

Summary of 2014 Student Survey on Library Experiences

Background

In fall 2014 Shasta College conducted an online survey of currently enrolled students regarding their experiences with the library. The survey was sent by email to 8,468 students with reminders sent to non-responders over the three weeks the survey was open. We also made paper copies available in the library and at specific locations on campus or classrooms by invitation. Students were told to complete the survey only once, either on paper or online. We received a total of 656 email and 164 paper surveys for a total of 820 responses between September 16 and Oct 9, 2014 with a response rate of 9.7%. Three demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to determine whether respondents are representative of the student body in terms of age groups, gender and residential ZIP code.

The survey has 14 sections with multiple questions asking students to respond to a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). Two sections asked for comments. The following results show the summary of scaled items in the order they were asked. We show the percent that agree and strongly agree combined, as well as the average rating based on the Likert scale (4.0 means everyone selected Strongly Agree). Qualitative comments are shared with the Dean of Library Services & Educational Technology and library staff.

Results

How often do you visit the College Library on our main campus in Redding?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily - more than twice a week	18.6%	152
Weekly - once or twice a week	22.6%	185
Monthly - a few times each month	10.3%	84
Seldom - a few times over the semester	24.7%	202
Never	23.7%	194

I visit the library to:			
Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Study or do homework	88.1%	3.34	579
Get help from library staff	50.8%	2.46	557
Use computers to access the Internet or other software	73.4%	3.04	571
Find a quiet place to study	85.6%	3.26	570
Use the Internet for personal or recreational purposes	39.0%	2.25	554
Hang out with friends	23.0%	1.88	552
Have a place to be between classes	66.4%	2.75	560

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To study or complete an assignment at the library I use:

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Databases to look up online articles	71.5%	2.96	576
Assistance from library staff	52.9%	2.55	561
Library computers	73.1%	3.01	568
Personal laptop or mobile device	69.2%	2.87	562
A quiet place to study	87.9%	3.28	578

Web Site

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
I know how to find the library databases from the web	67.6%	2.88	744
I know how to find the library catalog from the web site	64.8%	2.83	739
I know how to access online resources from home	77.0%	3.07	744

Online Databases

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
I know how to use the library databases to find articles	65.4%	2.85	738
I am successful in finding the topics I need in the	63.9%	2.78	732

Materials

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The library collection has a good variety of topics	85.4%	3.06	691
I am able to use the catalog to find what I need	74.7%	2.90	692
Library materials are easy to find	76.6%	2.89	691
Library materials (Books and DVDs) are available when I	81.0%	2.96	678

I have attended a library instruction session

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	30.4%	227
No	69.6%	519

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The library session helped me find information needed for my assignments.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Yes	87.6%	204
No	12.4%	29

I have attended library instruction in multiple classes.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Yes	42.6%	100
No	57.4%	135

I learn something new [from library instruction] each time.

Answer Options	Response	Response
	Percent	Count
Yes	48.9%	108
No	51.1%	113

Library Instruction

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
Library instruction has helped me make more efficient use of time.	84.1%	3.12	234
Library instruction has helped me achieve overall academic success.	78.6%	2.99	233

Library Hours

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
I am satisfied with the hours the library is open.	84.4%	3.01	674

Library Space

Answer Options	% Agree	Rating Average	Response Count
The library is a good place to study.	97.7%	3.54	710
I can find a quiet place to study when I need to.	96.0%	3.50	706
I can find a place to work in a group when I need to.	90.0%	3.31	701

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Demographic Questions

What is your current age?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Student Body
Under 18	9.2%	10.2%
Age 18 to 24	42.3%	48.0%
Age 25 to 39	26.5%	27.0%
Age 40 or older	22.0%	14.8%

What is your gender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Student Body
Female	64.9%	58.1%
Male	35.1%	41.1%

There were 692 students that provided a residential ZIP code with 97.4% living within the three counties we serve including 59.4% in Redding, 9.3% in Anderson, and 8.1% in Red Bluff. The survey respondents are representative of our fall 2014 student body with a higher percentage of female and young (under age 25) respondents. Older students (age 40+) and males responded in lower percentages than in the student body.

Summary and Conclusion

The survey has a moderately low (9.7%) response rate and is generally representative of the student body although a higher percentage of young and female students responded. The use of paper surveys addressed a potential bias due to “digital divide” where some students may not have email or access to online services. Therefore we are able to generalize these findings to all students with some confidence. Some key findings are:

- About 40% of students use the main campus library at least weekly.
- About 24% never use the main campus library.
- Students visit the library to study or do homework (88%) and use the computers (73%).
- Two-thirds of the students know how to use the library web site and online resources.
- 75-85% of students think library materials have good variety and are easy to find.
- About 70% have attended library instruction and 57% have done so multiple times.
- More than 80% are satisfied with the hours and more than 95% are satisfied with the space.
- Only half (51%) of the students get help from library staff.
- Nearly all students agree that library staff is friendly (97%) and helpful (96%).

Further information is available upon request. If you have questions or would like to discuss these results, please contact the Research Office or the Dean of Library Services & Educational Technology.

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