

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

*“I’ve always found the library to be a wonderful resource, staffed by very knowledgeable, very friendly people.”*

*~ UW-L Faculty Member*

*“I AM GRATEFUL for the AMAZINGLY FRIENDLY STAFF and the HELP that they are willing to give you either in person or via email! The Librarians which are connected to the Residents Halls are especially amazing with working with students! THANK YOU.”*

*~ UWL Undergraduate Student*

### Introduction

---

In spring 2008, Murphy Library participated in the Association of Research Libraries’ LibQUAL+® survey, which measures perceptions of library service quality. Approximately 2100 faculty, students, and staff from the university responded to the online LibQUAL+® survey, with a total 1,963 valid responses. The survey results offered a wide-ranging snapshot of how users make use of library resources and services and how they regard the libraries overall.

LibQUAL+® is a web-based assessment instrument that is based on SERVQUAL, a popular tool used to assess service quality in the business sector. Managed by the Association of Research Libraries, LibQUAL+® has been administered by more than 1,000 libraries since 2000. LibQUAL+® measures three dimensions (in terms of perceptions, ideals, and minimal expectations): library collections & resources, physical space/environment, and service. Additional results gauge perceptions of information literacy instruction, full-text articles journal collections, archives/special collections, document delivery/interlibrary loan services, and promotional aspects related to library resources and services.

UW-La Crosse’s survey population did not include random sampling. Instead, all freshman, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, all graduate students (excluding learning communities), all faculty and academic staff (excluding library personnel), and all classified staff (excluding library personnel) with valid email accounts were invited to participate. A total of 9,576 invitations to participate were sent to the survey population via campus email. Overall, 1,963 valid (20.5%) campus constituents responded, and according to LibQUAL+®, “Research indicates that web-based surveys typically have low response rates (around 15-20 percent)” (p.32). The survey was administered for a three-week period from March 31, 2008, until April 21, 2008. Prizes were offered as incentives to respondents who completed the survey and left valid UW-L email addresses. The average time to complete the survey for all participants was just over 11 minutes.

NOTE: There are discrepancies in demographic summaries and other data comparisons because the level of detailed demographic information available from UW-L did not always fit the requirements of LibQUAL+®. Also, 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.

## Who Responded

---

### Responses by gender

- Undergraduates: 71% female and 29% male (actual 58% female & 42% male)
- Graduates: 72% female and 28% male (actual 67% female & 33% male)
- Faculty: 49% female and 51% male (actual 42% female & 58% male)

### Responses by classification or user group

- 44% were second and third year students
- 40% were first, fourth, and fifth-plus year students.
- 8.5% were graduates
- 6.6% were faculty & staff
- 3.54% were undecided/undeclared undergraduates

### Responses by discipline

- 40% were from SAH disciplines (biology was highest with 11.2%)
- 35% were from CLS disciplines (education was highest with 11.35%)
- 15.42% were from CBA disciplines (marketing was highest with 3.44%)

## Library Use:

---

- 64% of undergraduates engage in research in the libraries either on a daily or weekly basis
- Over 60% of graduates, in research in the libraries either on a daily or weekly basis
- Over 66% of faculty members visit the libraries for class or scholarly pursuits on a weekly or monthly basis
- Over 74% of faculty members participating reported using library resources online on a daily or weekly basis.
- Over 83% of graduate students reported a similar frequency of use.
- Only about 53% undergraduates utilize online library resources this frequently. Instead, the majority (93%) relies on yahoo(TM), Google(TM), or other non-library gateways for information.

## Survey Results

---

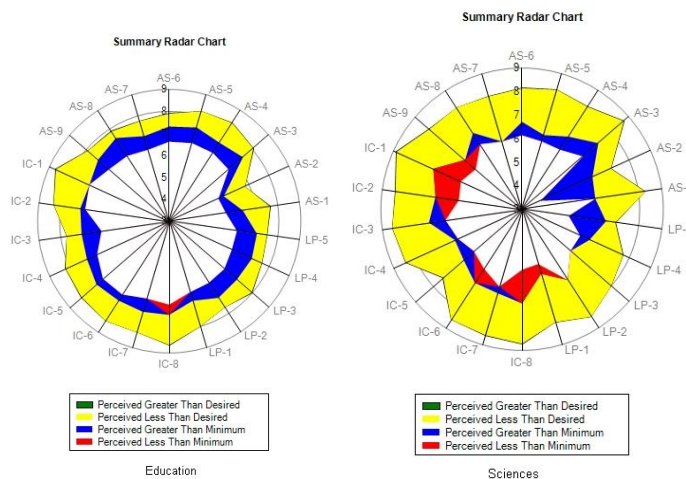
### The survey measured three core dimensions of service quality:

1. Affect of service – direct service quality
  - Respondents ranked this highest overall in terms of the library's performance.
  - For all "affect" questions, the perception of the service received was one point above minimally acceptable levels (lowest being .88, AS-9 Dependability in handling users' service problems).

- However, graduate students in the sciences expressed less than minimal levels of satisfaction with service quality in the area of “dependability in handling users' service problems” (AS-9).

## 2. Information control – resource collections & ability to find information independently

- Respondents said this is the most important category, but ranked the library lowest in performance.
- For all “information control” questions, IC-5 / Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information was rated lowest (.66) and IC-8 / Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work was next lowest (.70)



Graduate students in education and the sciences indicated dissatisfaction with the “print and/or electronic journal collections” (IC-8). Additionally, graduate students in biology felt that the electronic resource access from home or office was less than minimal (IC-1). Also of interest, is the fact that these biology graduate students expressed problems associated with easy-to-use access tools that allow them to find things independently (IC-6) and that the library’s web site did not enable them to find things independently (IC-2). See radar charts above.

## 3. Library as place – physical library environment

- Respondents ranked this lowest in terms of what they desire, but ranked it second in terms of the library’s performance.
- While users perceived the library’s space comfortable and inviting (LP-3), they perceived that the library’s “quiet space for individual activities” (LP-2) and “community space for group learning and group study” (LP-5) was not quite as satisfying.
- Graduate students in biology perceived less than minimal scores with library space (LP-1 doesn’t inspire study and is not quite enough LP-2).
- Overall, faculty felt that the library’s print and/or electronic journal collection did not meet their minimal needs (IC-8).

### **The survey measured additional dimensions:**

1. General satisfaction with library services (overall average general score on 9 point rating scale). Faculty/staff rated these questions slightly more highly than the undergraduate and graduate students.
  - In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated at the library. 7.60 (Faculty/staff rated this highest)
  - In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs. 7.19 (Graduates rated this lowest)
  - How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library? 7.34
2. Information literacy outcomes. Faculty/Staff to rated these questions lower than undergraduate and graduate students.
  - The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest. 6.0 (All respondents rated this the lowest category)
  - The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline or work. 6.90
  - The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits or work. 7.09 (All respondents rated this highly)
  - The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information. 6.27
  - The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study. 6.58

### **In addition, the survey measured five local areas of interest:**

1. Collections of online full text articles
  - This was ranked the most desirable area but was perceived as the weakest in library performance
2. Making users aware of resources and services
  - This tied for last place in importance and was in the middle in perception of library performance
3. Teaching people how to use resources
  - This was ranked in the middle of importance and was in 3<sup>rd</sup> place in perception of library performance
4. Access to archives and special collections
  - This tied for last place in importance and tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in perception of library performance.
5. Timely delivery of materials
  - This ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most desirable and was perceived as the strongest overall in terms of library performance