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UNE Libraries LibQUAL Survey Executive Summary

UNE Library Services

Association of Research Libraries

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LIBQUAL+® SURVEY RESULTS, 2008

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND LIBRARIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction:

As we plan for the future of the University of New England Libraries, it is important to understand users needs and expectations in order to provide dynamic services and comprehensive materials. Therefore, the Libraries conducted a total market survey of library users and non-users during the Spring 2008 semester.

From February 5th to March 7th, 1,021 (23.4%) UNE students, faculty and staff completed the LIBQUAL+® Survey. Of the 1,021 surveys completed, 380 respondents (37.2%) submitted information using the comments section of the survey.

We were delighted to award a grand prize of a Kindle® (an Amazon.com® wireless reading device) to an undergraduate survey respondent and Amazon.com® gift certificate cards to four additional winning entries.

LIBQUAL+® is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users’ opinions of service quality. The Association of Research Libraries offers these services to the library community. The program’s centerpiece is a rigorously tested web-based survey that helps libraries assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library. The goals of LIBQUAL+® are to:

- Foster a culture of excellence in providing library service.
- Help libraries better understand user perceptions of library service quality.
- Collect and interpret library user feedback systematically over time.
- Provide libraries with comparable assessment information from peer institutions.
- Identify best practices in library service; and,
- Improve staff analytical skills and assist staff in the interpretation of data, and guide in the creation of innovative and effective problem solving techniques.

LIBQUAL+® measures three dimensions of service: Affect of Service, Information Control, and Library as Place. The survey instrument gauges library users’ perceptions of services and measures their satisfaction with services and resources. LIBQUAL+® is more than a list of standardized items. It includes a comments box soliciting open-ended user opinions.
“As a medical student my main interest is remote access to electronic journals and databases. One of these … is used most often by residencies and should really be added for medical students / residents.” ~Graduate Student, COM

II. Survey demographics: <Number & percentage of respondents>

A. Survey Respondents by User Group
   - Undergraduates 599 (58.68%)
   - Graduates 242 (23.71%)
   - Faculty 106 (10.39%)
   - Staff 60 (5.88%)
   - Library Staff 14 (1.34%)

B. Survey Respondents by Discipline:
   - Medical Biology, Medical Sciences 103 (11.70%)
   - Osteopathic Medicine 95 (10.80%)
   - Marine Science 62 (7.05%)
   - Dental Hygiene 54 (6.14%)
   - Education 51 (5.80%)
   - Nursing 51 (5.80%)
   - Aquaculture and Aquarium Science 43 (4.49%)
   - Biological Sciences 42 (4.77%)
   - Occupational Therapy 38 (4.32%)
   - Medical Biology 35 (3.98%)
   - Medical Biology, Physician Assistant 35 (3.98%)
   - Medical Biology, Health sciences 31 (3.52%)
   *<These 12 academic disciplines accounted for over 62% of all survey respondents.>

III. Standardized Survey Items Responses:

A. Most Desired Services Areas:
   - Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office
   - Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.
   - Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information.
   - The electronic resources I need.
   - Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own.
   - Making information easily accessible for independent use.

   “The library on the Westbrook Campus is amazing. The resources and information is all at your fingertips.” ~ Undergraduate Student, CHP

   “I use the library more than most people and have always found the staff very helpful.” ~ Faculty, CHP

   “Time constraints demand easy access to downloadable full text peer reviewed articles. Time to sit in the stacks with printed versions is limited. Beef up access to full text online articles”. ~ Graduate Student, CHP

   “I would like to see some better technology on this campus. Since the library is a main spot for individuals to do their printing there absolutely needs to be more printers. In addition, I think the school should seriously look into wireless printing.” ~ Graduate Student, COM
B. Highest Perceived Service Levels:
- Employees who are consistently courteous.
- Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion.
- Willingness to help users.
- Employees who understand the needs of their users.
- Readiness to respond to users questions.
- Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions.

D. Greatest Gap Scores Between Desired & Perceived Service Levels:
- Library space that inspires study and learning.
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office.
- A comfortable and inviting location.
- Quiet space for individual activities.
- A gateway for study, learning, or research.
- Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work.

IV. Survey Comments Box Responses:

Some common themes are revealed in the observations recorded by respondents in the “comments box” section of the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>% Exemplary</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>% Satisfactory</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>% Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affect of Service</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>71.14%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.47%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.38%</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library as Place</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22.87%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.72%</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>73.40%</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.92%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>78.38%</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>37.09%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.81%</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>59.11%</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table above shows, “Affect of Service,” questions relating to library staff and services, received the highest percentage of favorable comments. Over 71% of respondents rated staff performance as more than satisfactory or “exemplary.” This sentiment was registered across all user groups.

Many of the comments concerning “Library as Place,” issues relating to facilities, underscored a desire for change. Over 73% of respondents found fault with issues dealing with study space, climate control, noise levels, furniture, lighting, size of the library and/or aesthetics. Graduate and undergraduate students registered the strongest critique of these issues. Faculty and staff were more tolerant of existing conditions.
“Information Control,” services related to library collections and access to resources, registered the highest unsatisfactory rating. This was true for all user groups. Faculty and graduate students were particularly intolerant of one or more aspect of this dimension of library service. Nearly 80% of the comments noted some level of dissatisfaction with one or more aspect of this service area.

On the one hand, the qualitative comments section of the LIBQUAL+® Survey exposed a deeper level of discontent with the “Library as Place” and “Information Control” dimensions of library service than did the quantitative section of the survey. On the other hand, the qualitative comments affirmed and amplified the positive ratings given “Affect of Service” issues on the qualitative section of the survey.

We are extremely pleased by the response to this survey, and we deeply appreciate the faculty, staff, and students who patiently endured several e-mailed survey reminders, and took time away from their crowded schedules to complete the LIBQUAL+® Survey. We believe that the survey results will assist the UNE Library Administration to identify best practices, analyze deficits, and more effectively allocate resources.