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Survey of Library Service Priorities by the Instructional Faculty at the USF St. Petersburg Campus, March 1996 : A Summary of Findings

Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

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Survey of Library Service Priorities by the Instructional Faculty at the USF St. Petersburg Campus, March 1996

A Summary of Findings

April 22, 1996

**Prepared for the Nelson Poynter
Memorial Library by:**

Julie Fuller
Julie Husbands
Jim Schnur
Desiree Spano

Statement of Problem

Academic librarians must establish strong relationships with their clientele. Faculty liaison activities provide one important means of building bridges between the library and various academic units. Exploratory surveys of faculty interests and priorities offer librarians an important decision-making tool that also demonstrates the library's commitment to learning the information needs and interests of its constituencies.

This group designed a survey to assess faculty priorities at a particular institution during an important transitional period: The opening of a new library facility at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus, provided an excellent opportunity to survey faculty members at a time when the campus shared in the excitement of the new library. Through a survey of present faculty status and use, future service demands predicted by instructors, and additional service dimensions, this group attempted to compile and assess faculty priorities for the new Nelson Poynter Memorial Library.

Survey Methodology

The group designed a full-population survey to assess faculty priorities for library services. The population defined for this survey included all faculty, regardless of status or home campus, who taught credit-earning academic courses on the USF St. Petersburg campus during the spring 1996 semester. Colleges represented on the St. Petersburg campus (Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts, and Nursing) provided the names of regular and adjunct faculty. Library faculty who coordinated bibliographic instruction courses also received surveys. Names obtained from the department secretarial staff were compared with class schedules to assure accuracy.

The survey had three specific sections. The first section requested background information, including the present college and status of faculty member (information that could be verified by other sources), as well as general questions to establish present use patterns of the library (when, how, and how frequently did the respondents use library services). The survey instrument provided possible answers in a multiple choice format.

The second--and longest--section of the survey asked participants to rate a variety of service priorities for the campus library. Questions covered issues such as collection development, reference resources, computer technology, information retrieval, instructional media, distance education, bibliographic instruction,

special collections, and auxiliary patron services (providing printers and copiers, for example). Patrons selected one of six priorities provided by a six-phase Likert scale. The range went from a very high priority (VHP), to a high priority (HP), to a priority (P), to somewhat of a priority (SP), to a low priority (LP), to a very low priority (VLP). The use of an even-numbered Likert scale made it difficult for participants to remain neutral throughout the survey by selecting a middle heading of "priority."

Finally, the third section asked the population about access and staffing issues and provided an opportunity for open-ended comments. Questions included the expected use of reserve materials when circulation and reserve functions combine in the new library, possible hours for expanded services, potential staffing priorities, and a request for additional thoughts or suggestions. To prevent a revolution of "rising expectations," the cover letter asked participants to assume that funding sources for services would not significantly increase. Indeed, the new library more than doubles the size of the present structure, yet the budget includes no provision for new line positions.

Surveys were distributed to the 112 instructors that offered classes during the spring 1996 semester. This population included fifty-eight faculty in College of Arts and Sciences, fourteen in Business Administration, twenty-six in Education, two in Fine Arts, three in Nursing, and nine faculty in the campus library. Of the Arts and Sciences professors, twelve taught in the Department of Marine Science, a comprehensive graduate-degree program that

generally operates independently of other Arts and Sciences departments. Seventy-one members of the population represented faculty who occupy line positions on the St. Petersburg campus; the remaining forty-one either travel from other campuses or teach in an adjunct capacity.

Each instructor received an identical survey packet. The materials included: 1) a cover letter explaining the purpose and limitations of this survey; 2) a survey; and 3) a campus mail envelope addressed to the St. Petersburg campus library. The new envelopes used both to send and receive surveys lacked traceable marks might allow others to distinguish a survey by the envelope in which it appeared. Each survey did, however, contain a small accession number (from 001 to 112) placed on the back side of the last page. This number corresponded with a number assigned to each member of the population, and allowed the team to track questionnaires as they returned.

The accession number permitted the group to compare the self-reported responses in section 1 (background information) with other sources to assess validity. For example, the group could determine if a part-time adjunct instructor responded that he or she taught full-time as a regular faculty member.

Surveys were placed in campus mail on Thursday, March 14, with a due date of no later than Wednesday, March 27. The group sent surveys to the home campus for those faculty who regularly teach on other campuses and visit the St. Petersburg campus only once per week. Prior to the deadline, an e-mail reminder on PETE-L (the

listserv for the St. Petersburg campus) thanked those faculty who had completed their surveys and encouraged other instructors to return their questionnaires by the deadline. To account for delays in campus mail, surveys received by Monday, April 1 were included in the analysis.

Faculty members returned forty-five completed surveys by April 1. This represents an overall return rate of 40.2%. Of the seventy-one faculty on regular line positions at the USF St. Petersburg, thirty-one (or 46.5%) responded to the survey. The results of one late survey--received on Wednesday, April 3--were not included in this tabulation.

Discussion and Analysis of Data

Generally, faculty provided honest responses to the self-reported and verifiable data in the first section (Background Information). Though a few adjunct faculty represented themselves as regular faculty, all respondents accurately described their academic college or unit. In some instances, respondents could honestly select from more than one status (i.e., adjunct faculty who teach an undergraduate course while they simultaneously complete an advanced degree).

According to their responses, nearly half (45.6%) of those who returned surveys usually visited the library during the weekdays, while a slightly larger group (50%) claimed to use the library at no particular time. Faculty often selected more than one "typical" use during their visits to the library, with "research" representing the highest priority. Other services with larger responses included use of the reserve/public services office to leave materials for students and visiting the library to engage in database searches or to obtain inter-library loans. The clear majority of respondents (76.7%) claimed that they utilized the library's services for three hours or less per week. Only 18.6% used it for up to nine hours weekly, and 4.7% for more than fifteen hours. No respondent selected between ten and fifteen hours of use per week.

Accordingly, it appears that faculty visit the library less

frequently than might be expected, and for shorter periods. The installation of a campus server and expanded Internet services might provide one reason for the fewer visits. Many faculty perform information searches (including those possible by telnetting to the State University System's Library User Information Service, or LUIS, from home or office).

The second section, measuring service priorities for the campus library, provided a number of interesting responses. Selections of VHP, HP, and P represent higher priorities, while selections of SP, LP, VLP constitute lower priorities. The second perspective on the data might divide responses into three categories: high (VHP, HP), intermediate (P, SP), and low (LP, VLP). Thus, the answers selected by faculty can be evaluated by response to specific priorities and within a broader framework. For example, of the forty-four respondents who answered the first question, forty-two (or 95%) selected VHP, HP, or P, and thirty-six of them (or 82% of overall responses) selected either VHP or HP.

Clearly, faculty demand a strong core collection of materials in their field. Participants rated access to and acquisition of scholarly books, monographs, serials, journals, abstracts, and bibliographies as an absolute priority, with access to reference and audio/visual materials as a strong priority. While faculty considered recreational materials (both print and media) as low priorities, popular videocassettes and books in a defined recreational reading section always produce high circulation statistics.

Access to information beyond the physical confines of the library remained a priority. Faculty expected the presence of LUIS terminals and computers connected to CD-ROM and external databases to increase as demand merits. While participants demanded information from a variety of local and distant sources, they generally had strong feelings either for or against distance education, such as the transmission of classes to other campuses, which could be based, in part, on their own feelings about appearing in front of a television camera. As evidenced by the responses, faculty believe that librarians should continue to emphasize formal (through LIS 2001) and informal (reference services) bibliographic instruction. Some questions provided a fairly normal distribution of responses, while others had higher responses at the extremes rather than in the center. Further data manipulation by academic unit and employment status might offer a more detailed examination of responses to particular questions (i.e., do faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences place a higher priority on the development of a special collections department than their colleagues in other colleges?).

The third section addressed additional service hours, staffing priorities, and miscellaneous comments. A clear majority of respondents believed that the merging of circulation and reserve functions at a single desk would not affect their placement of materials on reserve. Many participants thought that the library should expand evening or weekend hours, and their replies ranged from adding an extra hour on weeknights or later hours on Friday

evening to a library that never closes. Faculty recognize the increased workload that will fall on library employees as they move into the new building, and placed increases in public and technical services staff as high priorities. Some surveys left this area blank, while others included preferences in a ranked order. A few respondents claimed that they did not feel qualified to make such an assessment of staffing needs. Finally, twelve of the surveys (26.7%) included written comments. In general, the faculty praised the library staff and appreciated their efforts. A few responses raised concerns in which the library staff has little or no direct control, such as the speed and user-friendliness of LUIS, and the limited availability of campus parking at peak periods, a universal concern at the University of South Florida.

This exploratory survey sought to assess present priorities of the university faculty as a decision-making tool for library staff. The results of this survey will provide important information for the library faculty in present and future planning. A comprehensive report and discussion of the survey will take place during the April meeting of library faculty at the USF St. Petersburg campus. Librarians at USF St. Petersburg plan to include this survey in future accreditation reviews of the campus. In addition, copies will be provided to library and campus administration, as well as the Campus Faculty Council, an advisory body similar in form to the Faculty Senate. Permanent copies will be placed on reserve and in the archives for public inspection.

Prospects for Future Research

This survey measured the interests of a specific population, namely: those faculty who taught credit-earning courses on the USF St. Petersburg campus during the spring 1996 semester. Future surveys could address the needs of other populations or sample groups. Importantly, the results obtained do not infer that the priorities represented by faculty on this use survey necessarily represent the actual use patterns of faculty members under ideal circumstances. For example, although many faculty viewed the acquisition of recreational videos as a low priority, instructors frequently borrow popular movies and entertainment videos for their enjoyment. The survey does, however, establish a framework by which future research might assess the priorities of other constituencies (for example: students generally, Marine Science graduate students, or community members of the Society for the Advancement of Poynter Library).

Section 1. Background Information

Instructions: The following five questions provide background information that will allow us to compare priorities for library services among different groups. Please circle the one answer that best represents your background. All individual responses will remain confidential.

1. Indicate your present college at USF: n=45

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>22</u> A. Arts and Sciences | <u>1</u> E. Nursing |
| <u>5</u> B. Business Administration | <u>3</u> F. Other college or academic unit |
| <u>13</u> C. Education | <u>1</u> G. Campus Administration |
| <u>0</u> D. Engineering | |

2. Indicate your present status at USF: n=45

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <u>28</u> A. Full-time regular faculty | <u>5</u> E. Library faculty |
| <u>1</u> B. Part-time regular faculty | <u>0</u> F. Student |
| <u>3</u> C. Full-time adjunct faculty | <u>2</u> G. Administrator |
| <u>6</u> D. Part-time adjunct faculty | <u>0</u> H. Other affiliation |

3. When do you usually visit the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library? n=46

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| <u>21</u> A. Weekdays during the day | <u>1</u> C. Weekends |
| <u>1</u> B. Weekdays during the evening | <u>23</u> D. No typical time |

4. How do you typically use facilities at the Poynter Library? n=71

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>34</u> A. For research | |
| <u>5</u> B. For reading textbooks, reserve materials, studying, or exam preparation | |
| <u>3</u> C. For recreational reading (newspapers, periodicals) | |
| <u>13</u> D. For database searching or obtaining inter-library loans | |
| <u>2</u> E. For meeting colleagues | |
| <u>14</u> F. To place or leave materials for students | |
| <u>0</u> G. As a place to relax before/between classes | |

5. How many hours do you use the library in an average week? n=43

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>33</u> A. 0 to 3 hours | <u>0</u> D. 10 to 12 hours |
| <u>6</u> B. 4 to 6 hours | <u>0</u> E. 13 to 15 hours |
| <u>2</u> C. 7 to 9 hours | <u>2</u> F. More than 15 hours |

Thank you for your responses. Please continue the survey on the next page.

Section 2. Survey of Service Priorities for the New Poynter Library

Instructions: A variety of library services are listed below. For each service, please assign one priority that best represents your evaluation of that service within your research and instructional needs. Please assume that state and/or outside funding resources will not significantly increase to cover any or all of the services listed.

For each service, select one of the following priorities:

VHP -- a Very High Priority service
 HP -- a High Priority service
 P -- a Priority service
 SP -- somewhat of a Priority service
 LP -- a Low Priority service
 VLP -- a Very Low Priority service

1. Access to scholarly books in your field: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>23</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

2. Access to journal and periodical titles in your field: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>28</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

3. Access to indexes, bibliographies, and/or abstracts in your field: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>24</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

4. Access to reference materials (encyclopedias, directories, dictionaries, or guides) for your area(s) of research: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>10</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>

5. Access to audio/visual materials for research, study, or classroom use in your field: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>6</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>

6. Access to recreational readings or general books outside of your field: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>8</u>

Please continue the survey on the next page.

7. Access to recreational audio/visual materials: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>9</u>

8. Availability of personal computers in the library that are connected to CD-ROM databases (such as the St. Petersburg Times index, abstracts, industry reports, full-text magazine articles): n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>

9. Availability of personal computers in the library that are connected to LUIS (the Library User Information System, USF's on-line catalog of library holdings) and other databases: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>17</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>

10. Availability of personal computers in the library that are connected to the Internet and the World Wide Web via Netscape, Mosaic, or a similar program: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>

11. Availability of printers attached to computers or LUIS terminals: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>

12. Development of specialized or subject bibliographies ("A Guide to Resources in ..."), library handbooks, or library orientations: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>

13. Lectures by library faculty on bibliographic resources, LUIS, databases, search strategies, and/or Internet access to library holdings: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>4</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>

14. Acquisition of specialized databases, CD-ROMs, and/or on-line indexes for your area(s) of research: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>0</u>

Please continue the survey on the next page.

15. Availability of audio/visual rooms for small group or individualized instruction: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>

16. The broadcast or transmission of your classes from the studios at USF St. Petersburg to other university campuses: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>16</u>

17. Availability of instruction in the use of a variety of media services (laminators, cameras, photo production equipment, audio/visual editing equipment, and other instructional media resources): n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>

18. Availability of specialized copiers for microfilm or microfiche: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>

19. Increase in the number of photocopying machines available in the library: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>

20. Creation of a campus archives in the special collections room that would store and preserve the institutional records of USF St. Petersburg: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>

21. Expansion of archival materials from non-USF sources (oral histories, local historical materials, marine science materials, rare books, specialized subject collections) in special collections: n=45

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>

22. Availability of group study or research rooms in the library: n=44

VHP	HP	P	SP	LP	VLP
<u>7</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>

Please continue the survey on the next page.

Section 3. Additional Service Hours and Staffing Priorities.

Please answer the following questions based upon your knowledge of present library services. Any comments or information you provide will assist the library director, faculty, and staff in assessing faculty interests. All responses will remain confidential.

1. If the circulation and reserve desks are merged in the new library, will you be more or less likely to place items on reserve for student use? n=45

MORE LIKELY	NO CHANGE	LESS LIKELY
<u>3</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>0</u>

2. If sufficient resources permitted the library to expand its hours of operation, which date(s) and time(s) would you prefer?

See following pages

3. If sufficient resources permitted the library to hire additional staff, which positions would be of greatest importance? n=34

- 5 A. Additional staff for the reference desk
- 4 B. Additional staff for library instruction
- 3 C. Additional staff for collection development
- 9 D. Additional staff for public services (circulation and reserve desks, reshelving of materials)
- 9 E. Additional staff for technical services (processing of new materials, updating LUIS holdings)
- 4 F. Other (please describe):
 - (1 - computer/technical/information)
 - (1 - add staff for systems)
 - (1 - A/V staff)
 - (1 - where the library staff sees the greatest need)

4. We welcome any additional thoughts or suggestions you wish to share:

See following pages

Thank you for participating in this survey of library priorities.

Additional Services and Staffing Priorities

Open-ended comments:

If sufficient resources permitted the library to expand its hours of operation, which date(s) and time(s) would you prefer?

(**Nota bene:** Many respondents left this question blank, while others offered more than one selection.)

<u>1</u>	Sunday mornings and evenings	1
<u>1</u>	Sunday, 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Sunday until 9:00 p.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Sunday until 10:00 p.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Sunday-Thursday until 11:00 p.m.	1
<u>3</u>	Monday-Thursday until 11:00 p.m.	3
<u>1</u>	Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m. until 2:00 a.m.	1
<u>2</u>	Friday evenings	2
<u>1</u>	Friday until 7:00 p.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Friday and Saturday until 6:00 p.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Friday and Saturday until 8:00 p.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Saturday, 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m.	1
<u>1</u>	Saturday, 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.	1
<u>2</u>	Evenings (not specific)	2
<u>1</u>	Evenings during semester breaks	1
<u>6</u>	Weekends (not specific)	6
<u>1</u>	Twenty-fours hours per day	1
<u>4</u>	No change	4

At the time of the survey, regular hours of operation were:

Monday-Thursday	8:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.
Friday	8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Sunday	1:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

At the time of the survey, semester break hours were:

Monday-Friday	8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Saturday-Sunday	Closed

We welcome any additional thoughts or suggestions you wish to share:

"Please continue LIS 2001 'Use of Library'." --(College of Business Administration faculty)

"Unless I miss my guess, ILL will always be a critical function

for me and marine science in general. Anything that will expedite this process is a boon to me. Maybe a full-time fundraiser? The ILL group at our St. Pete library are the best and most competent staff at the USF in my opinion. If Tina, Deb, or J.J. leave we'll be toast." --(College of Arts and Sciences faculty, Department of Marine Science)

"If resources are limited, why expend these on non-academic materials and services? This is not a public library. Serve our students and faculty rather than high school students and general public." --(College of Arts and Sciences faculty)

"Better children's literature section is needed. Also instructional tapes need to be centralized in the library." --(College of Education faculty)

"1) Increased security presence in the building evenings and weekends; 2) Quiet area for study; 3) Increase budget allocations for full-text databases, especially with graphics capability." --(Library faculty)

"LUIS still seems not particularly user-friendly and is slow." --(College of Arts and Sciences faculty, Department of Marine Science)

"We need as much technology access as possible--Internet resources--the way of the future is micros. Staff and physical facilities need to support this--training rooms (large ones!) and many, many computer terminals." --(College of Education faculty)

"Emphasis should be placed on downloading data to disk instead of printing while using the library workstation. Supplying paper is a problem and printing can take more time than the search itself. Downloading [is] more efficient and usually quicker." --(Library faculty)

"We have a wonderful library staff now--very helpful despite being overworked." --(College of Nursing faculty)

"No complaints--library service [is] excellent." --(College of Arts and Sciences faculty, Department of Marine Science)

"Will there be more parking?" --(College of Arts and Sciences faculty)

"Expand the hours and expand the services to users." --(College of Education faculty)



Nelson Poynter Memorial Library
University of South Florida, St. Petersburg Campus
140 Seventh Avenue South, POY 118
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5016
(813) 893-9125

March 7, 1996

Dear Faculty Member:


As the new library structure nears completion, we look forward to moving into a larger, state-of-the-art research facility during the summer of 1996. The enclosed survey was designed by the students named below as a major research assignment for LIS 6271, a library research methods class offered at the University of South Florida. This project will be supervised by Dr. Anna Perrault, a professor in the USF School of Library and Information Science.

Please take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey. It has been distributed to all faculty--full and part-time, regular and adjunct--who are teaching credit courses on the USF St. Petersburg campus during the Spring 1996 semester. The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. All individual responses will remain confidential.

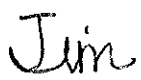
This survey assesses your priorities for services in the new campus library. While this survey explores services you consider important for the new library, it cannot guarantee that such services will become available. It assumes that state and/or outside funding sources will not significantly increase to accommodate all services requested. This survey will provide an important tool for the library community as the expansion of services takes place in the new building. Copies of the final report will be shared with the Campus Faculty Council and placed on permanent reserve in the library.

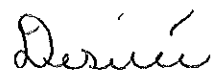
At this exciting time in the history of USF St. Petersburg, we value your time and opinions about the new Nelson Poynter Memorial Library. Please complete this survey and return it in the campus mail envelope provided by Friday, March 22.

Once again, thank you for your assistance.


Julie Fuller


Julie Husbands


Jim Schnur


Desirée Spano