

2012 Faculty Survey of Library Collections and Services: Executive Summary

In February 2012 the University Library, in collaboration with Institutional Research, administered a survey to all faculty regarding library services and collections. 185 faculty responded, for a 35% response rate and a plus or minus 5.7% margin of error at the 95% confidence level. Thus the results are generalizable to all faculty. A link to the full results is included below. Respondents gave detailed quantitative and qualitative answers to a variety of library services, collections, technology, and facilities questions.

Satisfaction with Collections and Services

Faculty responded to several questions about their use of the library and its resources. Key results include a high agreement that the library is important to their research (question #1.1). This aligns with students' own sense, as 86% of students surveyed felt that the library is important to their academic success (2011 Student Survey).

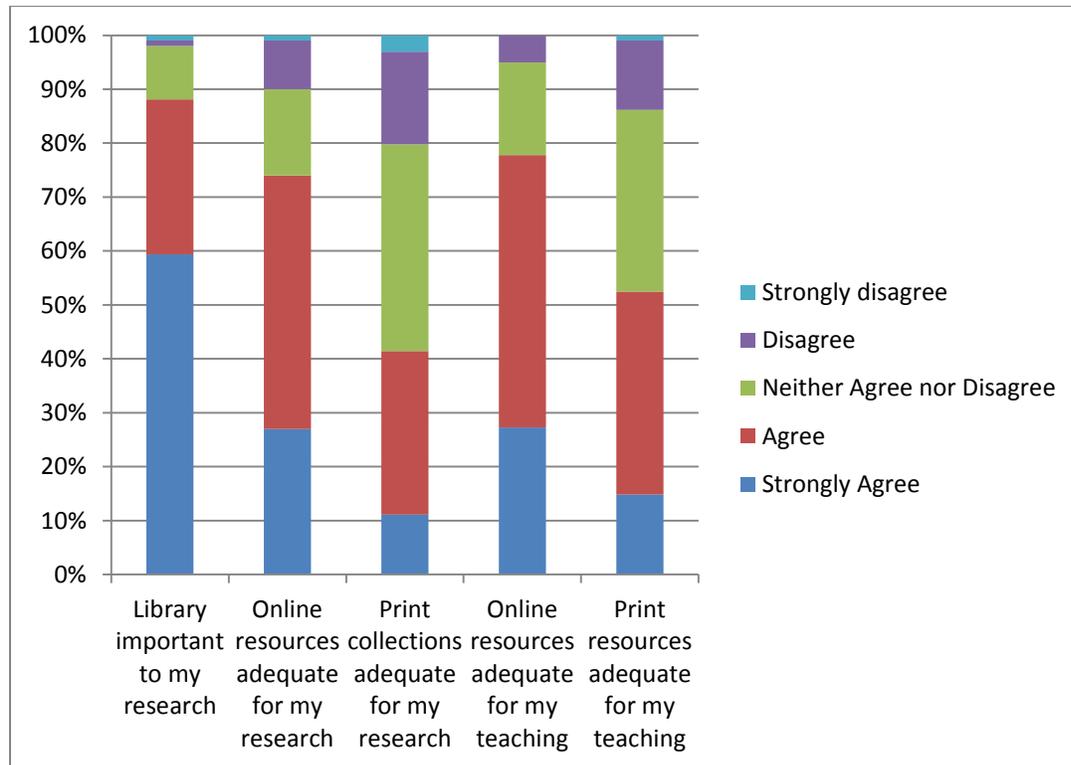
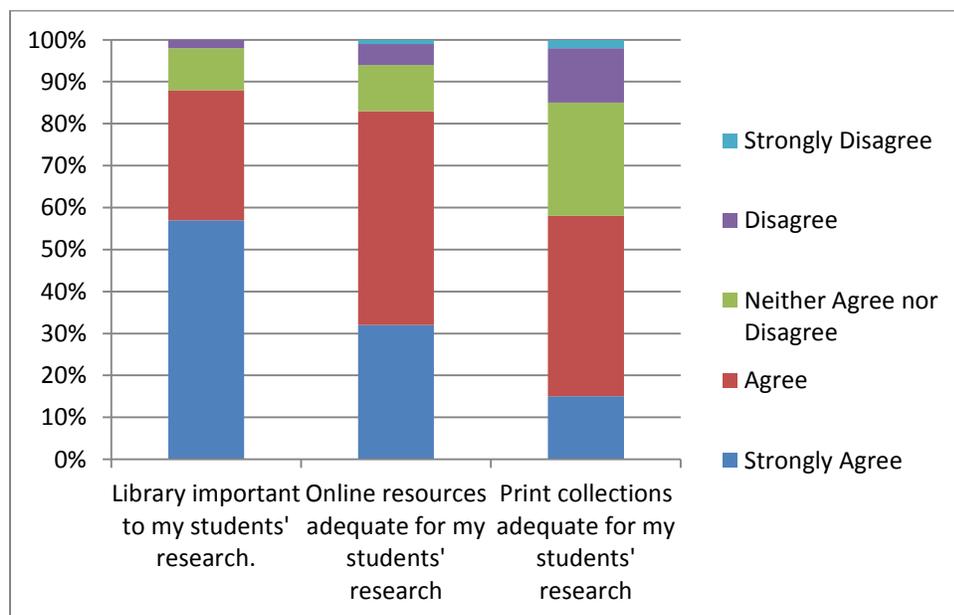


Chart A: Library's resources meet faculty needs

We asked specifically about online resources vs. print. As the chart A shows, there is a moderately high agreement that online resources are adequate, which aligns with students' reported 87% agreement that the library's online resources provide adequate support for their academic research (2011 Student Survey). On the other hand, satisfaction with print collections is rather lower, though 72% of students said the print collection is adequate for their research (2011 Student Survey).

Faculty responded to several questions about the library's adequacy for their students' needs, and their perception was that it was somewhat more adequate for students than for themselves.

**Chart B: Faculty perception that library meets students' research needs****Use of Collections and Services**

Faculty were also asked about their level of use of several library resources and services.

Key findings indicate that use of books and databases is high. Also, faculty rely on Link+ and Interlibrary Loan to obtain items through consortia borrowing. The reserve shelf is an important service for instruction, with two-thirds of faculty using it. Another question asked specifically about electronic reserves, which greatly facilitate our move to online resources and services, and 78% indicating they did desire electronic reserves (#11.1). We have begun to offer electronic reserves, though not to the extent

that we can afford to pay for copyrighted material. This response indicates the importance of fully funding this service.

Two-thirds of respondents say they consult with a librarian on research at least once per semester, which indicates the importance to faculty of collaborating with librarians.

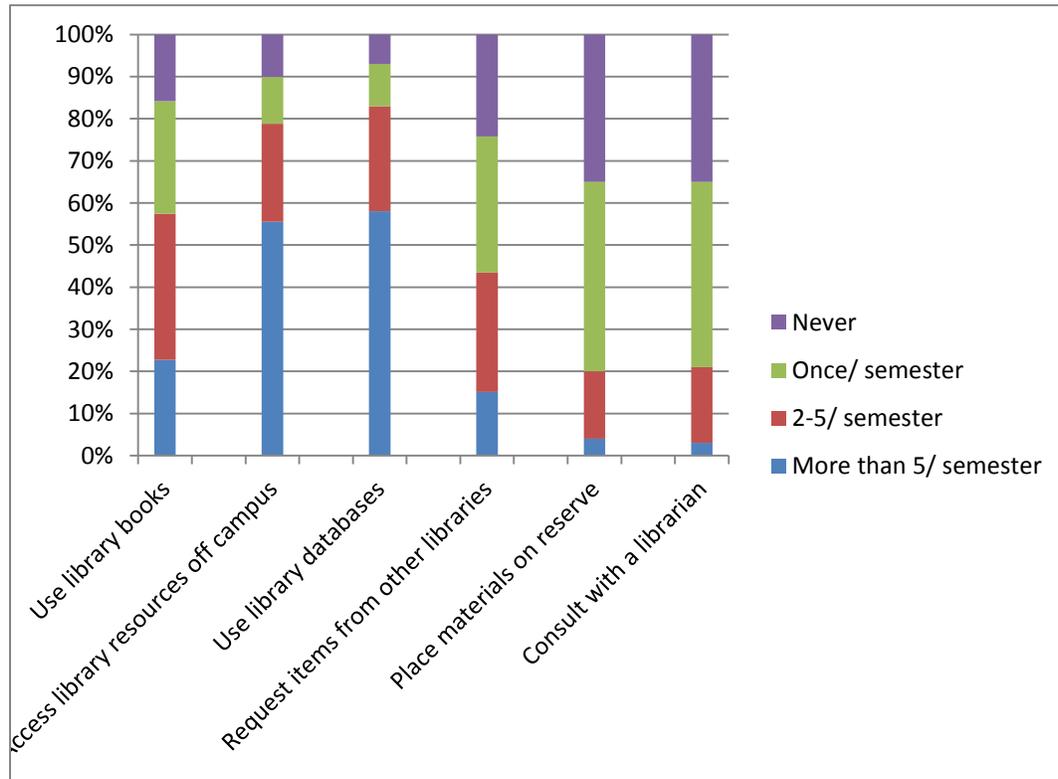


Chart C: Frequency of use of library collections and services

Library Instruction

Another important service to faculty is library research skills instruction. Results show that research is commonly assigned, and almost half of faculty use librarians for library instruction. Librarians are interested in collaborating more with faculty in a sustainable way to make sure faculty and students are supported in their research endeavors.

As faculty move instruction online, and more students are not on campus to physically use library resources and services, it is important for the library to develop services and collections that can help them online. Chart D below shows that the majority of faculty use Blackboard or another course management system for all or most of their courses, yet only 27% currently link to library resources

there (#5.4). Given that so many courses include library research, course management systems are an important area for librarians to place links to collections, services, and instruction.

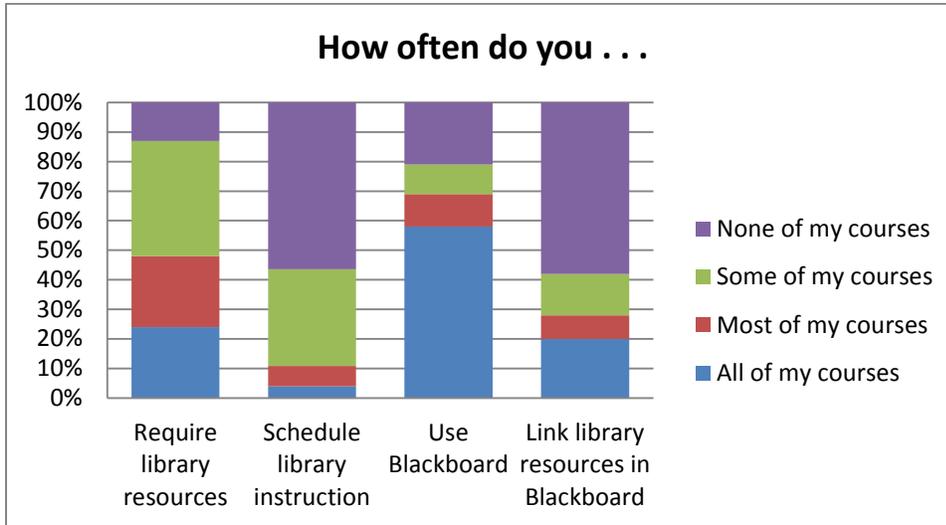


Chart D: Frequency of library research and Blackboard use

Online Tutorials

One way to integrate library instruction into increasingly online instruction is through tutorials. Two-thirds of faculty agreed that they would use online tutorials to help students learn about library research (#2.4). Chart E below indicates which topics. Librarians now offer tutorials for all these topics. With more faculty and student input, this instructional format can be improved. Tutorials are important not only to supplement research skills sessions taught by librarians, but also to serve students and instructors who do not meet on campus and therefore do not make use of the library's physical space, collections, and services.

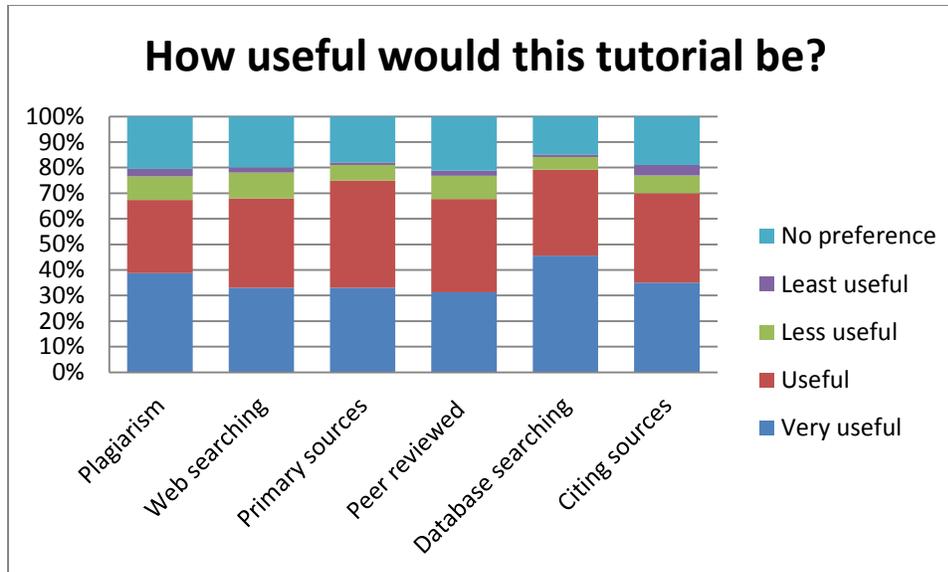


Chart E: Ranking online tutorial topics

Library Space

The responses for how faculty interact with the library validated our anecdotal impression that faculty use online resources more than they physically visit the library. Less than a third primarily visit the library in person, a third use the library home page from on campus, and 39% primarily use the library from off campus (#3.1-3).

This starkly differs from students, 73% of whom visit the library space (2011 Student Survey). When they do visit the library, the major uses are to conduct research and to check out materials (#8).

Communicating with Faculty

Eighty-one percent of faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the need to keep current with the library's changing electronic resources (#1.7). Seventy-seven percent of faculty use mobile devices such as smart phones or iPads and 70% engage in social networking (#7.1-2). However, when asked how they would like to be notified of new library services, resources, or events, only 9% indicated social networking, with 90% preferring email, and 69% indicating an announcement on the library homepage (#10). Students similarly report high levels of mobile device and social networking usage, and likewise preferred to receive information via email and the library home page (2011 Student Report).

Library Online

A great majority (88%) felt that the library Web site is easy to use (#1.6), though like students, more faculty agreed than strongly agreed, which indicates room for improvement in this first stop portal to the library. As expected, the majority come to the library home page to conduct research (#9.1).

We also asked faculty to rate the library as a resource for research and to rate the Internet as well. Although faculty rated the library higher than the Internet (79% rated it 1 or 2), the Internet was not far behind with 62% of faculty rating it 1 or 2 (#6.1-2). Combined with students, who already feel the Internet is better for academic research, this reinforces our impression that the Internet is becoming a viable alternative to the library in users' minds, even for academic research. In response, the library should pursue a very simple and intuitive Web interface and also promote the wealth, breadth, and depth of library resources as alternatives to the Internet. In addition, we are well positioned to instruct students on the essential differences between various types of information and ethical information use, which gain importance by a reliance on the Internet for academic research.

In addition, there were many free-text comments and suggestions about the library Web site and resources. Many felt the Web site was fine the way it is, and very useful (similar to students' comments). But faculty had several suggestions for improvement:

- Many faculty members indicated the general bewildering nature of the many databases, or of electronic journal title searching, or of the interlibrary loan process in particular. All these illustrate our struggle to present our wealth of tools in an intuitive way, and could be addressed by thinking differently about how myriad sources designed for high-level research are presented. More systematic instruction or the availability of tutorials may also mitigate this.
- One user suggested a customizable portal, while another suggested being able to save searches from various databases to a personal account on the home page.
- Several requested more online journals, particularly *Nature* and *Science*, and the database *Web of Science*.

Other Qualitative Comments

As for other services, the free text answers were again interesting:

- Several faculty decried the out-of date book collection (and film/DVD collection), and one asked for more online books.
- One wanted "E reserve," probably meaning the full copyright payment service. One mentioned placing textbooks on reserve, probably meaning a systematic campus initiative.
- One suggested a SciFinder workshop, and another lamented students' lack of research skills with databases in general.

- One lamented that librarians don't give consultations to thesis students as in the past. This is an incorrect perception. Perhaps we need to promote this more through graduate programs and key faculty. Perhaps we could become a more formalized step in the process.

Conclusion

This survey allows the library to gauge what is important according to our users' perceptions. Comparing answers from faculty and students showed that faculty and students use the library somewhat differently but at the same time have some needs in common. The data collected will serve to inform the library faculty in strategic planning and program development.

Full Survey Report

<http://library.csustan.edu/theld/2012facultyveysanspersonalinfo.pdf>

Works Cited

2011 Student Survey of Library Collections and Services Executive Summary. California State University Stanislaus Library. Web. 10 April, 2012.
<<http://library.csustan.edu/theld/2011studentsurveyreport.pdf>>.

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