UCL Subcommittee for Survey Responses

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Participants

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Background

Diane Walker relayed to the UCL a number of questions on behalf of the Organizational Design Team for Strategic Planning in the Hesburgh Libraries. At the UCL meeting of March 1, 2012, we agreed that it might be possible to use results from three different ImproveND surveys (Graduate and Undergraduate Students in 2010; Faculty and Staff in 2011) to deduce information that would be useful in guiding the process of the ODT. Patrick invited several members of the UCL to work with him to respond to these questions; he also invited Sherri Jones in her capacity as a member of the Balanced Scorecard team that is also analyzing survey results for the faculty survey.

The questions were:

1. What are the libraries doing well? Or, What’s the most important service the libraries provide?

2. What do you wish the libraries provided that we don’t?

3. What role do you see the library playing in research, teaching, recruiting, scholarship, etc.?

This group confirmed the overall picture of satisfaction with library services from all three surveys. Based on the charts as well as on individual perceptions, we were also able to identify many areas that would answer Question 2 & 3. We also know that there are several areas in which the Libraries need to improve. While not specifically a “survey question”, we found that some of the data confirmed the experience and perceptions of Patrick, Semion, Jon, and Neal, who also gave specific suggestions for improvement.

Note: Libraries refers to the entire system; library refers to the Hesburgh library building.
Responses to the questions

1. What the Libraries are doing well
   a. Library services—highly rated by all constituents.
   b. Public computers in the library.
   c. Laptop checkout is a good program.

2. Services that the Libraries should provide or improve; other ideas
   a. A search option from the www.nd.edu page that directly searches either the catalog or CatalogPlus.
   b. Improve CatalogPlus (CP).
      • Not a good search mechanism.
      • Does not properly reflect holdings (even compared with Catalog Classic).
      • Not good for indicating periodical holdings.
      • Has not resolved a number of the issues that were raised when it was first presented to UCL (http://www.library.nd.edu/ucl/minutes/documents/UCLMinutes10-28-10_000.pdf).
      • Many graduate students begin searches with WorldCat—or the catalogs at UChicago or Harvard—in preference to CP.
         o Sometimes surprising to find something in WorldCat that didn’t show up in CP.
         o This may account for higher use of and satisfaction with ILL, since users get better use from ILL.
         o From the faculty perspective, CP is not very useful as a research tool, or as a useful resource for seniors writing theses. (See first item under 3e.)
   c. A direct link to the Libraries from www.nd.edu. (Too many clicks at present.)
   d. Better library website.
   e. Marketing of specialized services.
      • Not many undergraduates know about Chat with a Librarian, but it is a very valuable service and needs to be better publicized.
   f. A required class for every freshman held in the library so that they visit the library and also are given an overview of library resources, meet subject specialists, and establish connections, since 50% of freshmen test out of Writing & Rhetoric.
      • This is critical, as freshmen do not know how to use the Libraries, with consequent negative results for them in their majors (many seniors are not familiar with disciplinary databases or understand how to do subject searches).
      • This needs to be structured into the FY system (i.e. not the responsibility only of the Libraries).
• Involve subject librarians much more closely with freshman instruction and in the teaching aspect of the Libraries’ mission.
• Freshmen who receive a good introduction to the Libraries will continue to use it.
• Students do not know about what the Libraries can do for them, what’s available in print or electronically, where to go/whom to talk with.

g. Link subject librarians to collections. (Co-locate offices and collections.)
• Being on the 12th floor limits easy accessibility to their users; difficulties in meeting regularly with them.
• Improve reference and instruction by subject specialists.
• Experience with subject librarians has been mixed.

h. Reduce referrals at the reference desk by having subject specialists there in addition to generalists, who usually have to refer users to someone else.

i. Develop appealing video tutorials that would appear between other content on the video walls. These would capture the attention of casual sitters; if done regularly, they could become an attraction in themselves.
• Link from the Libraries’ website for the benefit of those who want to refer to them at home.
• Brand them; create consistency or appeal (along lines of NBC’s The More You Know…).

j. Relatively low use of Libraries by exempt or non-exempt staff may be the result of a perception that they are “only” for those directly involved in academic work or research; or that non-faculty/non-students “don’t belong” there. Yet Notre Dame staff, as the largest demographic on campus, can make much more use of the Libraries than they do.
• Develop a program to draw staff in and encourage use; e.g. “Biggest User”, where people gain points for taking a workshop, checking out a book, answer a question by using an online journal article, etc.
• Important to incentivize people to use the library resources.
• Could be a summer pilot.
• Marketing will be key to this success.

k. Re-establish Hesburgh as a central point by encouraging fairs, markets, etc. in the courtyard.

l. Low usage of A/V material and space by undergraduates may reflect lack of awareness of resources there as well as the quality of the space itself.

m. Improve collection development
• The approval plans need to be looked at again. There are major gaps in the English-language plans, where publications from major university presses are not coming in.
• Current plans do not allow the Libraries to purchase new editions of scholarly books.
3. The Libraries’ role in teaching, research, recruiting, scholarship, etc.

a. Many services associated with research are handled well. They are not always visible.

b. Teaching.
   • Take advantage of the video wall by holding some classes in front of it; groups could
     work and project onto the wall.
   • More classrooms in Hesburgh Library to encourage not only use of the building by
     faculty and students, but also to encourage the Libraries as a teaching partner.
   • By improving the Registrar-controlled seminar rooms, more faculty would bring
     classes into the library.

c. Invite someone from the Kaneb Center to take a tour of the library and think about how
   space could be used in instruction and designed for the future.

d. The “Greatly” contribution of the Libraries to undergraduates’ success seems low—less
   than 50% in any category; high undergraduate use of library resources in any form
   should lead to a much higher percentage; we should also aim for over 80% in “Greatly”
   and “Moderately”.
   • It is important for undergraduates to learn to “use the library”—both physical and
     virtual resources.
   • Undergraduates should feel—and know—that the library is organic to their
     academic success and should be able to articulate this.

e. Faculty should see the Libraries as a partner in supporting/developing undergraduates,
   but may not understand what the Libraries can do in this area.
   • Increase honors thesis writing. (Currently at ~15%; Dean McGreevy’s goal is to
     increase this to 30–40%).
     o Good way to boost our services.
     o Better classrooms to bring seniors in.
     o Improve the catalog.
   • Ensure that the library is seen as user-friendly to research and to students.
   • Additional classrooms in the library would make it a more friendly place, more
     attractive and useable.
   • Faculty use of reference, research, or instructional services would increase through
     their referral of students to these resources.
   • Faculty can be more involved with the Libraries:
     o Conduct research seminars.
     o Participate in or create exhibits.
     o Cultivate relationships with subject specialists; involve the librarians much more
       in instruction and classes.
Other observations and comments

1. Physical space is the area of greatest dissatisfaction for all constituents, especially as libraries are expected to be places of inspiration.

Faculty:
- Hesburgh is the “home” for Arts & Letters faculty whose usage of print collections is highest among any respondents. Poor space detracts not only aesthetically, but also has a negative impact on use of the building for other purposes (reflection, interacting with colleagues, etc.) thus limiting the library’s ability to contribute to faculty research and productivity.
- Need more convenient access.
- Quiet access to computers.
- Need more rooms for classes/review/ability to work with students.
- Need more spaces for faculty.
- The library is not an appealing place.

Graduate students:
- Although graduate students have rooms on the 10th and 11th floors, these have had to accommodate many “social” needs (such as lunchroom, etc.), making it more difficult to fill a role as a reflective space.
- The library is the only space for graduate students in Arts & Letters: very important to accommodate them.
- With the University’s goal of enhancing graduate education, improved space for graduate research could make the Libraries a major selling point.
  - Poor space allocated to graduate students may have been a reason that a couple of graduate students recently turned Notre Dame down.

Undergraduate students:
- Undergraduate use of library space is primarily for study purposes, but either the configuration or lack of available space is a contributor to the low use reported (40%).

2. None of the results stood out as major areas needing immediate resolution or attention. Members of the group noted several points worth following up at a later time for deeper understanding.

- The greatest use of the physical library is by far by Arts & Letters faculty; this confirms the importance for them not only of print collections, but also the space in which they use and interact with such material.
- It was not surprising to see that faculty in the Colleges of Engineering and Science used virtual collections and discovery tools far more heavily than they did many
other resources and services; however, it is also noteworthy, and unexpected, that their use of these resources was surpassed by Arts & Letters faculty.

- The fact that less than 40% of undergraduates used the Libraries for study space is surprising and bears further investigation. The location of residence halls may be a factor in this as well.
- The low reported use of research, reference, and instructional services by faculty may reflect their own academic use, not the degree to which they use these services (such as instructional sessions) or refer their students.

3. The Libraries should excel, first and foremost, in providing undergraduate services.

4. Important to acknowledge challenges of supporting, in Hesburgh, both the undergraduate experience and graduate/faculty research needs.

- Pitch services at two different levels.
- Get more subject librarians involved in working more with graduate students.
- Institutionalize instructional classes for every graduate class.

**Conclusions and further comments**

1. Library space—location, aesthetics, availability—is unsatisfactory, particularly in Hesburgh Library.

2. The Libraries need to market their services and resources much more actively and visibly than they do at present through instructional classes, and with help from the faculty (through referrals).

3. As we probe deeper into understanding these and future survey results, it will be very important to define whether “library” means physical space, physical collections, online collections, virtual services, face-to-face services, location, or something else. It is possible that many respondents did not take into account the online resources provided by the Libraries when asked about their library use.

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