rated Collections & Resources as the most important of the three dimensions. However, Collections & Resources is also the dimension perceived to be furthest from participant ideals for all population groups. A notable exception was for "Access to archives, special collections" which had one of the top three ideals most closely met campus-wide (and exceeded for Faculty).

The minimal expectations of Graduate Students were not met for "The electronic information resources I need" and "Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work." Faculty minimal expectations for "Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work" were not met, and were barely reached for "The printed library materials I need for my work." Staff expectations for "A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own" were not met.

In contrast to users' overall high importance for Collections & Resources, "The multimedia collections (CD / DVD / video / audio) I need" piece of this dimension was actually rated least important of all measures.

## **Physical Space/Environment**

Users were most satisfied with Space, particularly, "a comfortable, inviting location" with Faculty and Staff ideals for Space almost all exceeded. For Faculty, "Community space for group learning and group study" was least important.

## **Service**

All survey participant ideals were nearly met for the entire dimension of Service, with Faculty and Staff ideals exceeded for "Making me aware of library resources and services" and "Teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information." Faculty ideals for library staff's "Willingness to help users" were also exceeded.

The overall population, excluding Faculty, reported the least importance for "Employees who instill confidence in users" and "Giving users individual attention."

Undergraduates rated "Efficient interlibrary loan / document delivery" as having ideals among the top three most closely met. By contrast, ideals for Interlibrary Loan were among the top four least met for Graduate Students. Faculty ideals and expectations for Interlibrary Loan are also high; however, Faculty ideals are more closely met.

Undergraduate ideals were least met for "Employees who instill confidence in users," while Staff ideals were not met for "Employees who are consistently courteous."

Satisfaction with information literacy instruction was highest for Faculty compared to other population groups.

### **Use of the Library vs. Non-Library Web Portals**

About 50% of survey participants reported using non-library web gateways daily, while approximately 10% use the library collections online daily, and roughly 10% use the library premises daily. Around 40% of respondents indicated using the library premises weekly, and nearly 50% access the library's online resources weekly. Students and Staff are somewhat more likely to use non-library web gateways on a daily basis than Faculty.

### **Comments**

157 surveys included optional participant comments. Comments that addressed Service, whether experienced as part of a library instruction session, or at the circulation and reference desks, were varied and abundant with the rough majority speaking positively about the full time library staff. The majority of comments expressing dissatisfaction with Service described poor customer service experiences with student employees.

"Reference people are quite helpful as well as special collections! Thanks for helping!" (Undergraduate Student)

"Some of the people (usually students) who check out the books before we leave could use some customer skill enhancement to be friendlier and more customer focused." (Graduate Student)

Comments received about the library's print and online collections mirrored the quantitative results of the survey with requests for more online access, and additional subscriptions to print and online journals.

### **Concluding Epiphanies**

- Compared to other population groups, Faculty were most satisfied with the library, while Graduate Students were least satisfied.
- Overall user priorities: Resources first, then Service, then Space
- Undergraduate Student priorities: Resources and Space, then Service
- Graduate Student priorities: Resources first, then Service and Space
- Faculty priorities: Resources and Service, then Space
- Staff priorities: Service first, then Resources and Space