

The 2007 LibQUAL+™ Survey

Background

You make a difference! By responding to the LibQUAL+™ survey every few years, you tell us where we need to improve, and we listen!

In response to the 2005 survey results, HSLIC

- Converted to e-journals when possible (90% of HSLIC journals are now online)
- Increased the number of e-books and databases
- Improved access through a link-resolver that enables one-click access to full-text journal articles
- Decreased the general age of the book collection by removing outdated materials
- Made interlibrary loan free for students
- Placed an assistive technology shortcut on the public computers
- Increased responsiveness to building temperature control, especially in study rooms
- Marked quiet zones on upper floors
- Established a routine for cleaning the public computers
- Converted space to the 3rd floor for quiet study
- Created an enclosed telephone room on the 4th floor to minimize noise

In 2007, the Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center (HSLIC) again participated in the LibQUAL+™ survey, a nationwide survey of academic libraries. The HSLIC survey ran for the last two weeks of March and received 166 valid responses and 83 comments, about half the number of responses received in 2005 and 2003. Since the email inviting participation reached 8000 GroupWise Salud users, we can report a response rate of only 2.2%, making it hard to generalize about the representativeness of the results.

Below is a discussion of the survey results with a summary of your comments accompanied by our responses. We have responded to issues identified by at least 3 comments. After the synopsis of statistical results, the summary is divided by the three main areas covered in the survey: affect of service, information control, and library as place, followed by technology-related comments.

Synopsis of Statistical Results

The LibQUAL+™ survey measures three dimensions: Affect of Service, Library as Place, and Information Control. It does so by asking respondents to rate the minimum level of acceptable service for each question, the desired or ideal level of service, and lastly the perceived or actual level of service they receive as patrons. The minimum and desired scores are used to generate a "window" of acceptability for library services, called a "zone of tolerance." The location of the rating of perceived (actual) service within this zone creates gap scores which enable libraries to assess service adequacy on survey items and dimensions and to determine areas needing improvement.

Results are compiled centrally at Texas A&M and distributed to participating libraries. Two scores are generated to facilitate assessment: an "Adequacy Mean" (the perceived score minus the minimum score) and a "Superiority Mean" (the perceived score minus the desired score). For both the Adequacy Mean and the Superiority Mean, higher numbers indicate higher service quality, although the Superiority Mean is generally less than zero. As explained in the 2005 LibQUAL+™ Survey Results manual, "an *adequacy* gap score of +1.2 on an item, subscale, or total score is better than an adequacy gap score of +1.0. A *superiority* gap score of -0.5 on an item, subscale, or total score is better than a superiority gap score of -1.0" (p. 8).

The survey process and results for HSLIC are summarized below. Through a Public Affairs email, in March HSLIC sent to all Salud e-mail account holders (~8,000) an invitation to participate. The survey received 174 responses of which 166 were scored after discarding non-logical responses (e.g. desired

scores lower than minimum scores). Faculty responses accounted for 63 of the 166 scored. Adequacy Means and Superiority Means for the three dimensions are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. HSLIC Overall Mean Scores for the Three Dimensions of Library Service Quality

| Dimension | Minimum | Desired | Perceived | Adequacy | Superiority |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Affect of Service | 6.91 | 8.28 | 7.71 | 0.80 | -0.57 |
| Information Control | 7.14 | 8.45 | 7.29 | 0.16 | -1.16 |
| Library as Place | 6.17 | 7.58 | 7.28 | 1.11 | -0.30 |
| OVERALL MEAN | 6.85 | 8.21 | 7.46 | 0.60 | -0.75 |

HSLIC service quality is strongest in Library as Place and in Affect of Service; it is weakest in Information Control, figures consistent with HSLIC's 2003 and 2005 scores and with the scores of peer academic health sciences libraries in those years. Items in the Information Control dimension included topics such as making electronic resources accessible from home or office (Adequacy mean= -0.06); the electronic resources matching information needs (Adequacy mean= -0.09); and print and/or electronic journal collections required (Adequacy mean= -0.41). The Information Control area was targeted after the 2005 survey as a high priority for improvement by HSLIC; and survey results show improvement since 2005 despite continuing dissatisfaction with the service provided (Table 2).

Comparison to 2003 and 2005 Results

Mean scores for Information Control and Library as Place both improved over 2005 scores, while Affect of Service declined for the second consecutive time (Table 2). Detailed discussion of each area is included below under the respective areas.

Table 2. Comparison of HSLIC LibQUAL+™ Adequacy Means, 2003 - 2007

| Dimension | 2003 | 2005 | 2007 | Difference (2005-2007) |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Affect of Service | 1.08 | 0.91 | 0.80 | -0.11 |
| Information Control | 0.46* | 0.05 | 0.16 | +0.11 |
| Library as Place | 1.07 | 0.98 | 1.11 | +0.13 |
| OVERALL | 0.80 | 0.59 | 0.60 | +0.01 |

*Score derived from 2003 Access to Information and Personal Control dimensions.

Scores on each dimension varied by respondent user group. This year, HSLIC exceeded faculty respondents' expectations in the areas of giving users individual attention, providing a quiet space for individual activities, and providing community space for group learning and group study. This is an improvement in faculty perceptions of these three areas from the last time this survey was given in 2005. HSLIC also exceeded staff respondents' expectations for most of the questions in the Library as Place dimension. However, while the library did not fall below student respondents' minimum expectations, HSLIC failed to exceed them in any area of the survey, a net decrease in scores from 2005.

2007 Comparison with Other Academic Health Sciences Libraries

In addition to HSLIC, seven other member libraries in the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries (AAHSL), conducted the survey in spring, 2007. Table 3 compares the mean scores of all AAHSL libraries to HSLIC mean scores.

Table 3. Comparison of Mean Scores for HSLIC and Other AAHSL Libraries, LibQUAL+™ 2007

| Dimension | Minimum Mean | | Desired Mean | | Perceived Mean | | Adequacy Mean | |
|---------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|----------------|-------|---------------|---------------|
| | HSLIC | AAHSL | HSLIC | AAHSL | HSLIC | AAHSL | HSLIC | AAHSL |
| Affect of Service | 6.91 | 6.77 | 8.28 | 7.95 | 7.71 | 7.62 | 0.80 | 0.85 |
| Information Control | 7.14 | 7.07 | 8.45 | 8.23 | 7.29 | 7.37 | 0.16 | 0.30 |
| Library as Place | 6.17 | 6.42 | 7.58 | 7.64 | 7.28 | 7.10 | 1.11 | 0.68 |
| Overall | 6.85 | 6.82 | 8.21 | 8.01 | 7.46 | 7.41 | 0.60 | 0.59 |
| S.D. for Overall | 1.28 | 1.76 | 0.86 | 1.38 | 1.14 | 1.53 | 1.36 | Not available |

These scores indicate that respondents to the HSLIC survey share a similar level of expectations with their counterparts nationwide. However, the expectations (both Minimum and Desired) of HSLIC users are higher than at peer libraries on both the Affect of Service and Information Control dimensions. HSLIC users set a higher standard than users at peer institutions. This is particularly important in the Information Control area because HSLIC’s resource budget is \$600,000 less than the mean of peer library resource budgets.

Discussion: Affect of Service

It concerns us that the adequacy mean for Affect of Service has declined over two consecutive administrations of the survey. However, this is partially an effect of users’ increasing expectations. From 2005 to 2007, the mean of minimum scores for Affective of Service increased from 6.66 to 6.91 (0.25), and the mean of desired scores increased from 8.04 to 8.28 (0.24). The mean of perceived scores increased, but to a lesser degree, from 7.57 to 7.71 (0.14). We will be looking at issues identified by the items with the three lowest adequacy means within Affect of Service:

- Dependability in handling users’ service problems (0.34)
- Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions (0.56)
- Employees who understand the needs of their users (0.69)

In relation to the desired mean, this year’s perceived score falls shorter of the mark set by the desired scores than in previous years. Your higher expectations are an inducement to improve our customer service knowledge, courtesy and responsiveness so that we can meet your increasing expectations.

Most of the comments we received about library services are favorable. For example:

- “I think the library services are very good, especially the online services.”
- “The library staff and resources are providing excellent services all around!”
- “The service I have received has always been top-notch.”
- “I think that the service here is great.”
- “The services provided by the library staff are impeccable.”
- “I am very impressed with the level of service and I say keep up the great work!”

However, you weren’t afraid to tell us when we fell short. Occasionally our staff doesn’t go far enough in trying to fix a problem. And we still aren’t quiet enough. Your comments record:

- “Staff walking around and talking with a normal-volume voice [are disturbing].”
- “Employees need to be more quiet on the floors going to their office.”

- “It ...seems as if sometimes the faculty (and various other students) still do not respect the ‘quiet’ness of the library which can prove to be very distracting.”

We “hear” you—that you “hear” us all too well. We apologize for the distractions caused by staff voices and are undertaking a campaign to keep the quiet in the library, particularly on the 3rd and 4th floors.

Discussion: Information Control

In the area of Information Control, in 2005 HSLIC’s perceived mean score was less than the minimum mean score on three questions:

- The print and/or electronic journals I require for my work (-0.56)
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office (-0.16)
- The electronic information resources I need (-0.17).

In 2007 the perceived mean score was less than the minimum mean score on the analogous three questions as well as a fourth local option question:

- The print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work (-0.41)
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office (-0.06)
- Electronic resources matching my information needs (-0.09)
- Collections of online full-text articles sufficient to meet my needs (-0.82)

Items in the Information Control dimension relate to the print and electronic resources that the library makes available as well as the ease of accessing them from home or office. The scores show that you want more electronic resources and your comments reflect your appreciation of the resources we do provide. HSLIC’s annual resource budget is more than a half million dollars below that of peer libraries. We are continuing to pursue ways to increase the resource budget through legislative requests and a development program.

Discussion: Access to Electronic Resources

A clear and consistent message from everyone was the importance of electronic resources. Comments stating this sentiment included:

- “...easy, full remote electronic access is a must.”
- “...my needs are highly focused on the availability of electronic information.”
- “I really enjoy the availability of online electronic journals – that helps me get my job done quickly.”

Since we may not see many of our electronic-only customers, we are happy to know you appreciate the services we provide. We are always working towards making as much information as possible available wherever and whenever it is needed.

COLLECTION EVALUATION

Electronic access is essential; however, many of you also stated that the collection does not fit your research needs or that the overall ejournal collection is too small. Thank you for taking the time to send specific titles and cite collection areas that could use improvement. As we work to ensure a relevant collection of information resources for a growing and diversifying Health Sciences Center (with small budget increases that don’t even cover inflation), your feedback is extremely helpful. Please contact us or your departmental liaison at any time with book/journal/resource suggestions (<http://hsc.unm.edu/library/liaison/index.shtml>).

ACCESS DIFFICULTIES

We also know that electronic resources aren’t much use if accessing them is difficult. Several of you said that some sites and resources are easier to find and use than others. We are currently working on a project to streamline and improve the ability to find all of our print and electronic materials. This project includes redesigning the print and electronic catalog records and refreshing the visual appearance of the

catalog itself. The publisher websites can present many obstacles. While we do not have direct control of those sites, we are their customers and can give our vendors feedback on the usability of their site. Please let the Resource Access and Delivery Coordinator Holly Phillips know any comments you may have about specific resources (hphillips@salud.unm.edu).

REMOTE ACCESS

A few respondents noted intermittent issues with accessing resources from off-campus. We know that connecting to resources at anytime and from any location is crucial. We contract our off-campus access technology from UNM University Libraries. Recently they have upgraded both the server type and the version of software they use to provide this service. We hope these moves will improve the service we are able to offer.

Discussion: Library as Place

Library as Place questions portray the extent to which the library is conducive to study and learning for individuals and groups. Your overall responses to “Library as Place” questions on the survey resulted in the highest score this dimension has received in the three years we conducted the survey with an adequacy mean of 1.11 compared to 0.98 in 2005 and 1.07 in 2003.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Studying must be hard, hungry-making work! We received numerous comments about food and beverages:

- “Overall, I am very satisfied with the services provided by the library but would really like some type of break room with a microwave and coffee machine...”

There were four other requests for a microwave and/or break room, and additional remarks about the vending machines. Our responses follow.

Even though the library permits users to bring in food and beverages, it was not designed to accommodate a food-lounge area, but nearby buildings (BMSB, Pharmacy/Nursing) have student lounges. Domenici Center has three floors of comfortable chairs and tables for student use as well as balconies and a plaza in good weather. In addition, the east end of the Domenici Center Auditorium building is a student lounge. Remodeling the library in order to include such an area would be an unwise use of resources in light of the nearby facilities with student lounge space and in light of the collection needs.

Spilled and spoiled food is another reason why we do not provide microwaves and refrigerators for student use. The library must control the insect population within the building, since bugs eat books and create unhealthy situations for humans. The food offered in the vending machines is wrapped and sealed so that you have an opportunity to eat it before the bugs do. Additionally, microwaves particularly present a fire danger, and food storage and preparation can be associated with odors offensive to others.

To respond to concerns about the vending machines, we want you to know that the vending machines in the 3rd floor copy center are serviced and supplied as part of a UNM-wide contract. The library has no input about what food and drink are available or how often the machines are stocked or serviced. Based on the number of specific complaints and refunds, we estimate that the machines work properly about 90% of the time. If you lose money in the machines or if the product you purchase is unsatisfactory, you can get a refund at the Information Desk. We call in a service request when a machine is not working properly, so be sure to report malfunctions to the Information Desk.

Discussion: Tech Related Comments

A few of you took the time to make some positive comments about Tech Support, giving commendations such as

- “Computer Tech support is wonderful. Everyone that I have dealt with has been patient, kind, caring and informative.”

One respondent said all help desk responses were quick and efficient, and another said that User Support has evolved into a top-notch help desk. We appreciate these encouraging responses. The helpdesk has different levels of support depending upon the issue. The most serious issues require us to respond within two hours of receipt of the ticket. We do strive to address all issues at a high priority whenever possible. The help desk has worked for several years now to establish standardized business practices to ensure that they deliver consistent and quality based services. The help desk staff is here to assist users. The primary operational goal is to make sure people can do their jobs. Although the staff is out-numbered according to industry standards, we do strive to do our best.

Because the Help Desk ratio of technicians to computer devices is below industry standards, the user support team has developed some self-help tools. For example, users can look up answers to common questions in a FastInfo database at <http://fastinfo.unm.edu> or access <http://hsc.unm.edu/library/usersupport/> to download software, and get information on current issues. For issues to be addressed in a timely and orderly manner, the user should submit a problem using the HEAT Ticket system at <https://hscssl.unm.edu/heat/hss/login.html>. (This link can be found on the USLIC User Support web page).

A few respondents lamented the lack of Macintosh computers and support, and stated that Macs were safer than PCs and a better use of financial resources. Actually there is a high financial cost to supporting both Macs and PCs simultaneously because User Support Techs would have to be trained to support both platforms. Software would have to be purchased that runs on MACs and a separate software package would need to be purchased that runs on Microsoft Windows. There is also a compatibility issue. The majority of systems at HSC are PCs. The two electronic classrooms run Microsoft Windows as do the two portable Classrooms On Wheels. Software created on a MAC may not run properly on a PC and vice versa. For example, a PowerPoint show created on a MAC will not have all the functionality when run on a PC with Windows XP. While it is true that there are fewer virus attacks on Macs, the numbers are growing. Any computer connected to the internet is vulnerable. A web page has been created to offer some limited support for Mac users: <http://hsc.unm.edu/library/usersupport/Macintosh.shtml>.

A Message from the Deputy Director

The 2007 LibQUAL™ Implementation Team and HSLIC employees appreciate the time you took to complete the LibQUAL™ survey. We know it requires some perseverance to make it all the way through the survey! We also appreciate the comments you gave us, both positive and those areas where you'd like us to improve. Based on the survey results, we'll be working on the following:

- We will be working to improve staff knowledge through in-services and expectations about what our staff needs to know.
- We are planning to institute focus groups to understand better the needs of our users.
- We need to quiet our staff.
- You would appreciate additional improvements to streamline access of electronic resources.
- We will continue to seek funding to bring you more of those electronic journals and books that we know you need.
- We have tried to modify policies and the environment to provide you with some food and beverage amenities. We'll “keep our eyes open” to other possibilities that might arise.

We'll be working on these issues and checking in with you again in a few years to see how we're doing. Be sure to contact us with questions or concerns in the meantime by calling 272-2311 or by emailing Janis Teal, Deputy Director for Library Services: jteal@salud.unm.edu.

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