

## **Open-ended Comments Received Through the Library LibQUAL+ Survey, Feb 2006**

### **Compliments:**

Eighty Nine comments including compliments were received. The majority (forty nine) referred to staff or more generally to customer service (broken down as twenty four from undergraduates, seven from graduates, fourteen from faculty and four from staff). Thirty five described staff with adjectives such as friendly, helpful, or responsive. Sixteen indicated more generally that they liked library services, but the broader context indicated they were primarily referring to customer service, saying things such as “friendly service,” “customer service is excellent,” or similar. Another eight comments referred to specific services, such as Interlibrary Loan or instruction (examples: “ILL, instruction services are excellent,” “Research staff (instruction) has presented many excellent research primers in my courses...,” “[A] positive increase in library services, operation, outreach of users and training,” “interlibrary loan works,” “I have found the research department to be extremely useful in my research...Their help is nothing short of incredible, and they clearly love their jobs,” “The staff is absolutely top-notch”).

Twenty five comments were received complimenting the library’s various tools (such as laptop rentals, computer labs, IT Labs) and resources (electronic collections, electronic databases). Graduates and undergraduates were the most vocal in this area (twenty comments total). Fourteen undergrads and one graduate commented on the labs and laptops area, while eight undergrads, four graduates, four faculty, and one staff member thought the library provided good to great library resource, with the focus mainly on electronic/computer resources such as electronic databases, electronic books and electronic journals.

Ten respondents (six undergrad and four graduate) commented positively on the library’s environment, space, as well as the library “as a place” (examples: a graduate student likes the “improved library environment,” and an undergraduate says “Gordon is a very warm and quaint place to study,” while another undergraduate commented “information is very easy to find - the library is very well marked” and praised the “addition of study tables on the ground floor – because no one knows about them-it is quiet there,” and finally a graduate student who says, “I really love studying here [library]”).

Thirty comments (twenty two from undergrads, three from grads, three from faculty and one from staff) included very generic compliments such as they like the library and think the library is doing a good job (examples: “great library,” “WPI library is great,” “Gordon Library is a cool library,” “keep up the good work,” “pleased with library and its services,” “library and its staff are excellent”).

### **Complaints/Miscellaneous**

Seventeen complaints or comments were received that did not fit well into other categories. Five complained that fees were too high, particularly on laptops and equipment, stating that students are both poor and busy studying and can lose track of time. Two commented that they miss the card catalog (both were undergraduates, lest an age correlation be assumed). Two people disliked being asked to leave too long before the library closing time. One student requested we use the Dewey Decimal system rather than Library of Congress. Someone complained that Founders requests take too long, and another that reserve items are inaccessible when you do not have your ID with you. One person wanted food to be allowed in the building. One student complained that obtaining the ID needed for use of materials and printing can only be obtained during business hours which is difficult for part time students; We will pass along this comment to Administrative Services. One person complained that the pdf scanner was inconvenient to use and that library staff did not care; this comment will be shared with Academic Technology Center staff who supply the scanner. One person asked that we allow one day circulation of journals as MIT does. Finally, one faculty member felt it was not the library’s job to keep up with his/her field of interest (referring to one of the questions asked on the numerical portion of the survey).

## **Collections**

There were many responses including comments on aspects of the library collection and often addressing multiple collection topics. Eleven responses included complaints that the print book collection is old and that the library needs newer books. Eight responses indicated a need for more books in various subjects\*. Three responses complained about the inadequacy of Humanities & Arts books. Six responses wanted more personal interest, best sellers, or current fiction. Six responses (1 graduate and five undergraduate) wanted the library to have copies of textbooks used in their classes or on Reserve. One person said there should be an easier way to request new books. Two comments on e-books: one liked them but the other complained that they couldn't be printed.

Thirteen responses said the library needs more electronic journals with one specifically saying the e-journals collection does not fill their needs. Nine of these complaints came from the Biology/Biomed/ChemBioChem areas, though two students from this area felt the collection did meet their needs. Three indicated the need for easier or more immediate access. One wanted access to any journal article online. One was concerned that the library's collection of e-journals is shrinking at alarming rate. One wanted improved access to all journals. One graduate complained about gaps in years, and an undergrad requested better access to Civil Engineering e-journals. One said there aren't any journals that fit his/her research interests. One response said students rarely use print. Eight responses indicated that the electronic journal collection was pretty good/improved/excellent.

Seven responses focused on print collections, not specifying whether referring to books or journals, with the following comments: "one great weakness is in the diversity and depth of printed materials both periodical and text," "print resources are sadly lacking," "serious lack of physical materials," "lack of materials," "printed material is a bit out of date," "print collection could be stronger," "library would be so much better if they have more (and updated) printed collections." One person wanted print Readers Guide to Periodic Literature rather than the online. One person reported using MIT's libraries because their collections are stronger.

More general comments included someone who wanted more print and electronic resources to support new majors. One wanted more "reliable resources." There were three requests for entertainment items or media, such as DVDs or films.

\*(Specific subject needs suggested were: Nutrition, Political/Social/history in Latin American & Urban areas, Physics, Civil Engineering, Actuarial, Non scientific, Engineering & Technical, Basic information for undergraduate classes).

## **Equipment Needs**

Six people requested that the library have more computers in the building and four people said there are not enough laptops. One person felt the library did not need more computers but does need up to date books and access to the latest information. Another person would like to see dual screen monitors in the Movie Lab. One felt it was inconvenient to use the scanner in the library. One person wanted more erasers and another mentioned the need for whiteboards on the ground floor.

## **Facility Issues**

Many comments were made regarding library facilities. The most frequent concerns of respondents were regarding the noise level in the library and the need for more quiet individual study areas. Twenty-seven people feel that the library is too noisy and that it is too difficult to find a place to study without disruptions. Fifteen people asked specifically for quiet individual study spaces. Three expressed a need for more group spaces. Two noted (and were very appreciative of) the additional tables added to the ground floor for group space work. Two people felt that the library should try to divide quiet spaces from other study spaces. It was noted that people who are in group study cubicles on the third floor seem to think they are in an enclosed space and can talk as loudly as they want, but this sound travels throughout the floor.

The topic receiving the second most responses (twenty one) was the physical state of the library. Seven people commented on the need for a renovation or updating. Three felt it should be a more inviting environment physically. Two people felt it was depressing. Six people think it needs better lighting. One felt a bigger building was needed, and another commented that new carpet was needed to give it "more life." One felt that the walls were bare and could look prettier. Two people commented that more support from the WPI administrators is needed for physical improvements.

Seven comments were received regarding the need for more IT Labs, and one suggesting that the IT Labs should be individual rooms not shared spaces (referring to IT labs 1 & 2 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor as too noisy). Four comments were received that the IT labs are "great." Two thought that reservable rooms, but not necessarily IT labs, would be helpful.

One person requested a room where librarians can run programs (e.g. on distinguishing between good and bad resources) and which perhaps students could also use to teach groups. One did not want classes to be allowed in the Movie Lab as it is inconvenient for students who want to use it. One wanted to move the Movie Lab so that students needing the specialized software offered there could have access to it without waiting for students who didn't need that software to leave. One person also wanted a viewing room for videotapes and dvds.

Two people wanted the library to allow food and drink but one stated that the library does not need a café. Three people felt more comfortable chairs were needed, and one mentioned generally that additional seating is needed. One person does not like the move of current magazines and newspapers to the third floor and no longer comes in to read them. One person complained of the heat and two of the cold.

Seven people felt that the library was a good place to study (best place on campus, wonderful, an abundance of rooms). One person commented that they felt the library is well marked and another that it is nicer physically than five years ago.

### **Interlibrary Loan**

Four people commented that ILL is too slow (one indicating that it was practically useless because of this). One of the four also complained that one receives no status notification regarding requests and particularly mentioned that there is no confirmation that a request has even been received. Three people commented that while they use ILL they do not find it pleasant and would prefer to get articles immediately on line or through in house collections. One person commented that it is unfortunate that the electronic document delivery is not working perfectly. One person would like to see ILL expanded in general and in particular to include sharing of WPI's "rare works." However others were happy with the electronic article delivery and hoped the bugs would be worked out of it, or mentioned that ILL works well for them.

### **Library Hours**

Thirty-three responses contained comments concerning library hours, thirty-one saying that the library was not open long enough. The thirty-three making comments made forty-one specific suggestions about hours. For example, some said it should open at 7am and close at 2am, while others only specified that it should remain open until 2am. Ten people said that the library should stay open later in the evening but didn't say how late. Five said that either 2am or 3am would be good. Five said that the library should open at 7am to accommodate those who need to study before 8am classes. Five would like to see the library remain open twenty-four hours a day (one said 24/7). Five others said that the library should have longer hours without being specific as to opening and closing times. Five respondents commented on weekend hours. Three said the library should open earlier on weekend mornings, one wanted a later closing time on Friday, and another said that the library should not close on weekends during term breaks or during the summer to better serve the needs of graduate students and faculty. Two additional respondents commented that library hours favored undergraduates and did not adequately consider graduate

students. Finally, two people complained about being forced to vacate the library before the actual closing time, and two others complimented the library on the later closing time during finals week.

### **Library Instruction**

One person commented that ADLN students could benefit from more instruction on how to locate electronic documents. Four other people made similar comments that it is difficult to get to full text of articles and to use electronic journals and databases. One of these people requested small to medium sized group training sessions to go over different databases before starting sufficiencies and projects. One person wants to know how to view eBooks through the library catalog. The person had learned about this possibility during a library instruction session but it was explained so quickly that he/she was unable to actually make it work later. One person requested more training sessions, particularly focused for certain majors and with graduate student schedules in mind.

Three people think that library training and resources should be more widely advertised. One of these thought we should do more marketing to faculty who are about to assign research papers. One person thought training sessions should be advertised in the Campus Center and/or on the main WPI homepage.

Several positive comments about instruction experiences were made: one person praised Christine Drew for the work she has done for his/her classes, another commented on great education programs, and a third thought the IQP group meeting with the librarian was extremely helpful. One person said that the most help he/she ever received from any librarian was not in the library but when the librarian went to visit his/her class to provide search suggestions. This person had no idea what was on the library Web site until the librarian visited the class. One person would like to see the topic of Research as its own minor or concentration at WPI.

### **Marketing Needs**

A number of comments received (some mentioned in other categories above and below) indicating that WPI patrons are not finding information on the library Web site or that the library needs to do better marketing of specific services which actually do exist, but aren't known by at least some community members. Ability and method for accessing resources from off-campus is one area. Several commented that they wished this was easier or that it did not involve passwords (which it rarely does).

Some comments suggested that the library should do a better job of publicizing its instruction offerings, both to the community and to faculty who can incorporate library sessions or referrals into their classes. For example, "I think more advertisement about how the library can help you with research would help. I only heard about how Laura Robinson could help...from my ID 2050 class. If you could inform teachers that assign research papers about how the library could help out the students, I think you would find more students coming to you guys for help, and they would eventually learn how to do it themselves...I know it helped my group out tremendously." Someone else commented that a librarian "came and showed us what was on the library Web site, I had no idea any of this was there...I have found it hard to use in past." Another student recommended publicizing reference librarian services "more often."

One person wished for a "list of keywords to use when looking for things in a certain area." Though no one single list exists, the catalog and most databases include subject or descriptors to search by. Someone else had no idea the IT Labs existed until brought to one by a friend. Someone else mentioned not being able to read an article because we did not subscribe to the full text, which may have been true for time or some other restrictions, but could have meant lack of awareness of interlibrary loan services. One student wanted more faculty to know that they could put a course text on reserve in the library.

### **New Service Ideas**

A number of comments suggested the idea of new library services or generally painted a picture of what the responder's concept is for ideal library service. One graduate student requested "a 'common method' for tracking research at WPI...instruction in EndNote (or some other selected software package) would probably help many students to keep their work organized, and could be integrated into our already progressive electronic library system." Another person suggested an "online check-out system" as important for helping students manage their time. While the catalog does allow online renewals, some schools have self-checkout systems, which may have been what the person was referring to. One day circulation of journals was requested, like MIT (though not all MIT Libraries participate). Given comments about frequency of Google use, simple straightforward interfaces are of interest.

One undergraduate commented, "The library is generally a good place to study, however, I think it needs to be renovated and expanded to include more resources, especially continuing to further its horizons with new technology. I'd like to see a space that not only serves as a repository of information, but a place where ideas are shared, a place where art happens, a place where the community, not only that of WPI alone, but of Worcester at large, comes together to celebrate its diverse points of view – connecting through our mutual human traits."

### **Off-Campus Access**

A total of seven comments dealt with off-campus issues, six of which complained of the difficulty involved in accessing the Library's databases and journals from off campus. The comments ranged from seemingly no awareness of off-campus access capabilities to those who have awareness of the proxy server but with some confusion with the "VPI something" (sic) to those who say there is "little to no clear information on connectivity and logins/passwords" available. One undergraduate commented that the Web site is confusing when "trying to find things especially from home". A graduate student commented that ADLN students might benefit from "better training in identifying and getting the correct document through proper search procedures" because of the difficulty in locating electronic documents.

### **Printing**

There were four comments related to printing. One undergraduate would like to see improvements in the print quality and ink levels of the Movie Lab printers. Another undergraduate feels that our printing costs are too expensive and would like to see the cost drop to \$.05 per page from the current \$.10. A third student would also like to see printing costs lowered, because "most of the schools library ...allow (sic) their students to print out material for free." He/she further suggests a specific way in which to accomplish this – by having the Library set a "free" page limit, then charge for anything over that limit. Another person requested an easier way to print from computers.

### **Search Tools/Library Web Site**

A number of comments were made indicating that the online information environment is confusing and that tools for navigating through it could be better. Several people commented that getting to journals that the library owns is confusing or time consuming, sometimes commenting specifically on confusion around finding the full text of articles from citations found in library databases. One person specifically hoped for "continued improvement of LinkFinderPlus (so that it doesn't split up 'we have this' when we don't)." Another person wanted a tool that would "search all the networks for just the journals we have access to," possibly meaning a tool that would search across all databases for only those journal titles to which the library subscribes to full text.

One person expressed confusion with the online catalog and its relationship to connecting to electronic books, and asked that the catalog and WorldCat be "more user friendly or explained better." Other comments focused on the desire for well designed online resources, allowing people to work independently. Someone requested "an easy-to-use index of all books in the library." Another person commented that searching for IQPs and MQPs "is difficult and

inefficient.” Two faculty members commented that they use Google on an hourly basis, presumably indicating it is their first navigation point for information.

Comments on the library Web site included the following: “...electronic databases, while plentiful, are not well organized. It’d [sic] hard to figure out which ones to search without training,” “I wish things were organized better on the library website. I feel that I really need to hunt for links,” that using journals is confusing and it would be better if there was an improved way to organize and search them, and a wish that the library front page could be better organized as it contains too much text. Two comments referred specifically to using the Web site and resources from off-campus, complaining that passwords are difficult to find or that resources don’t always work from where they are located, indicating problems locating the information on the proxy server or that some problems with pointing to the proxy server may exist.

### **Staff Issues**

Seven comments concerned library staff issues. One requested more engineering expertise in the library, another complained that evening staff are not as knowledgeable as daytime staff, one complained that staff were confused by requests for IT Labs, one hoped for better uniformity of staff knowledge with the newest technology, and two commented that student staff were unhelpful. Finally, a comment from an undergraduate stated that though there is always someone in the library “who knows what’s going on and can direct patrons where they need to go” he/she still feels that stacks students are lacking in information on non-stacks related library services and wishes that the student stacks employees could be better informed, with knowledge closer to that of the circulation student employees have who “know exactly how to answer the question.”

### **Survey Itself**

There were eighteen complaints about the survey. Four specifically state it was confusing; another four indicated problems with its design. One respondent felt he had no anonymity due to the narrowness of the demographic categories; one felt his department (division) was not listed. Other negative descriptions that received one comment each were: too repetitious, too long, too many categories, complicated, difficulty maneuvering, tedious, vague, and horrible.