



2016 LIBRARY USER SURVEY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





“ I value it most as a study space, but I don't think it should be just that. I think there are many aspects to a library that should be maintained, such as experimentation with technology and workshops, as well as a place for finding articles and books of course. ”

Undergraduate student

Each year, the University Library launches a survey for UVA faculty and students that helps us to identify trends in service satisfaction, as well as to identify current areas for improvement. The survey is constructed to determine satisfaction, importance, and contribution results. Ratings are typically on a 1-5 scale, with 5 being the most positive. In addition, this year, we asked about the scope and searchability of our digital collections, about Library activities, Library service awareness, space allocations preferences, and emphasis perceptions for the Library. *[Click here for full results.](#)*

Highlights for this year include the different (often opposing) needs of our Library community, the deep engagement of graduate students with the Library, mediocre satisfaction with our locally digitized text collections, the low awareness of some Library services, the high value of Library staff assistance, and the continued prominence of Alderman.

Different needs for Virgo (the Library's online catalog) and the Library website ... sometimes

"I prefer VIRGO Classic because the current version returns too many results when I know exactly what I'm looking for." -Faculty

"Virgo's keyword orientation makes it difficult to find 1) all the books on a given topic 2) all the books by a given author or 3) known books with common names ..." -Graduate student

Feedback from Faculty focus groups (that were formed as a result of last year's survey) resulted in some enhancements for the advanced search in Virgo. While these efforts to improve the Virgo experience for Faculty were fruitful (satisfaction increased slightly with Faculty), satisfaction decreased slightly for Undergraduates. The same pattern was true for satisfaction with the Library website. Satisfaction with the Library website also decreased slightly for Graduate students and they are the most frequent users of the site.

Undergraduate and Graduate students indicate a variety of interests in using Virgo to search for resources, while Faculty rank finding known items as most important.

On the Library website, looking for Library hours was an activity that everyone engaged in heavily, suggesting that it is of primary importance that this feature be prominent.

Tension in space needs

"More books should be open stacks-- less space for 'socializing.' That can be done at many other locations." -Faculty

"I feel like there is very little group work areas because anytime I go in to do group work, it is really hard for us to find a spot to work together." -Undergraduate

Results from this year's survey confirm that the Faculty and Graduate students typically value the Library's resource/materials spaces, while Undergraduate students typically value spaces for individual and group study. In questions about Library emphasis, Undergraduates want more emphasis placed on study spaces, Graduate students indicate equal emphasis, and the Faculty want more emphasis on open stacks space. This tension in space needs manifests itself repeatedly. We need to be cognizant that in customizing spaces, we must attempt to minimize the negative impacts on any one user group.

Deep engagement of Graduate students

“The range of services it provides and breadth of the materials available.” -Graduate student, in response to “What do you value most about the Library?”

Graduate students are “very interested” in most Library services and the Library contributes “very much” to their academic work. Their frequent use of the Library website, interest in most Library services, and indications that the Library makes substantial contributions to their work, suggest that we should continue to strengthen engagement with Graduate students and look to them as ambassadors for the Library.

Lukewarm satisfaction with locally digitized text collections

“Cannot access the library’s digital collections off-grounds, even after getting IT help staff” -Graduate student

Faculty and Graduate students are frequent users of both physical and online Library materials.

The scope of, and ability to search for, digital text in Virgo is rated as highly applicable by all even though satisfaction with both scope and searchability is mediocre.

Low awareness of Library Services

“I’d like to be more aware of the kinds of classes and services offered and I am not always entirely sure where to find that information. I suspect I’m missing out on many of the resources you offer, especially for graduate students like me returning from field work with data to organize.” -Graduate student

Undergraduate and Graduate students rate availability of “spaces to try new technology” as lacking but also indicate low awareness of Library Makerspace services.

In addition to this disappointing lack of awareness, less than 60% of Graduate students and Faculty have service awareness of Libra. These results suggest that we need better promotion of Library services, in particular for some of our less traditional services.

Alderman: still “the one”

“I wish Alderman stayed open later, much more study spaces than Brown, in my opinion.” -Undergraduate

Undergraduate students indicate that Brown is their primary Library, although Alderman is a close second. Both Graduate students and Faculty indicate, by substantial margins, that Alderman is their primary Library. As in past surveys, we find that Alderman is the crossroads for Library activities for all constituents. Clemons was not indicated as the primary Library for a plurality, even by Undergraduates. No Faculty or Graduate student chose Special Collections as their primary library.

Library staff assistance gets high marks

“...the excellent, brilliant staff” -*Graduate student, in response to “What do you value most about the Library?”*

At least 77% of each user group has taken advantage of Library staff assistance. Satisfaction with Library staff assistance is quite positive: 4.17 or higher. 90% of the Faculty have worked with Library staff and their satisfaction is extremely high: 4.38.

Slight decline in overall satisfaction

	2015	2016
Undergrad	4.30	4.14
Grad	4.18	4.05
Faculty	4.27	4.14

Overall satisfaction with the Library declined from 2015 for all three statuses (Faculty, Graduate students, and Undergraduates). 2015-2016 witnessed the retirement of many long-time staff members, including Karin Wittenborg, University Librarian for more than 20 years. It also saw a change in focus for the Library’s organization, and concerns over the possible effects of renovations to Alderman Library. So although 2015-16 was unusual in the amount of substantial change, the slight decline in overall satisfaction is still concerning and something to watch for in next year’s survey.