Parents, Alumni, and Libraries
What our customers really believe about the library
Presented by Lorraine Haricombe and Irene Hoffman, ARL Membership Meeting, May 3, 2013
Why this study?

• Success requires increased engagement with all our stakeholders

• Many studies on how to increase value and engagement with our students, faculty and scholars -- little work on customer perceptions

• Gain deeper understanding of how customers value the full range of campus life, and how the library “stacks up”

• How might these perceptions impact libraries and universities as they move from physical spaces to mixed and virtual models
Aim for today

• Share an overview of what we learned
• Share a campus “perceptions map”
• Dive into a few landmarks on the map and what the findings tell us about new ways to think about the value and perception of libraries
• Entice you to read the report
Landscape to Mindscape

Library
Surveyed our customers:
805 parents; 805 alumni

30 minute surveys = 48,000 minutes of interviews
Campus Elements to Probe

- Library
- Classroom
- Alumni Programs
- Career Placement
- International Studies
- Performing Arts
- Restaurants & Bars
- Fraternities & Sororities
- Recreation Center
- Research
- Residence Hall
- Sports
- Student Union
- University Clubs
- Campus Coffee Shops
- Campus Support Communities
Impressions to map

- Helps you get work done
- Way to blow off steam
- Heart and soul of the campus
- Place to think philosophically
- Builds character
- Builds lifelong relationship
- Stimulates amazing ideas
- Find your passion
- The greater good
- Safe haven
- Access to technology
Perceptions Mapping

Distinctive

Common

Distinctive

Distinctive

Distinctive
The spot we own in the mind

• Place to get work done
• Latest technologies
• Technology access
• Current and relevant information
• Assistance when struggling
• Legacy
Libraries are there for me and my children

Something students can rely upon

An indispensible part of the “student” experience

Provides a safe haven

Provides a safe haven for pursuing one’s own passions

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)
Libraries and classrooms share many academic attributes

- Find information of past generations
- Technological tools to get work done
- Allows people to learn from the past
- Current, relevant, and extensive information
- Knowledge for the faculty, students, and community
- Allows students to be introspective

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)

- Library
- Classrooms
Customers see the library as an important part of the legacy of the university

Provides a legacy of intellectual property that is invaluable to the university

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)
Recruitment and Longevity

Imparts a sense of timelessness and longevity

Would be something high on the list that prospective students would examine before deciding to attend

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)
Provides a space for groups to meet and work together

Convenient for students

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)
Customers feel that students receive help and guidance in several specific places.

Gives students help and guidance

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)

- Library
- Classrooms
- Advisors
- Career Placement
The spot we thought we owned

• Heart and soul of the campus
• History of the university
• Legacy
A few points where classroom hold an advantage in the customer’s mind

- Provides ways for students to explore new concepts
- Enables great thinking to occur
- Think philosophically
- Virtual center of the university

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)

- Library
- Classrooms
Library is not “top of mind”

Connects all of the various parts of the university together

Brings students together one-on-one so that they can learn from each other

The real "heart" and "soul" of a university

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)
Customer Beliefs

Library “believers”

Perceptions of the library in terms of:

• Stature
• Recognition
• Deprivation
• Funding
Library Believers:
More than 77% of all constituencies

Agree with “University/College Library…”
...funding says a lot about the caliber of school
...was personally very important to me / or the success of my student
...is even more important today than it was a decade ago
...is a very important contributor to the success of students
...if closed would make me very concerned about delivery of a quality education

Disagree with “The University/College Library…”
...does not significantly help students to be more successful
...if closed would be a sensible way to save money
...is not needed - they can get everything they need in other ways, like the Internet
...only provides access to books
...funding could be better spent on other areas of the school
Perceptions drive belief

Communicates that the university is reputable
Impacts the university's status and ranking
Imparts a sense of timelessness and longevity
Gives the university its legitimacy
Gives students help and guidance
Provides students with support when they need it
Helps students when they are lost or struggling

% Agree attribute describes the library (5 or 6 out of 6)

- Library Believer
- Library Skeptic
Recognition Exercise

Imagine that a substantial gift to the university or college is made in:

• your honor
• your student’s honor

Where can we honor your gift?
Name it after me

- A Discipline-based building: 55
- The main Library: 54
- A Chemical/engineering/electrical laboratory: 32
- A Performing arts center: 32
- The Student computer lab: 32
- The Career placement center: 27
- A Classroom: 26
- The Student union / student center: 26
- A Student residence hall: 22
- An Artist studio: 16
- The University archives: 15
- The Alumni house or center: 15
- A Sports arena: 15
- A Sports field house: 11
- A Student cafeteria: 8
Deprivation Exercise

“To what extent would the reputation of a college or university be damaged if the funding to support the following were lost?”
65% of grads/parents agree that losing the funding for libraries would severely damage the reputation of a university.
Budget Exercise

Imagine that you had the power to increase the budget for 4 of the following 8 things at…

• the university or college that you attended (graduates)
• your student’s university or college (parents)

Now, of those, pick your top 2
While loss of funding considered an issue, increasing funding not top of customer’s list

- Learning laboratories: 51%
- Additional courses and educational programming for students: 45%
- Hire more faculty and teaching assistants: 41%
- New laboratories for research and development: 27%
- Library and library resources/materials: 24%
- Community spaces for students: 8%
- Sports and athletic scholarships: 3%
- Sports: 3%
A few takeaways

• New areas of value to amplify
• Compelling, contemporary value for customers – getting their dollars out of college
  – Pragmatic, “getting work done”
  – Tools for individual work
  – Assistance when struggling
• Long term appreciation for library as a ‘place’ on campus
  – my name on a building
• Many shared perceptions with the classroom
• Perceived need for increased funding relatively weak
For more information

• Contact
  – Lorraine Haricombe ljharic@ku.edu
  – Irene Hoffman hoffmani@oclc.org

• The Report
  – Member Report planned for release before ALA annual
  – Will be available at no charge on OCLC website http://www.oclc.org/en-US/reports.html