Evaluating the Critical Role of the Law Library in the Law School: 2016 Student Survey
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Library Survey Committee

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Previous biennial student surveys are available at http://libguides.law.cua.edu/publications/surveys
Introduction

Assessment is a critical component of the library's commitment to providing the best possible service and resources to our students, and constitutes an important component of the Law School's Strategic Plan (see CUA LAW, STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-18, Goal 4, Objective 4, Implementation b). The library began conducting biennial student surveys in 2004, and throughout the years the surveys have enabled us to determine what is most important to our students while also providing a forum for us to respond to their concerns. Each survey contains a mix of questions, designed to establish benchmarks, track trends, determine student satisfaction, promote existing resources and services, and solicit input about possible new resources and services.

The 2016 survey measured four general areas:

1. Library service
2. Library resources and initiatives
3. Library technology and facilities
4. The library in context

Highlights from the 2016 survey include:

- Use of library printers and computers rose 10% from 2014.
- Students seeking assistance from library staff rose 12% from 2014.
- Satisfaction with library staff remained strong despite reductions in staffing.
- New resources and initiatives were well-received.
- Students rely heavily on the library for technology and technology assistance.
- Student satisfaction with library facilities improved across all areas.

While students are satisfied overall, there are a number of areas of concern, including issues with wireless printing, and undergraduates using the library. Suggestions include more casual seating, more audio study aids with longer checkout periods, textbooks for all courses, an increase in library hours, and warmer temperatures in the library. The library will address these concerns and suggestions in the coming months.
Library Usage

- 82% of students surveyed used the library daily or a few times a week
- 87% of students use the library to study for class
- 93% of respondents come to the library to access the printers

“We need much longer hours, if not 24/7 access!”
Student Comment 2/16/16

The first few questions of the 2016 student survey were demographic questions to help us identify the types of students taking the survey, and how often and for what purposes they used the library. Twenty-one percent of the total law school student population participated in the 2016 student survey; a number that is down slightly from the 25% participation rate for the 2014 biennial survey. A total of 91 students responded, with 73% of the respondents being day students, 21% evening students, 3% M.L.S. students, and 1% LL.M. students. Forty percent of the 91 respondents were 1Ls, 35% of respondents were 2Ls, followed by 3Ls and then 4Es. This is a change from the 2014 survey in which the 2Ls were the largest cohort. Participation rates for 3Ls and 4Es were also down from the 2014 survey.

Library use has remained high and is an integral part of the law school experience for our students. Eighty-two percent of respondents use the library daily or a few times a week, a slight increase of 1% from 2014. The majority of students are satisfied with the library’s hours; 91% approved of our hours Monday-Thursday, 80% approved of our Friday and Saturday hours and 95% approved of our Sunday hours. No significant change was noted when results were filtered for evening students. In terms of why students use the library, 87% of students use the library to study for class, 65% use the library for research and 50% to get assistance from library staff (see table for Q.4 below). An even greater percentage, 93%, come to the library to access the printers, 55% to use the scanners and 43% to utilize the library’s computers. The 2014 survey mirrored the 2016 survey for the main reasons that students use the library: to study, to use the printers, and to do research. The frequent use of printers, scanners
and library computers show that the technology support supplied by library staff is an important part of the services provided to our students.

Q.4: Why do you use the library? (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To study for classes</td>
<td>87.95% 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use the library computers</td>
<td>43.37% 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use the printers</td>
<td>93.94% 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To do research</td>
<td>65.06% 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use the Library's print materials</td>
<td>22.53% 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek assistance from Library staff</td>
<td>59.60% 42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To socialize / relax</td>
<td>37.34% 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group study</td>
<td>46.00% 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare for work</td>
<td>38.55% 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To review graded exams</td>
<td>57.03% 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use the scanners</td>
<td>55.42% 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To check out reserve items (textbooks, study aids, etc.)</td>
<td>46.99% 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To use the law library's databases</td>
<td>33.73% 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 83
Library Services and Resources

- Student satisfaction with the levels of library service remains virtually unchanged from 2014.
- Students indicated that most resources were easily locatable, although staff assistance is still sought in many instances.
- Most new initiatives and resources were well received and deemed useful by the majority of students.

“I have nothing but the highest regard for this staff. Anytime I have asked for assistance I have received it and it typically exceeds my expectations.”
Student Comment 2/26/16

“I really appreciate the coffees that are hosted by the library”
Student Comment 2/10/16

The Library has a strong tradition of providing excellent service to all our constituents, and over the years it has placed particular emphasis on delivering high quality service to the law students. Each biennial survey includes questions that provide feedback on how the students rate this level of service and the quality of the resources we offer. This year’s survey indicated that overall student satisfaction, i.e. a level of service rated either good or excellent, ranged from 70% for media services to 97% for reference librarians (see graph Q6). Circulation and technology services both received scores in the 86-91% range. In comparison to the 2014 student survey these numbers remain virtually unchanged despite reductions in staffing. When the numbers are filtered for just evening students there is still little change in the overall level of satisfaction.

When asked how students find information in the library, the survey indicated that the most popular methods were either on their own or using the library’s website. However, almost 50% of respondents indicated that they sought the assistance of library staff as either their primary or secondary means of locating information. Related to this topic, the survey questioned students on how easy it is to find particular resources in the library. Although a number of categories, including graded exams and research databases, were considered easy to locate by over 85% of respondents, there were still a few resources that could be made more
locatable. Class recordings was singled out by almost 20% of all respondents and almost 30% of self-identified 2L respondents as being “not easy” to locate. This may be partly due to the balkanized nature of the recordings; the Panopto videos are located on individual TWEN sites, while the audio recordings are compiled on the library’s website.

Students also provided some very positive feedback on a number of the new initiatives and resources the library has implemented since the last survey. Over 60% of all respondents described the new West online study aids subscription and the new Academic Skills collection as “useful,” and the number climbs to 70% when filtered for evening students. Other new initiatives that proved popular with the students include the monthly Library Newsletter, and the library Coffee/Open House held each semester. Each of these was considered “beneficial” by at least 80% of all respondents. A couple of the new initiatives underperformed (e.g. only 34% of all respondents described the bar prep collection as “useful”, and only 44% of all respondents described the research and user guides as “useful”), however this appeared to be largely due to lack of awareness. The library will address marketing of these resources in the future. Overall, the comments supplied by the students indicated an appreciation for many of the outreach programs and the accompanying ramping up of certain library resources. The Library Newsletter was singled out by almost 60% of respondents as being particularly useful in helping them discover new resources in the library.

Q.6: Please rate the level of service provided by law library staff

![Service Rating Chart]

"[The new initiatives]... are nice features and give some “personality” to the library. I appreciate them and I’m sure other students use them."  
Student Comment 2/9/16
Library Technology and Facilities

- 75% of respondents indicate they have trouble printing wirelessly, an increase of 7% from 2014.
- Students continue to rely heavily on the library for assistance with technology issues and are overall satisfied with the assistance they receive.
- Student satisfaction with library facilities improved across all areas.

In keeping with its strong commitment to service, the library has endeavored to fill the void left by the elimination of the Law School’s Computer Services Department in January 2013. Systems Librarian Len Davidson devotes much of his time to student technology, and meets regularly with CUA Technology Services to prepare for and facilitate technology changes that affect students. In 2015, the library created a staff position that devotes ten hours per week to assisting students, in addition to adding a part-time technology assistant for nights and weekends. Library staff members also provide detailed technology guides and trouble-shooting instructions. Students take regular advantage of this assistance, as demonstrated by the Q15 chart below.

Q15: If you have had problems printing from your laptop, did you find it helpful to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not Helpful</th>
<th>Aware of this but did not use</th>
<th>Not aware of this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reset your network password</td>
<td>40.30%</td>
<td>26.87%</td>
<td>10.45%</td>
<td>22.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change the password stored in your keychain/credential manager</td>
<td>43.28%</td>
<td>22.39%</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
<td>29.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstall the printers by following the instructions at printing.law.edu</td>
<td>34.33%</td>
<td>14.93%</td>
<td>28.36%</td>
<td>22.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for help in the law library</td>
<td>77.61%</td>
<td>5.97%</td>
<td>11.94%</td>
<td>4.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call CUA Technology Services</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>37.31%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The whole password reset thing every other day (it seems like) has gotten to be a bit much. There has got to be a more efficient way of having the printing access set up on our computer.”

Student Comment 2/16/16

In keeping with its strong commitment to service, the library has endeavored to fill the void left by the elimination of the Law School’s Computer Services Department in January 2013. Systems Librarian Len Davidson devotes much of his time to student technology, and meets regularly with CUA Technology Services to prepare for and facilitate technology changes that affect students. In 2015, the library created a staff position that devotes ten hours per week to assisting students, in addition to adding a part-time technology assistant for nights and weekends. Library staff members also provide detailed technology guides and trouble-shooting instructions. Students take regular advantage of this assistance, as demonstrated by the Q15 chart below.
Over 77% of respondents report that seeking technology assistance in the library is helpful, and a combined 77% report the use of library-created instructions as helpful. Nevertheless, students continue to report problems printing wirelessly, with a combined 75% reporting problems printing from their laptops, an increase of 7% from 2014. Nearly 67% of evening students report problems, an increase of nearly 20% from 2014. The problems students encounter most frequently, such as password-reset issues, are largely beyond the control of the library.

In terms of facilities, the library made several changes in response to feedback from the 2014 survey, in an effort to improve areas such as study space, lighting, and temperature. These efforts paid off, with improvement being shown across the board. The majority of students rated all aspects of library facilities as excellent except temperature (see Q16 chart below). Some areas received a 25% or higher increase in satisfaction, including casual seating (an increase of 30%), lighting (an increase of 25%), and study room availability (an increase of 26%). Dividing the library into silent, quiet, and social zones also paid off, with over 46% of students rating the library noise level as excellent (an increase of 9% from 2014). However, nearly 15% rated the noise level as fair or poor, an increase of 7% from 2014. Comments indicate that the problem is most often undergraduates using the library, the first time we have received this complaint on a survey. Ratings for temperature also improved slightly, with over 46% rating the temperature as excellent or good, an increase of 13% from 2014.

Q16: Please rate the following aspects of the library facility:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise level</td>
<td>46.58</td>
<td>38.36</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>54.79</td>
<td>31.51</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual study space</td>
<td>56.16</td>
<td>28.77</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual seating areas</td>
<td>46.58</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>20.55</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Study Room availability</td>
<td>45.21</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>16.44</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>8.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>21.92</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>26.03</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and security</td>
<td>47.95</td>
<td>23.29</td>
<td>20.55</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restroom maintenance</td>
<td>60.27</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study chairs (carrels and tables)</td>
<td>52.78</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Library in Context

- Students primarily perceive the library as a place for individual study.
- Almost 50% of respondents’ concerns involved environmental issues (noise, temperature, etc.).

The last two questions of the survey provide an opportunity for the law students to articulate their perception of the role of the library in the law school, and to express any suggestions or frustrations they might have related to the running of the library.

When the students are asked what they see as the primary purpose of the law library, “A Place for Individual Study” was chosen by over 50% of all respondents (see graph for Q17). The results, while not surprising, do shed some light on how the law students view the library. While the question had been slightly changed from previous surveys, the primary purpose of the library as perceived by respondents remained the same. Interestingly, almost 60% of all day students selected this answer, while it was selected by only 40% of evening students. Although well back of the first choice, the second choice for the purpose of the library, “A Place To Get Help With Research & Class Preparation,” was selected by more respondents than all the remaining choices combined. However, once again this year’s survey confirmed the results of previous surveys in that law students do not view the library’s primary purpose as a place for collaborative study.

The final question of the survey is an open ended free-text question soliciting comments from the students concerning anything and everything of interest or concern to them regarding the library. This question has been on the biennial surveys since 2008 and has provided a lot of useful feedback.

“I would get rid of changing the computer password every 6 months”
Student Comment 2/9/16

“Get the temperature problem solved”
Student Comment 2/12/16
over the years. This year the question was answered by 45% of all respondents, a slight drop-off from last year’s survey.

Over the past few surveys environmental concerns such as noise, temperature, seating, and lighting have stood out as being the most common concern to respondents and this year’s survey was no different. Almost 50% of all the comments touched upon the library environment, although the issue of undergraduate use of the library appeared to be more of a central issue this year than in previous surveys. It was also noticeable that comments regarding lighting were down this year, probably as a result of a major re-lamping project undertaken by University Facilities in summer 2014, however the temperature of the building continues to be a frustration shared by everyone. Other areas that received criticism included the University requirement that network passwords be changed every six months, and more general requests that some of the resources be more available and easier to use. Overall, there were few substantive comments that focused on the library services and collection.

Q.17: Which of the following statements do you most agree with? “The primary purpose of the law library is to provide a …”

![Graph showing survey results]

“My top priority would be ensuring that the resources are user-friendly”
Student Comment 2/10/16