



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

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LibQUAL+™ 2005 Survey Results *Executive Summary*

INTRODUCTION

In May of 2005, the University Library administered the LibQUAL+™ survey. LibQUAL+™ is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality. These services are offered to the library community by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The program's centerpiece is a rigorously tested Web-based survey bundled with training that helps libraries assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library. The LibQUAL+™ survey evolved from a conceptual model based on the SERVQUAL instrument, a popular tool for assessing service quality in the private sector. As of spring 2005, more than 600 libraries had participated in the LibQUAL+™ survey, including colleges and universities, community colleges, health sciences and hospital/medical libraries, law libraries, and public libraries.

RESEARCH QUESTION(S) AND SUBJECTS

This survey instrument attempts to measure library users' desired level of service, minimum acceptable level of service, and the level of library service they actually perceive by asking them to rate each dimension on a scale of 1 to 9, with 9 being the highest level of service imaginable. The survey has 22 standardized core questions, divided among three aspects of library service: affect of service, information control, and library as place. There are also five questions chosen by the local library from a standardized list, three questions related to general satisfaction with library services, five related to information literacy outcomes, and three related to frequency of library use. Demographic information about the respondents, including a variety of academic and personal characteristics, is gathered and cross-tabulated with the responses to each question. On May 1, 2005, invitations to participate in the Web-based survey were distributed to all CSU Stanislaus e-mail addresses. This included approximately 7,000 students, faculty and staff.

METHODS, EVIDENCE, AND ANALYSIS

The invitations directed participants to a Web address where the survey could be found and completed. Weekly reminders were sent to potential participants, and by the end of May when the administration was closed, a total of 448 surveys had been completed, yielding a response rate of approximately six percent. In June, sixteen participants were selected at random to receive prizes that had been advertised in the invitations as incentives to participate. Because of the low response rate, results of the survey cannot be generalized to the larger population of CSU Stanislaus students, faculty and staff. However, given the relatively large number of participants, which included 275 undergraduate students, 64 graduates, and 109 faculty and staff, a number of interesting conclusions about the quality of library service can be drawn from the survey.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the 448 survey responses received in this administration, the following general conclusions can be reached:

- Although respondents' perceived level of service, reflected by a mean rating of 7.06 on a scale of 1 to 9 for the 22 core questions, is lower than their desired level of service, rated 7.95, the gap between actual and ideal is relatively small. This is consistent with the results of more than 69,000 survey administrations in college and university libraries world wide in 2005.
- Similarly, the mean responses to four of the five locally selected questions reveal relatively small gaps between the perceived level of service and the desired level of service
- The mean response to one of the five local questions, however, reveals that the availability of convenient library service hours is actually less than respondents' minimum acceptable level. Further analysis of the responses to this

question would be required to determine whether they reflect service hours in Turlock, in Stockton, or at both locations.

- Respondents' general satisfaction with library services is reflected in a mean rating of 7.28 on a scale of 1 to 9 for the five related questions.
- Satisfaction with information literacy outcomes received a mean rating of only 6.44, which indicates that respondents are somewhat less satisfied with the library's contribution to meeting their information needs and developing their information skills.
- Responses to the questions related to library use indicate that respondents use non-library gateways (such as Google and Yahoo) for information with greater frequency than library resources available either on site or via a library Web page.
- Responses are fairly consistent across all user categories with one notable exception; library staff appear to rate their desired level of service generally much higher and perceived level of service generally much lower than students, faculty and non-library staff.

The survey also highlighted several areas of concern that will require further analysis and investigation. These areas are reflected in the responses of particular user groups to specific questions when the responses reveal an especially large gap between the perceived level of service and the desired level of service, or when the perceived level of service is lower than the minimum acceptable level of service. Notable examples include the following:

- Mean ratings of graduate students on the questions related to information control (the degree to which library users are satisfied with the availability of information resources they need and the tools to find them) indicate that their perceived level of service is lower than their minimum acceptable level.
- A similar situation exists with graduate students' responses to the local questions related to the adequacy of the library's physical environment and service hours; the perceived level of service is lower than the minimum acceptable level.
- Although less pronounced, faculty responses also showed a significant gap between the need for information control and the library's ability to respond to that need, especially with regard to the availability of library collections, electronic and print, to support their work.

A detailed analysis of the LibQUAL+™ 2005 survey results is available online via the Web at <http://library.csustan.edu/cbengston/LibQUAL%20Results.pdf>. The analysis, which was prepared by ARL, provides background information about development of the survey instrument and its reliability, as well as full results of this administration at CSU Stanislaus.