

If You Were in Charge What Would You Do?

Survey of Students at Penn State Worthington Scranton Library

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ABSTRACT

Students living off-campus are the majority of today's college student population. If a library is to be a success, librarians must understand the needs of this population base. This study attempts to determine if students at the all-commuter campus of Penn State Worthington Scranton are satisfied with services and facilities of the Library and to determine if their needs are being addressed. Results from the survey are analyzed to develop a profile of the needs of these particular students.

BACKGROUND

Penn State Worthington Scranton is an all commuter campus within the multi-campus system of Pennsylvania State University. The campus has an enrollment of approximately 1270 full-time and part-time students. 898 were enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs, and 268 were enrolled in associate degree programs. The campus offers 9 baccalaureate degrees and 6 associate degrees. Students also may participate in a 2 +2 plan which allows them to begin their first two years of course work for over 160 Penn State majors at the campus, and then finish the program at another Penn State location

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Commuter students frequently face demands that compete for their time and attention (e.g., parenting, full-time employment, community roles). Because of these multiple commitments, and multiple life roles, commuters are limited to the times when they are on campus. So, how do librarians better accommodate these students? The ACRL guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services (1998), suggests that librarians regularly survey these users in order to "monitor and assess both the appropriateness of their use of services and resources and the degree to which needs are being met."

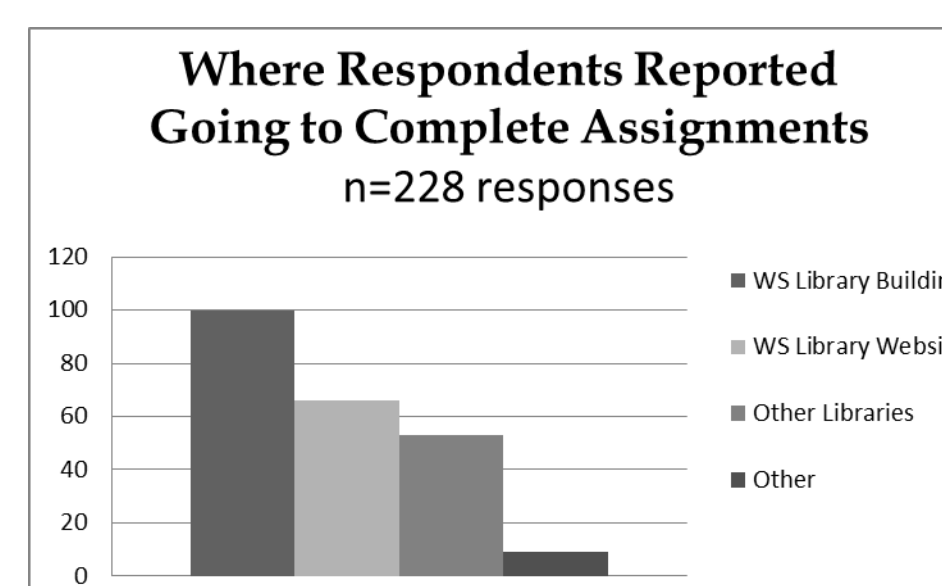
RESEARCH QUESTIONS (What I Want to Know?)

1. What library services do commuter students use?
2. What is the perception of the library services and facilities the library offers?
3. What changes, if any, would you make if you were in charge of the library?

METHODS

This study used utilized the survey method for gathering data. The population of the study was students who entered the Worthington Scranton library from April 23-27, 2012. A total of 143 or 71.5% of the questionnaires were completed and returned. The survey questionnaire consisted of 15 open and closed-ended questions.

RESULTS



The top five purposes for using the library are:

- To write a paper (16.6%)
- To study by themselves (15.7%)
- To surf Internet (12.8%)
- To study with friends (11.4%)
- To take a break between classes (11.15%)

Only 1.3% of the students selected reference services

Purpose	# of Responses	# of Total
Surf Internet	85	12.8%
Write a Paper	110	16.6%
Use Photocopier	17	2.5%
Use Scanner	8	1.2%
Email	59	8.9%
Break Between Classes	74	11.1%
Read Newspaper/Mags	13	1.9%
Borrow/Return a Book	21	3.1%
ILL	16	2.4%
Borrow a Calculator	4	.6%
Search Online Catalog	24	3.6%
Search Databases	42	6.3%
Study with Friends	76	11.4%
Study by Yourself	104	15.7%
Reference Services	9	1.3%

RESULTS

How satisfied are the students with services and library facilities?

- Staff, Safety, Conditions and Maintenance were rated the highest

Facility	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Disappointed	Very Disappointed	Not Applicable
Group Study Rooms	54	61	1	1	23
Computers	63	71	5	0	1
Conditions/Maintenance	67	70	2	0	0
Noise Level	47	76	12	1	3
Photocopiers	42	57	5	0	33
Safety	90	49	0	0	1
Printers	85	44	4	0	6
Scanners	42	50	1	0	43
Seating	51	73	11	2	2
Signage	47	76	2	0	12
Temperature	50	86	4	0	0
Hours	51	78	6	2	3
Staff	90	47	1	0	1
TOTAL	779	838	54	6	128

What changes, if any, would you make if you were in charge of the library?

- This open-ended question received over 110 responses. The top 3 responses were related to adding more computers (33), no change (19), and purchasing comfortable seating (10).

Have our school books in the library. 1. They are way too expensive to buy 2. I don't need them every day. I needed a book 3 times for the whole semester and I'm not paying \$150.00 for a book I use 3 times. I'll put more sofas to sit and to study comfortable.
 The library needs a lounge area with comfortable chairs and couches for relaxation between classes.
 If new computers would be available, that would be a great help. Sometimes during lunch hours, some computers are occupied and it is difficult to work on assignments.
 I would have stricter policies on cell phone usage within the library
 Coffee bar would be great.
 Open the library longer at weekends. Having children it's hard to study at home. Unfortunately library is only open Sunday afternoons. Should at least be open weekends leading up to finals if nothing else.
 I would look into the possibility of adding more group study rooms.
 The overall environment, when you first walk-in it just doesn't feel like a place you would want to hang out. Needs to be a fun place for students to come and get work done.
 I wouldn't change much because this library is in beautiful condition and it seems like a very nice place to study and expand my education.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if students at the all-commuter campus of Penn State Worthington Scranton are satisfied with services and facilities of the Library and if their needs are being addressed.

The data suggest there is a need for more computers, newer comfortable seating, additional hours, and a need for 'convenience services' like food and drink (e.g., the coffee bar). There also a need to enforce policies for cell phone and quiet study areas.

While there is good news in that a majority of these students cite the Worthington Scranton library building and website as their primary source of completing their assignments, we need to market our resources and services in a more effective manner.

FURTHER RESEARCH

- A more focused examination of the characteristics of the user and non-users.
- Survey of other key players such as faculty and administration to ascertain their perception of library facilities and services.