



# LibQUAL+ 2007: Benchmark Observations

## Executive Summary & Report



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## GVSU LibQUAL+ Benchmark Observations

### Summer-Fall 2007

*The GVSU Libraries are committed to the University's mission and goals as they pertain to student and faculty success. For a goal of such importance, it is imperative for the libraries to know how well we are doing. Without asking, we lack hard data to tell us where we are succeeding and where we might be failing. We are preparing to do just that, using an instrument called LibQUAL+. LibQUAL+ will provide baseline data from our users about how they perceive our strengths and weaknesses. With the results, we can develop strategic plans for improvement and measure our future growth and progress. We will also be able to compare our progress with that of a group of peer institutions. LibQUAL+ is far and away the most respected survey instrument among academic libraries. Our participation signals an important step forward for the GVSU Libraries.*

*Lee C. Van Orsdel  
Dean of University Libraries  
July 2007*

#### LibQUAL+ is...

- ... a “total market survey”

We find out across the board – from students at all levels, faculty, and staff – how the University community perceives the Libraries’ services.

- ... a survey of users’ perceptions

Based on the principle that, at some level, the only thing that matters is what our “customers” (both users and non-users) think and feel about their service experiences.

- ... “22 questions and a box”

The LibQUAL+ instrument is extensively validated and normed based on a standardized set of three-part questions, a few demographic-related items, and an open-ended comment box; 5 optional questions from a given list may be included. The survey takes about 13 minutes on average to complete; a random drawing for incentives may be offered.

- ... web-based for easy distribution by e-mail and/or access by web page links

The survey objective is to gather soundly representative responses, by distributing invitations to a representative sample of the population, or by inviting responses from the entire survey population.

# GVSU LibQUAL+ Benchmark Observations

## Summer-Fall 2007

### Table of Contents

Executive summary	3
Outline of the project	6
Initial planning	6
Survey-in-progress and post-survey outcomes	6
What we get from LibQUAL+	7
Summary of response totals	7
Narrative summary of overall results	9
Representativeness	9
Survey Item Summary	9
Selected Core Questions observations	10
Core Question Dimension summary	10
Local Questions summary	13
General Satisfaction Questions summary	16
Information Literacy Outcomes Questions summary	17
Library Use summary	18
Key topics from comments	19
Conclusion	21
Additional analyses proposed	21

# GVSU LibQUAL+ Benchmark Observations

## Summer-Fall 2007

### Executive Summary

The measure of a library's quality is much more than simply the size of its collection. In addition to the breadth and appropriate strengths of its collection, a top-notch library also provides high quality services to its constituents. In a setting such as Grand Valley State University, constituents include undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and members of the surrounding community. In assessing service quality, one prominent assessment model is based on the premise that, "only customers judge quality; all other judgments are essentially irrelevant" (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, Berry, 1990, p. 16). In 2007 the University Libraries at GVSU undertook a first administration of the LibQUAL+ survey, modeled on the SERVQUAL service-quality assessment tool developed by the authors of the previous quote. Administration of LibQUAL+ gave us the opportunity to glean insight into our users (and non-users) concerning the extent to which they *perceive* the Libraries as meeting their expectations. Our goals were to learn how to administer this major "total market" survey, to gather an initial set of benchmark service-quality assessment data for comparison with future iterations of the survey, and to evaluate the data generated toward application to planning and decision-making.

- Administering LibQUAL+

LibQUAL+ has been developed, and is made available to libraries through, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). ARL's LibQUAL+ staff members have developed an excellent support program, including a detailed procedures manual, extensive web information and survey management site, and a series of orientation and training sessions. Taking advantage of these resources, preparing for our first administration of LibQUAL+ was straightforward and proceeded with few obstacles. Having now done the preparation, survey setup, administration, and initial data evaluation one time, future iterations should be relatively routine and easily accomplished.

- Benchmark data

Our initial plan was to gather and establish benchmark, or baseline, data in a first administration of LibQUAL+ at GVSU by inviting all employees (staff and faculty in all categories), and representative random samples of undergraduate and graduate students to complete the survey. We eventually opened the survey beyond our original student sample to any students who wished to participate. The set of valid responses at the end of the survey period (six weeks) was, in round numbers, approximately 10% of the GVSU community, and reasonably well reflected the proportions of undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff comprising GVSU. We are satisfied that as a baseline, our 2007 LibQUAL+ data contains useful information about current user perceptions of service quality, and will serve as valid comparison data with other academic libraries' LibQUAL+ results and with results from future iterations at GVSU. We tentatively expect to administer LibQUAL+ every three years, with Fall 2010 being our next projected survey date.

- Initial data evaluation

Within less than a month of closing the survey to respondents, we had a summary of analyzed quantitative data, the raw quantitative results, and raw qualitative data in the form of open-ended comments submitted as part of many of the valid submitted surveys.

The summary of analyzed quantitative data is delivered by ARL to each participating LibQUAL+ site in a given semi-annual cohort shortly after its survey period concludes, in the form of “The Notebook.” GVSU’s LibQUAL+ Notebook for Fall 2007 provides a summary of the survey response group with respect to the overall GVSU population based on the demographic data collected in the survey. In general, the response group was reasonably representative of the general GVSU population with respect to user sub-groups; somewhat less so with respect to discipline, which is in part almost certainly related to the category names we applied.

The notebook summarizes the mean scores on the 22 core survey questions for the entire response group, and for each of the major user group categories (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, library staff) in the form of so-called radar charts, tables of mean scores, and tables of standard deviations. In taking the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their score on a 1-9 scale three times for each question: their minimum acceptable service-level score, their desired service-level score, and their perception of current service level. The radar charts represent this visually by labeling the spokes of a wheel for each of the core questions, and placing 1 at the origin and 9 at the outermost of a series of concentric circles; connecting the mean “minimum acceptable” scores for each question forms a line around the origin, as does connecting the mean “desired” scores, and the mean “perceived” scores. Ideally, the “perceived” scores fall into the “zone of tolerance” in the space between “minimum” and “desired,” preferably tending toward the upper end of the range, near “desired.”

The overall GVSU response group results approached the ideal: the “perceived” scores all fell easily within the “zone of tolerance.” This was true for just the undergraduate student group as well. For graduate students “perceived” only exceeded “minimum” by a small margin, especially for certain questions (those comprising the “Information Control” dimension, and to extent, the “Library as Place” dimension). For faculty, “perceived” consistently fell *below* “minimum” on most “Information Control” and “Library as Place” questions; staff and library staff mimicked this pattern to an extent. A superficial analysis of this result would be that the University Libraries are essentially meeting the services needs of students (both undergraduate and graduate) at least minimally; but there are significant issues among faculty and staff regarding services expected of the libraries which we must investigate and understand better if we are to improve perceptions of service quality among those users.

Approximately 40% of the valid surveys submitted included comments from the respondents in an open-ended comment box – anything from 1-2 words to several lengthy paragraphs. This qualitative data is deceptive: on the one hand, it is immediately readable text, and reading through pages of accumulated remarks provides insight into some recurring themes; on the other hand, an accurate, quantifiable analysis of nearly 1300 pieces of free text takes time, tools, and skills that have not yet been applied to the task. Therefore, only the most cursory observations can be made about what the comments data reveals.

Perhaps the most obvious trend in the comments was criticism of physical facilities: Zumberge Library is confusing, dark, uncomfortable, ugly, unaesthetic, too few computers, too few outlets, too little quiet study, too little group study; Steelcase Library doesn't have enough seats. Additional criticism was offered regarding books and collections: need more books in my subject, need more current books, need more books on the shelf, dislike books in storage or retrieval unit, online full text for journals is great (want more!) but want print for books. On the other hand, "helpful," "friendly," "courteous" service was also consistently mentioned and complimented. Many comments were in the general form of, "Library staff are very friendly and helpful, but....," where the rest of the comment expressed one of the criticisms or lacks listed previously.

- Conclusion

Our initial administration of LibQUAL+ went smoothly and resulted in a generous quantity of data. Upon initial inspection, we can quickly determine some areas where we should focus attention in the short term (or have already); we can also discern areas of focus relevant to planning for a new building, and other areas which might become focal in a next strategic planning cycle. We have a benchmark to use as we choose questions to compare against other institutions' LibQUAL+ data; and we have a baseline for future iterations of LibQUAL+ at Grand Valley. We have tentatively proposed a 3-year cycle for administering LibQUAL+ at GVSU, giving us time between each set of data-gathering to review, analyze, interpret, experiment, and grow.

Debbie Morrow  
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Library Administrative Services  
March 2008

#### References

Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A., Berry, L.L. (1990). *Delivering quality service: Balancing customer perceptions and expectations*. New York: Free Press.

# GVSU LibQUAL+ Benchmark Observations

## Summer-Fall 2007

### Outline of the project

#### Initial planning

We subscribed with LibQUAL+ for the July-December 2007 cohort, and planned to conduct our survey during a portion of the Fall semester. Preparatory tasks included:

- Obtaining approval from the Human Research Review Committee (HRRC) to conduct the survey
- Determining our survey population
- Selecting the actual dates the survey would be open
- Deciding on a budget for incentives and marketing, and selecting incentives
- Developing a marketing and publicity strategy
- Getting approvals and working out technical details for broadcast e-mail messages
- Customizing the survey

These tasks were readily accomplished during July-September, with help from Dr. Paul Reitemeier, HRRC Chair; Philip Batty, Institutional Analysis; Ed Lindeman, Information Technology; Dave Poortvliet, Institutional Marketing; the University Libraries Dean and Directors; and members of the Libraries staff.

Initially we planned to offer the survey, via a link in an e-mail invitation, to all employees (faculty and staff in all categories) and to representative samples of graduate and undergraduate students. The survey period was planned for the month of October, with an announcement message in late September, invitations on October 1, and two thank-you/reminder messages during the month. A generous budget was approved for a range of 18 attractive incentives, from \$50 gift cards at campus, local, and online businesses to \$300 electronics items. Arrangements were made for a cover article in the *GVSU Forum* and announcements by various Library representatives in faculty and student governance meetings. Incentive information and an FAQ page about LibQUAL+ were linked on the Libraries home page. The survey was customized to reflect Grand Valley's academic units and library locations, and to include five optionally selected questions from an existing list.

#### Survey-in-progress and post-survey outcomes

After a fair initial response to the invitational message on the first day, responses dropped off and stayed low, even following reminder messages. After learning in late October that we were free to extend the survey closing date and to open it to the entire campus community, we made some changes to improve return rate: with very able assistance from Institutional Marketing and University Promotions, we placed "Win an iPod" ads on the University home page, the Libraries home page, and the campus e-mail kiosk default page, linked to the survey via our incentive promotion page; and we extended the closing date from October 31 to

November 9. Between October 28 and November 9 response rates rose dramatically, especially among undergraduate students, for a final valid survey return rate of about 10% of the University population, and overall fairly representative return distribution as to proportions of students, faculty, and staff by class year or employee category.

Immediately upon closing the survey we had access to a randomly generated list of 50 names and e-mail addresses from among respondents who both a) submitted complete surveys and b) opted to enter the incentive drawing. We selected 18 winners (two 1<sup>st</sup> prizes, four 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes, and twelve 3<sup>rd</sup> prizes), working through the list as drawn, including one faculty, one staff, two graduate students and fourteen undergraduate students, and excluding any who could not be identified as current GVSU students or employees. Winners were contacted, allowed to select their preferred prize within the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd prize categories, and arrangements were made for them to pick up or receive their prizes, prior to the end of Fall semester.<sup>1</sup>

Upon closing the survey we had access to a complete file of the comments submitted in the survey's final open-ended comment box. Approximately 40% of valid surveys included comments. A committee of library faculty and staff was assembled to make an initial evaluation of the comments; members included Debbie Morrow, Pete Armstrong, Sarah Beaubien, Brian Merry, and Mary Morgan. The committee made a short presentation to the Libraries staff in early January 2008, preliminary to completing any written analysis of the comments contents.

Within three weeks of closing the survey we received our survey data notebook with summarized and analyzed data for the twenty-two core questions and demographic questions. We also have access to our complete set of raw data, in comma-delimited format, which can be manipulated with SPSS or other statistical analysis software; and will eventually receive a formatted SPSS data file limited to all valid results. And via the LibQUAL+ web site we have access to data from other participating libraries, from which we can draw samples and simple analyses for comparison to our own results.

#### What we get from LibQUAL+

Once the LibQUAL+ survey has been made available for a period of time (generally at least three weeks is recommended) and then closed, a participating institution receives or has access to:

- A 'LibQUAL+ Notebook' with summarized (quantitative) data, graphs, and charts
- Raw quantitative data, including
  - User comments (qualitative data)
  - Files that can be used with statistics software, e.g. SPSS
- Access to analyzed data from other participating libraries

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to the team who provided great creative thought and input to proposing a collection of incentives, devising a budget, selecting and purchasing the prizes, and seeing that they got delivered to the winners: Sarah Beaubien, Lynell De Wind, Rikhei Harris, Deb Maddox, and Sarah Pepper; and with assistance from Circulation Desk staffs.

Summary of response totals

- 4917 attempts to submit responses: raw quantitative data
  - *Incomplete surveys are coded and are excluded from the Notebook*
- 2752 complete surveys analyzed and summarized in our Notebook: quantitative results
  - *229 Faculty, 283 Grad Students, 108 Staff (incl. Library staff), 2132 Undergrads*
- 1293 surveys included comments: raw qualitative data
  - *119 Faculty, 115 Grad Students, 39 Staff (incl. Library staff), 1020 Undergrads*

## Narrative summary of overall results

### Representativeness

- Population and Respondents by User Sub-Group

Overall, the proportions of respondents identifying themselves by class year or faculty rank/type mostly matched very closely with the proportions in the entire GVSU population. This suggests that it is relatively safe to make some generalizations about the perceptions of faculty vs. students, for example.

- Population and Respondents by Standard and by Customized Discipline

Whether looked at overall or by user groups, there are considerable variations in response rate by discipline vs. total population breakdown by discipline. In the ‘customized discipline’ charts, some of this very likely can be explained by students being unfamiliar, or unaware, of their major program being associated with such categories as “CLAS Humanities” (i.e. College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, including departments of, and majors in, Classics, English, Modern Languages & Literatures, History, Philosophy, Russian Studies, Writing, and School of Communication). It could be misleading to make incautious generalizations or inferences about respondents in one discipline vs. another, if one or both discipline areas are significantly under- or over-represented in the survey responses.

- Respondent Profile by Sex and by Age

The distribution of female vs. male in the responses (57% vs. 43%) is fairly close to that in the university population (60.5% vs. 39.5%). The overall age distribution among the 2700+ responses includes: under 18=0.55%, 18-22=67.85%, 23-30=16.84%, 31-45=8.44%, 46-65=5.99%, over 65=0.33%. This overall distribution is less meaningful perhaps than the breakdown by age within each group, e.g. among just faculty. Age distribution for the entire campus community is not available as a comparison to the response group.

### Survey Item Summary

- Selected Core Questions observations

Considering GVSU overall, responses to all 22 core survey questions reflect perceived service levels occurring within the range between minimum and desired service levels, with slightly higher apparent satisfaction in the area of ‘Affect of Service’ than in the areas of ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place.’

Students, by far the largest group of survey respondents, expressed several areas of strong opinion. In particular, they averaged over 8 points on the 9-point scale in rating their desired level of service in four out of eight ‘Information Control’ items; on two of those

they also averaged low perceived service rankings, for the largest negative “superiority gap” scores. Their responses showed a similar pattern on one of the optional added questions. These large negative superiority gap items for students were:

- IC-1: Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office
- IC-2: Library web site enabling me to locate information on my own
- opt27: Ready access to computers/internet/software

Students also responded with a substantial negative superiority gap on the ‘Library as Place’ item,

- LP-1: Library space that inspires study and learning

Faculty as a group also expressed some strong opinions. On eleven out of thirteen items in ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place,’ Faculty scored perceived service as lower than their minimum acceptable level of service, resulting in negative “adequacy gaps.”

Further detailed examination of the responses on the individual core questions is planned for separate later documents.

- Core Question Dimensions summary

For GVSU overall, responses grouped by dimensions of service reflect perceived service levels falling roughly mid-way between minimum and desired service levels, with slightly higher apparent satisfaction in the area of ‘Affect of Service’ than in the areas of ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place’ (Fig. 1).

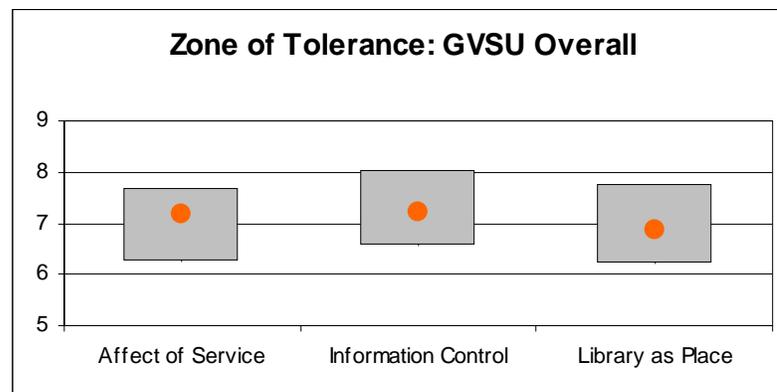


Figure 1\*

\* In the ‘Zones of Tolerance’ charts the bottom of each grey area marks the mean score for minimum acceptable service level in that dimension, and the top of the grey box marks the mean score for the desired service level. The orange dot marks the mean score for the perceived service level. If the orange dot falls between the ‘minimum’ and ‘desired’ levels, then perceived service level is within the “zone of tolerance;” the perceived service level could also fall below the minimum level or exceed the desired level.

The pattern for the GVSU responses overall holds true for Undergraduates (Fig. 2). For Graduates, in the areas of ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place’ the mean scores for perceived service levels exceed the minimums by noticeably less than among the Undergraduates (Fig. 3). Among Faculty, the desired service level mean scores are higher than the other groups in the areas of ‘Affect of Service’ and ‘Information Control’, and lower than the others in the area of ‘Library as Place;’ and Faculty scored perceived service as lower than their minimum acceptable level of service in the areas of ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place’ (Fig. 4). GVSU Staff means roughly reflect those of the Faculty, though not quite as extreme (Fig. 5).

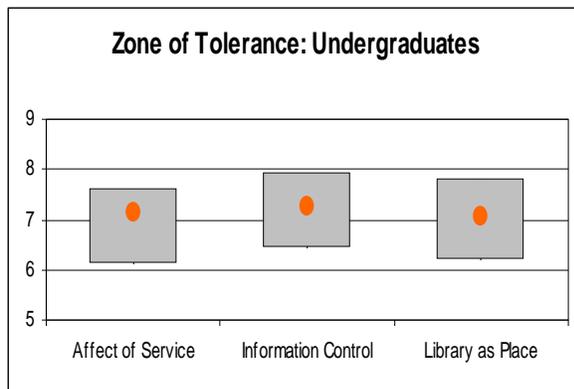


Figure 2

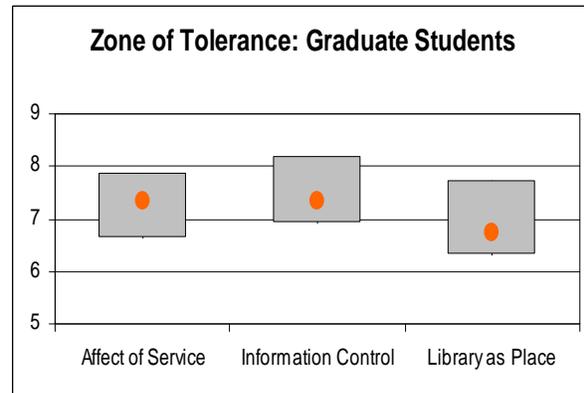


Figure 3

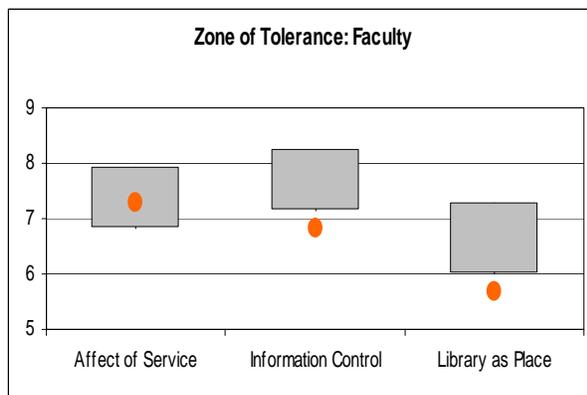


Figure 4

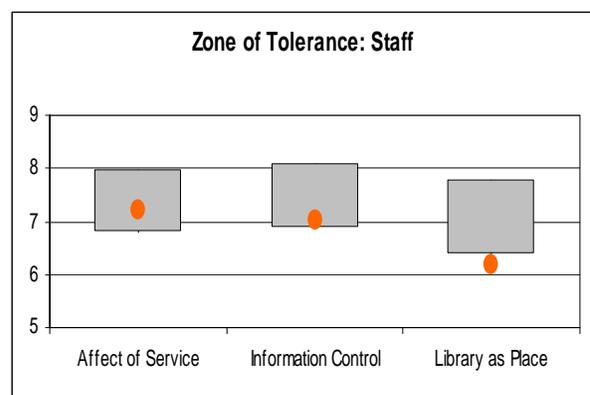


Figure 5

#### Interpretation:

- Undergraduates are generally satisfied with service levels
- Graduate students have a slightly higher threshold of minimum and desired service levels than Undergraduates, but find service levels acceptable in general
- Faculty indicated satisfaction with how they are treated (‘Affect of Service’), but feel that services in the areas of ‘Information Control’ and ‘Library as Place’ do not meet even their minimum service level expectations.

- Staff indicated satisfaction with how they are treated ('Affect of Service'), but feel that service levels in the area of 'Information Control' barely meet their minimum expectations, and in the area of 'Library as Place' do not reach their minimum expectations.

In general, library services with respect to the three dimensions measured by the survey seem to fall comfortably within a zone of satisfaction for students, especially Undergraduates. Graduate students have a somewhat higher set of expectations for the service level they would desire and the minimums they will accept; nonetheless their perceptions are that GVSU's library services are within their zone of tolerance. Faculty exhibited the most extreme ratings of aspects of library services: they seem to feel they are treated well ('Affect of Service' well within a reasonable zone of tolerance); but feel that services in the areas of 'Information Control' and 'Library as Place' do not even meet their minimum expectations. Faculty's minimum and desired levels for 'Information Control' are the highest of any sub-group, and for 'Library as Place' are the lowest for any sub-group; and their perceived means are the lowest of any sub-group in those two dimensions. To the extent that Faculty and Staff summaries are rather similar, one possibility is that the "staff" who responded to the survey may include a large number of EAP (Executive/Administrative Professional) staff who teach periodically and answered from the teaching perspective, but self-identified as Staff.

• Local Questions summary

GVSU opted to include the following five additional questions to our Fall 2007 implementation of the LibQUAL+ survey. We were limited to selections from a pre-tested pool of optional questions:

When it comes to ... my <minimum / desired / perceived> performance level [etc.]

- Providing help when and where I need it [opt12]
- Ready access to computers / Internet / software [opt27]
- Teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information [opt14]
- Convenient access to library collections [opt67]
- Ease and timeliness in getting materials from other libraries [opt114]

The additional questions we selected tended to focus on issues of access to finding tools and resources, with the exception of “Teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information”: this latter item reflects more of a focus on services librarians tend to believe or assume users should want and receive. The optional questions are not associated (by LibQUAL+) with a particular one of the three core service dimensions.

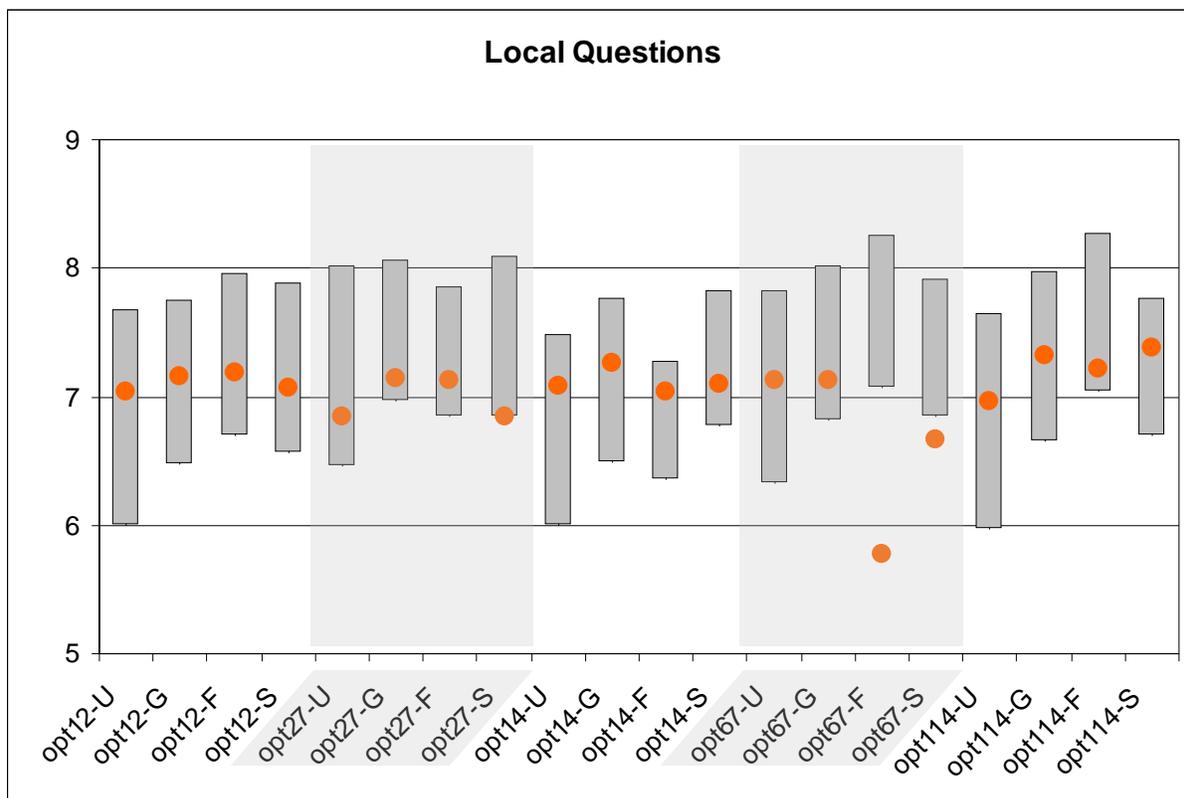


Figure 6

## Interpretation

Since these five optional questions don't relate to each other, or specifically to the core service dimensions, it's only really possible to draw out a few isolated inferences by sub-group.

- Undergraduates
  - express mild dissatisfaction with ready access to computers in the Libraries.
- Graduate students
  - strongly desire ready access to computers in the Libraries, and find their needs only barely met;
  - similarly they place a premium on convenient access to library collections, and find their needs only minimally met.
- Faculty
  - are highly satisfied with the Libraries' efforts to teach (them) how to locate, evaluate and use information;
  - are only barely satisfied with ready access to computers;
  - have very high expectations for ease and timeliness in getting materials from other libraries that are being met only just above their minimum level; and
  - have very high expectations for convenient access to library collections, which the Libraries are failing entirely to meet (Fig. 6, 'opt67-F').
- Staff
  - perceive the Libraries' efforts to teach (them) how to locate, evaluate and use information at about the same level as Faculty, but have distinctly higher minimum and desired levels, such that the perceived level falls low in the zone of tolerance;
  - have very high expectations for desired and minimum in respect to ready access to computers, and their perceived level is at their minimum; and
  - similar to the Faculty, have fairly high expectations for convenient access to library collections, which the Libraries are failing to meet (though not so extremely as for the Faculty).

Alternatively, we can consider responses across groups for each question.

- Opt 12: Providing help when and where I need it Overall, respondents rated service levels in this regard within their "zone of tolerance," and perceived service level was fairly close among all sub-groups. Undergraduates were least demanding in regard to minimum level of service, and faculty reported the highest level of desired service.
- Opt 27: Ready access to computers / Internet / software All sub-groups rated this item near or barely meeting their minimum level of acceptable service. All sub-groups consistently placed a high value on their desired level of service.
- Opt 14: Teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information All sub-groups rated perceived service in this area in a similar range, and all sub-groups except Staff rated perceived service level above the mid-point of their zone of tolerance. Undergraduates' minimum service level was lowest with respect to the other sub-groups; Faculty's desired level was lowest among all the sub-groups, just slightly above their perceived level.

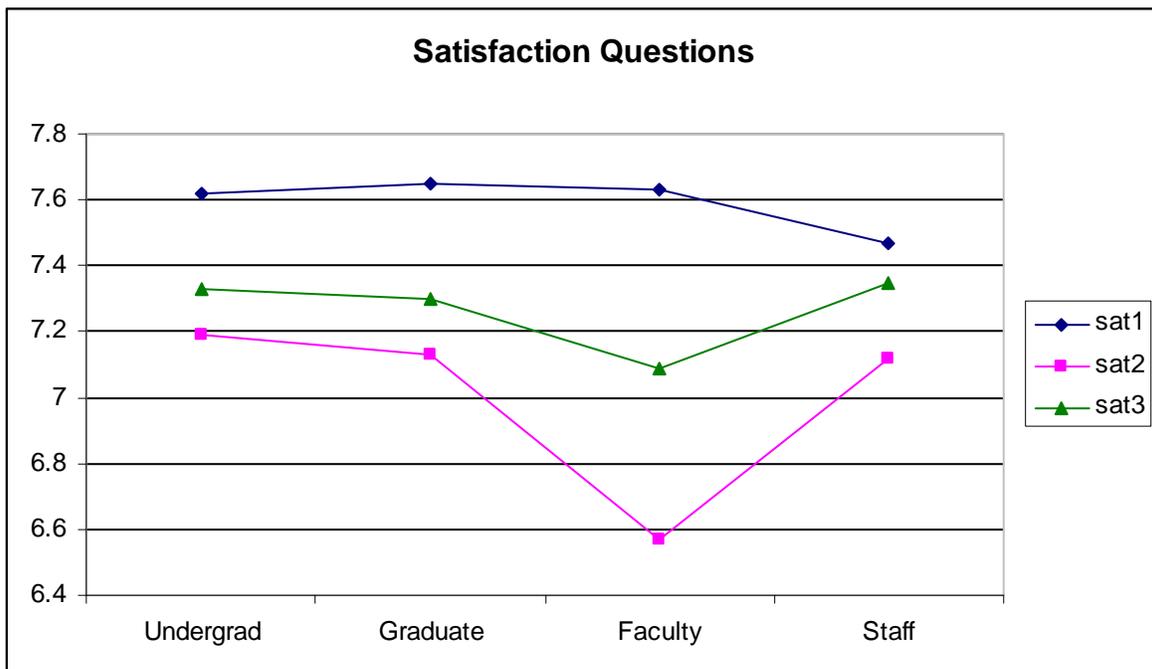
Desired level and minimum level for Staff were the highest, with perceived level falling below the mid-point of their zone of tolerance (but within the zone).

- Opt 67: Convenient access to library collections Undergraduates are essentially satisfied with access to the collections of the Libraries; Graduate students' minimum level is much higher and desired is somewhat higher, and their perceived level falls toward the low end of their zone of tolerance. The minimum level and desired level of Faculty on this item are higher than for any other of the option Local Questions, and the perceived level falls fully a point and a half below the minimum level of acceptable service, lower than any other perceived or minimum scores for this set of five questions. Staff also have high minimum and desired levels, and perceived falls slightly below minimum level.
- Opt 114: Ease and timeliness in getting materials from other libraries Undergraduates are essentially satisfied in this area of services; Graduates exhibit slightly higher desired level and definitely higher minimum level, and nonetheless have a perceived mean close to the mid-point of their zone of tolerance. Faculty have the very highest desired and minimum levels (comparable to those for the previous item, "Convenient access to library collections"), and perceived level falling just above the minimum, within their zone of tolerance. Staff were similar to Graduate students, with a slightly lower desired level.

- General Satisfaction Questions summary

The survey includes three questions in which respondents rate general satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 9:

- In general, I am satisfied with the way in which I am treated in the library [sat1]
- In general, I am satisfied with library support for my learning, research, and/or teaching needs [sat2]
- How would you rate the overall quality of the service provided by the library? [sat3]



**Figure 7**

### Interpretation

Undergraduates, Graduate students, and Staff gave fairly consistent responses overall, with Staff trending just a little lower than the student groups (Fig. 7).

- Faculty were in agreement with Undergraduates and Graduates, and higher than Staff, regarding satisfaction with treatment in the library (sat1).
- Faculty were just a little lower in their ranking of overall quality of service provided by the library (sat3) than the other three sub-groups.
- All sub-groups indicated least satisfaction with library support for learning, research, and/or teaching needs (sat2), and Faculty responses averaged significantly lower on this item than did responses of the other sub-groups.

- Information Literacy Outcomes Questions summary

The survey prompted respondents to indicate their level of agreement, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 9 (Strongly Agree), with five statements related to information literacy outcomes. These statements were:

- The library helps me stay abreast of developments in my field(s) of interest [lit1]
- The library aids my advancement in my academic discipline [lit2]
- The library enables me to be more efficient in my academic pursuits [lit3]
- The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information [lit4]
- The library provides me with the information skills I need in my work or study [lit5]

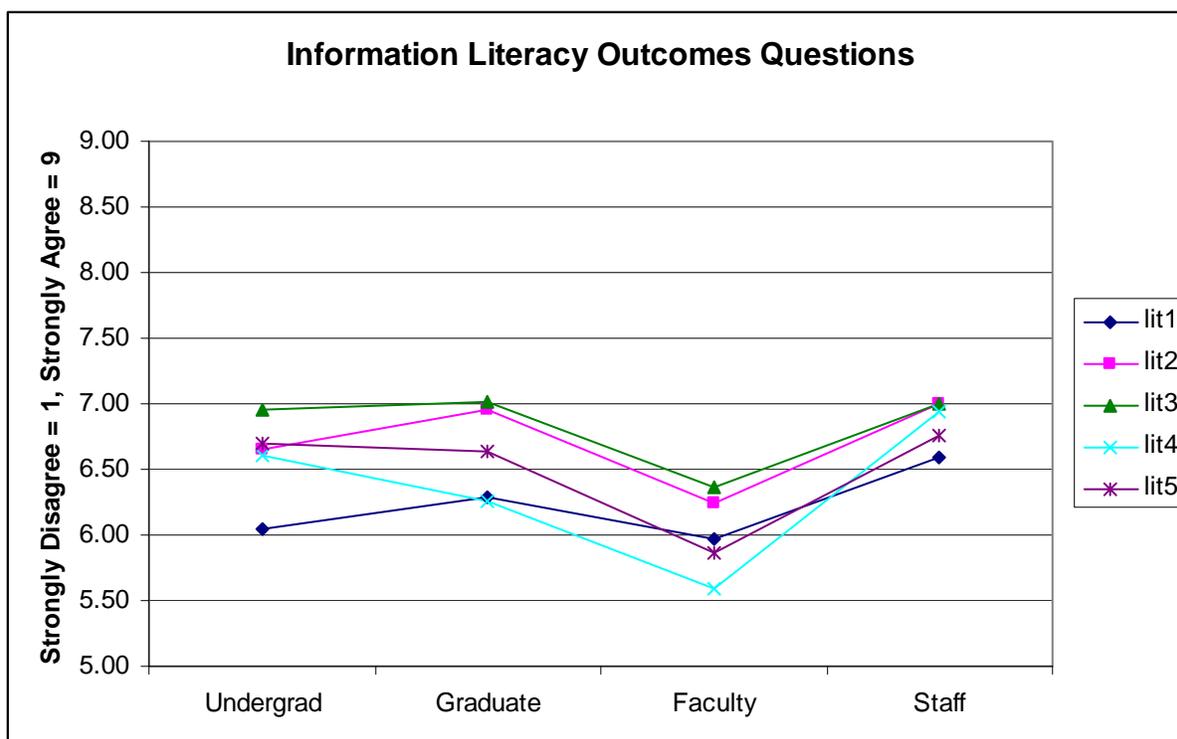


Figure 8

### Interpretation

Responses across all sub-groups fell above the mid-point on the 1-to-9 scale, with responses from Undergraduates, Graduate students, and Staff on all statements falling between 6 and 7 – in general, clear agreement with the statements (Fig. 8). Faculty responses were slightly lower, ranging overall between 5.59 and 6.37. The lowest score (5.59) occurred in the Faculty response to the statement, “The library helps me distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy information” [lit4]. Standard deviations on the Faculty and Staff rankings hovered slightly above or below 2.0; for the student subgroups they were mostly in the 1.5-1.75 range.

- Library Use summary

The survey queried respondents' estimated frequency of usage (Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Never) of resources in three different venues:

- How often do you use resources on library premises? [use1]
- How often do you access library resources through a library Web page? [use2]
- How often do you use Yahoo™, Google™, or non-library gateways for information? [use3]

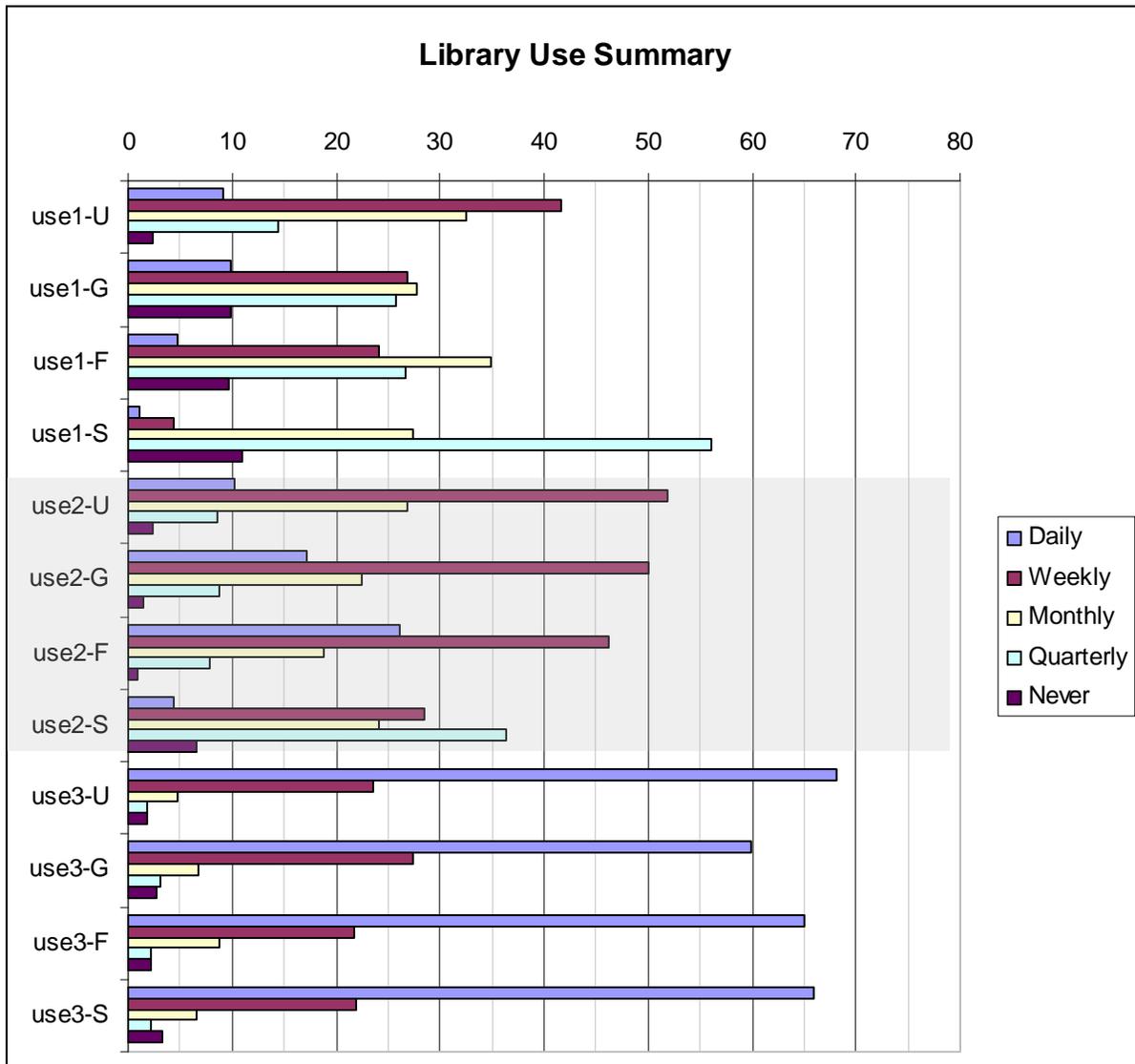


Figure 9

## Interpretation

- Approximately 25% of Faculty and Graduate students report using library resources on the premises [use1] as often as weekly; over 40% of Undergraduates reported weekly use. Between 25-35% of each sub-group reported using library resources on the premises as often as monthly. Staff were most likely to use resources on the premises only quarterly (56.04%). Respondents indicating they never use library resources on the premises were under 11% in all sub-groups.
- In round numbers, 25-50% of each sub-group indicated use of library resources through a library Web page [use2] as often as weekly. Staff indicated the least weekly use (28.57%), and were the only sub-group which indicated greater likelihood of perhaps quarterly use of library resources via a library Web page (36.26%).
- Sixty percent or more of each sub-group reported using Yahoo TM, Google TM, or other non-library gateways for information [use3] daily, and another 20-30% of each sub-group indicated as often as weekly.

It is a reality of the networked world that many of us in academic and other settings have reason to look for information of all kinds via the Internet daily. It's significant that students (both Undergraduate and Graduate), Faculty, and Staff all report significant weekly use of library resources via the Web, as distinct from other Web information retrieval interfaces they may use. And it's encouraging that while use of resources on the premises reflects low daily percentages, weekly use by Undergraduates approaches 50% of those responding.

## Key topics from comments

Approximately 40% of survey respondents included comments in the survey's concluding free-text comment box, not quite 1300 comments. Apparent ease of analysis of comments is deceptive. On the one hand, the text is easily readable, and one can get a quick sense of recurring themes. On the other hand, 1300 separate responses, some quite lengthy, is a great deal to sort, collate, and quantify; close and accurate analysis is not included in this report, and remains a possible future project.

As an example of some of the kinds of information gleaned from simple "brute force" examination of the raw comment files, the following observations are offered (percentages are very rough, and reflect the fraction of all valid survey responses, not just those which included comments):

- Most common comments from students (2415 graduate and undergraduate):
  - General complaints about Zumberge Library (347; 14%)
  - Quiet study, want (112; 4.6%)
  - Computers, want more (108; 4.5%)
  - Steelcase Library, insufficient seating (75; 3%)
  - Lighting, electrical outlets, and comfort, want (52; 2%)
  - Group study space, want (50; 2%)

- Tally of “Need more books (in my subject, on the shelf, not so old, etc.)” comments, by user group:
  - Undergraduates: 55 of 2132 (under 3%)
  - Faculty: 36 of 229 (16%: 30% of respondents, but Humanities = 64% of total)
  - Grads: 11 of 284 (just under 4%)
  
- Keyword searches on recurring terms
  - “helpful,” “friendly,” “courteous”: These terms as a group of ‘either/or’ options turned up 211 responses, often characterized by statements along the lines of, “Library staff are very friendly and helpful, but [ ],” where “but [ ]” is a complaint about weakness of the collection, and/or inadequacy of the facilities and/or insufficient computer equipment.
  - Similarly, 272 hits on “love,” “great,” “fantastic,” “wonderful” produced matches along the lines of, “You guys are great, but [ ].” Not all such responses were qualified, but a majority were, with users being candid about sharing improvements they would prefer.

## Conclusion

Our initial administration of LibQUAL+ went smoothly and resulted in a generous quantity of data. Upon initial inspection, we can quickly determine some areas where we should focus attention in the short term (or have already); we can also discern areas of focus relevant to planning for a new building, and other areas which might become focal in a next strategic planning cycle. We have a benchmark to use as we choose questions to compare against other institutions' LibQUAL+ data; and we have a baseline for future iterations of LibQUAL+ at Grand Valley. We have tentatively proposed a 3-year cycle for administering LibQUAL+ at GVSU, giving us time between each set of data-gathering to review, analyze, interpret, experiment, and grow.

### Additional analyses proposed

The observations made in conjunction with this description of the Libraries' Fall 2007 baseline administration of LibQUAL+ are very limited. The task before us is to determine what the data tell us about actual service issues – weaknesses and strengths; where possibly more complex issues might lie, inviting exploration by other means; and what other questions we might wish to pose, and query this data for possible insights. Some suggested project areas might include:

- More specific analysis of Core Questions results across all groups
- Selection of key Core Questions and Core Dimensions results for further investigation
  - by comparison with selected other institutions
  - by other assessments, e.g. focus groups, targeted surveys, etc.
  - with respect to short-term improvements the Libraries might consider
  - with respect to operational, logistical, and programmatic planning for a new library facility on the Allendale campus
- Formulation of queries to be explored in the data, derived from broader questions that may arise as we consider planning for a new library facility on the Allendale campus
- More thorough analysis of comments (qualitative data) using appropriate textual analysis tools

Respectfully submitted,

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