Library Assessment Survey



Center for Survey Research State University of New York at Stony Brook

A Report Prepared for the

Office of the Provost

November, 2009

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Center for Survey Research conducted a survey of faculty and graduate students to assess their usage and satisfaction with various resources and services of the Stony Brook University Libraries. The survey was conducted by the Center for Survey Research, State University of New York at Stony Brook, between September 21 and September 24, 2009. The survey was administered via the web, with a unique link to the survey contained in an e-mail invitation. West campus faculty and graduate students (PhD, MA, MSc) were eligible to participate in the survey. Faculty were defined broadly to include full-time tenure-track and research faculty as well as adjunct faculty (including Stony Brook staff members who had recently taught), full-time or part-time lecturers, visiting assistant professors, professor emeriti and postdoctoral fellows. Contact information for graduate students was provided by the Registrar's office; faculty contact information was provided by the Systems Support/DoIT Department. Up to three reminder invitations were e-mailed to faculty and students over the course of the study. The response rate was 27% for faculty and 16% for graduate students (greater detail is provided in the technical appendix).

Throughout this report, faculty and graduate students are divided into three broad disciplines based on their home department: humanities, social science and natural sciences. The allocation of departments into disciplines is contained in the technical appendix. Findings are reported separately for faculty and students, but results for full-time and adjunct faculty are combined. For the most part, disciplinary differences among faculty far outweighed any differences by employment status.

DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES IN FACULTY AND STUDENT LIBRARY USAGE

The Stony Brook Libraries are used differently across disciplines with faculty in the humanities physically visiting the library most frequently and relying most heavily on the monograph collection and physical holdings. In contrast, faculty in the sciences visit the library least often and rely most heavily on the electronic collections. Social science faculty lie somewhere in between. Graduate students rely more heavily than faculty on the physical library, but differ by discipline in resource usage with science students relying most and humanities students least on the electronic collection.

Faculty and students were asked how often in the last 12 months they had physically visited "the Frank Melville Jr. campus library to use library resources" (Q1) and if they had frequented the library were then asked the main reason for their visit (Q2).

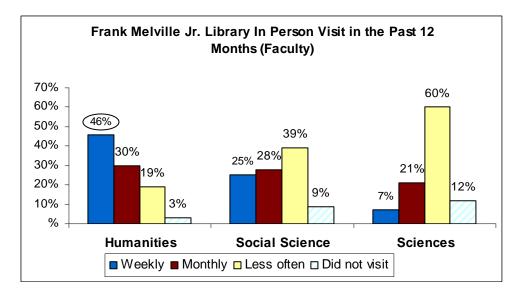
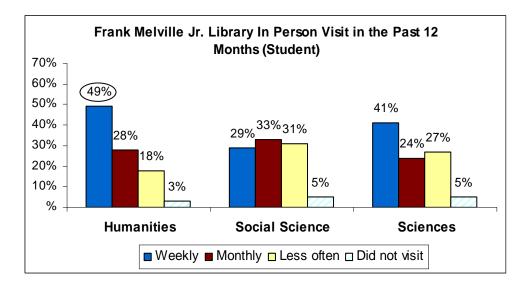


FIGURE 1A - FACULTY

FIGURE 1B - STUDENT



Among faculty, those in the humanities use the physical library space most commonly with 46% visiting the library at least once a week; in contrast only 7% of science faculty and roughly a quarter of all social science faculty visit the library at least weekly. Indeed, few science faculty visit the library, with almost three-quarters visiting the Melville library less often than once a semester. The picture differs for science graduate students of whom fully 65% visit the Melville library at least once a month, and 41% who visit at least weekly. Science graduate students use the library almost as often as students in the humanities.

For the most part, faculty and graduate students visit the Melville library to conduct personal research, although faculty in the humanities visit almost equally for teaching and research purposes. Among faculty who visit the library, 72% of scientists and 56% of social scientists visit for research purposes. While research also remains the main reason for library use among graduate students, not surprisingly roughly a quarter visit the library to access course materials.

Humanities faculty and students rely most heavily on the library's physical resources whereas scientists and social scientists rely most heavily on the library's electronic collections. Faculty and students were asked two questions about their use of electronic and physical library materials: "Think of all the library materials you use, do you rely much more, or somewhat more on physical materials, or much more or somewhat more on digital materials, or both equally?" (Q4) and "What is the most common way in which you access library resources at SBU, including all libraries on campus?" (Q3).

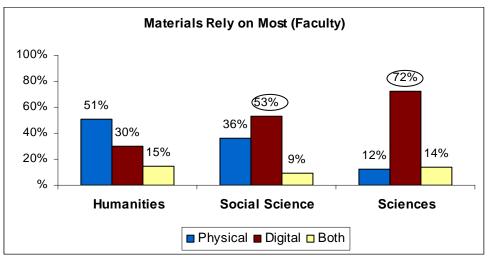
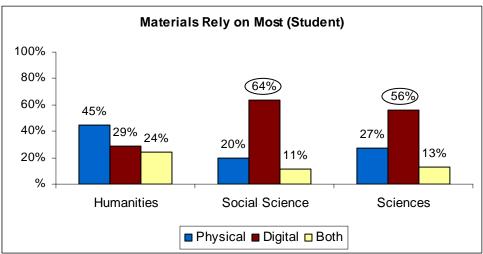


FIGURE 2 A - FACULTY

FIGURE 2 B - STUDENT



There are stark differences across disciplines in library resource use. In the humanities, 51% of faculty rely most heavily on physical library resources. In contrast, 72% of science faculty and 53% of social science faculty rely most heavily on electronic resources. The same pattern is reproduced among graduate students, although science graduate students rely a little more than science faculty on physical materials (27% vs. 12%). Nonetheless, faculty and graduate students across disciplines rely most commonly on electronic sources to access library materials. Over 90% of faculty and 85% of graduate students in the sciences and roughly 70% of faculty and graduate students in the humanities most commonly access resources electronically.

FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE LIBRARY

Faculty and graduate students give the library positive marks for quality, although most rate the library as good not excellent. In addition journal collections are rated more positively than the book and monograph collection which were assessed more negatively. To gauge satisfaction with the library, faculty and graduate students were asked to rate the quality of "library resources overall in terms of their breadth and ease of access" (Q5), and then separately rate the book and monograph collection (Q7), the physical and electronic journal collection (Q8), and the video and CD collection (Q9).

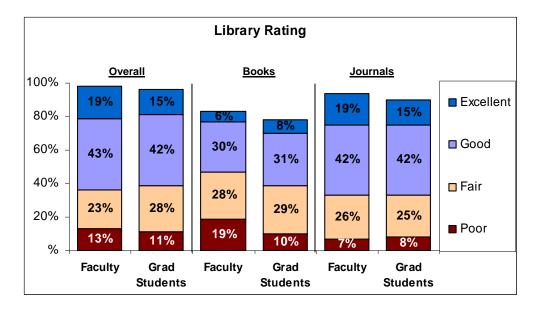


FIGURE 3

There was considerable consensus across disciplines and between graduate students and faculty in assessment of the library collection. Overall, roughly 57% of graduate students and 62% of faculty rated library resources as good or excellent, although relatively few (less than 20%) rated resources as excellent. Graduate students varied little by discipline in their overall assessment of the library; there was more variation among faculty. Among science faculty, 74% rated the library resources as excellent or good compared to 50% of humanities and 51% of social science faculty. Ratings of the journal collection were equally positive, on balance, mirroring assessment of the library resources overall.

Satisfaction did not extend to the library's book and monograph collection, however, which received negative ratings from faculty and mixed evaluations from graduate students. Overall, 36% of faculty rated it as good or excellent versus 47% who rated it as fair or poor. Graduate students were more split in their assessment with 39% rating the book collection as good or excellent and 39% rating it fair or poor. In addition, 16% of faculty and 21% of graduate students did not know enough about the collection to provide a rating. Relatively few faculty and graduate students were able to rate the video and CD collection. Of those who did, equal numbers gave the collection a positive and negative rating, suggesting a mixed reaction at best.

Faculty and students were asked to rate the balance of the library's physical and electronic holdings (Q10), and fully three-quarters of faculty were able to answer the question. Of those who provided an answer, roughly 60% of faculty in the humanities and social sciences believed the collection was imbalanced towards too few physical resources. This view was not shared by faculty or graduate students in the sciences who were split, for the most part, between viewing the collection as having too few physical and too few electronic holdings. A plurality (44%) of science faculty thought the collection had attained the right balance between physical and electronic holdings, and almost a third believed it lacked sufficient electronic resources, leaving only 23% who thought the collection lacked sufficient physical holdings.

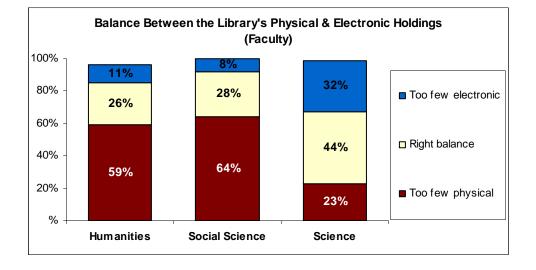


FIGURE 4 - FACULTY

Faculty compared the library very unfavorably to the library at the institution at which they completed their PhD (Q6). Of those faculty with a PhD, few (14%) rated the Stony Brook library as better, and a majority (58%) rated it as worse that their PhD institution library. Scientists were the least negative about the SBU library with only 18% rating the library as much worse than their PhD institution (although a majority still rated it as worse) compared to 44% of social scientists and 39% of humanists who rated it as much worse.

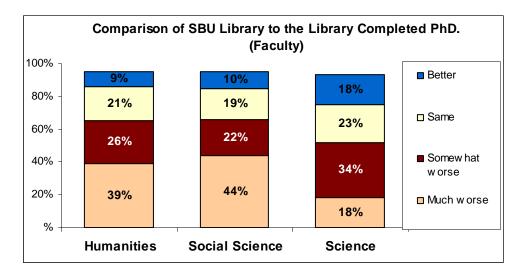


FIGURE 5 – FACULTY

IS THE LIBRARY ADEQUATE FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING NEEDS?

On balance, faculty and graduate students see library resources as adequate to successfully conduct their research and teaching, but there are real pockets of dissatisfaction with 25% of graduate students, and 38% of social science and 40% of humanities faculty viewing library resources as inadequate for research. An added 30% of humanities and social science faculty rate the library resources as inadequate for successful teaching.

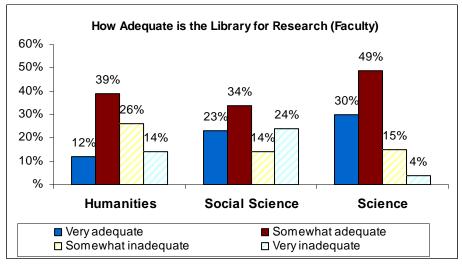


FIGURE 6 - FACULTY

Faculty and graduate students were asked how changes in library resources and service in the last five years had affected the quality of their research (Q12) and teaching (Q14). Not surprisingly, most graduate students were unable to answer the questions because they had not been on campus for five years. Among faculty who could provide an answer (roughly 74%), reactions

ranged from negative among humanities faculty to positive among science faculty. Overall, 42% of humanities faculty viewed recent changes to the library as having had a negative effect on the quality of their research (compared to 29% who said it had been positive). In contrast, 59% of science faculty said library changes had a positive effect on their research. Social science faculty were evenly split with 42% ratings changes as positive, and 41% as negative.

Changes to library resources were seen as somewhat less damaging to successful teaching with faculty viewing changes as more positive than negative on average. Overall, 34% of faculty who could rate the effects of library changes thought they had been positive, 46% rated them as neutral, and 20% viewed changes as having a negative impact on successful teaching. Few science faculty (9%) saw changes as negative compared to a greater number of humanities (28%) and social science faculty (26%).

DO FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS NEED TO VISIT OTHER LIBRARIES?

Faculty and graduate students were asked "Do you ever visit academic or research libraries other than the libraries located on the Stony Brook campus" (Q15), and were then asked to check various reasons for why they had visited alternative libraries (Q16). A majority of faculty (58%) and a near majority of graduate students (48%) frequented other libraries.

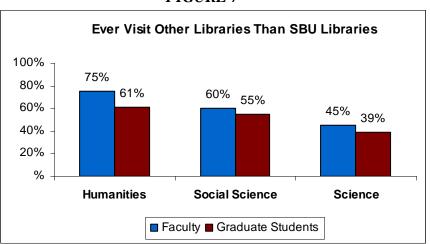


FIGURE 7

The most common reason given by faculty and graduate students in the humanities and social sciences for visiting other libraries is to access materials that are unavailable at Stony Brook. Faculty and graduate students in the humanities were most likely to visit other libraries; science faculty and graduate students were least likely to. In the humanities, 75% of faculty and 61% of graduate students visited other libraries compared to only 45% of faculty and 39% of graduate students in the sciences. Moreover, the most popular reason given for visiting other libraries by both graduate students and faculty was that "other libraries contain materials that should be available at SBU but are not."

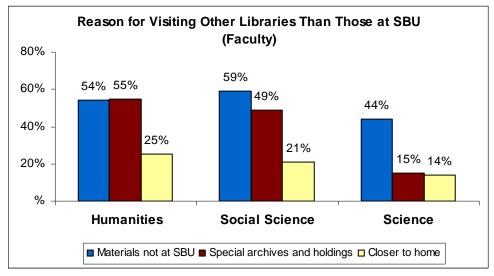


FIGURE 8 - FACULTY

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Response Rates

	Faculty	Graduate Students	TOTAL
# of e-mails sent	1,429	3,759	5,008
# of Completed interviews	384	572	956
Response Rate = Completes / (e-mails sent)	27%	16%	19%

Cross-tabulation Tables

Three sets of cross-tabulation tables accompany the current report, providing answers to each question broken down by discipline (separate reports for faculty and graduate students) and employment status (only faculty). Employment status is split into three categories: Professors, Faculty Non-Professors, and Graduate Students.

The "Employment Status" variable refers to respondents' current employment status. Information for graduate students is taken from the Registrar's database (provided to the Center) and the information for faculty was based upon the response to Q17 ("What is your employment status?"). Employment categories for the faculty are as follows:

1. Professors

[Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor]

2. Faculty Non-Professors

[Adjunct faculty member (Stony Brook staff member teaching for extra compensation), Adjunct faculty (no other affiliation with the University and, Full time or part time Lecturer, Visiting Assistant Professor, Professor Emeritus and Postdoctoral fellow)]

In addition, the Cross-tabulation tables provide the responses broken down by the respondents' discipline separately for Faculty and Graduate Students.

The "Discipline" variable refers to the respondents' field of study. This information was based upon responses to Q18 ("What is the name of your department (center or school?") and coded according to the divisions listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Departments in Each Discipline

Social		
Sciences		Natural Sciences
	Anthropology	Applied Mathematics and Statistics
	College of Business	Biochemistry
	Dean For Enrollment Management	Biomedical Engineering Program
	Economics	Center for Global Issues/Human
	History	Chemical Engineering
	Learning Communities Project	Chemistry
	Linguistics	Computer Science
	Political Science	Earth and Space Science
	Psychology	Ecology And Evolution
	School of Business	Electrical Engineering
	Social Sciences	Engineering & Applied Sciences
	Sociology	Genetics
Humanities		Geosciences
	Africana Studies	Inst. for Terrest/Planet Atmos
	Art	Inst. for Theoretical Physics
	Asian & Asian-American Studies	Institute For Mathematical Science
	Athletics	Marine Environmental Studies
	Center for Dance	Marine Sciences Center
	Comparative Studies	Materials Science & Engineering
	English	Mathematics
	European Languages	Mechanical Engineering
	French and Italian	Mineral Physics Institute
	Hispanic Languages	Molecular Genetics & Microbiology
	Journalism Program	Neurobiology and Behavior
	Library	Physics & Astronomy
	Music	Technology & Society
	Philosophy	Undergraduate Programs in Biology
	Physical Education	Waste Management Institute
	Theater	
	Women's Studies	
	Writing Program	

DETAILED FINDINGS

Q1 Frequency of in Person Visits to the Frank Melville Jr. Library in the Past 12 Months									
		Faculty		Gra	aduate Stude	nts			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences			
Base:	(105) %	(116) %	(163) %	(163) %	(119) %	(290) %			
At least once a week	25	46	7	29	49	41			
At least once a month	28	30	21	33	28	24			
At least once a semester	25	16	37	24	13	16			
Less often than once a semester	14	3	22	7	5	11			
Did not physically visit a campus library building	9	3	12	5	3	5			
Not yet visited library; first semester at SB	-	1	1	2	3	3			

Q2 Main Reason for Visiting the Melville Library in the Past 12 months										
		Faculty		Gra	aduate Stude	nts				
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences				
Base: Among those who visited the library in the past 12 months	(96) %	(110) %	(143) %	(151) %	(113) %	(266) %				
Personal research	56	44	72	60	56	50				
Teaching purposes	34	44	12	4	1	4				
Access materials for a course you are taking	2	2	4	20	33	25				
Other	7	11	12	17	11	21				

Q3 Most Common Way to Access All on Campus Library Resources										
		Faculty		Gr	aduate Stude	ents				
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences				
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)				
	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Through electronic databases (Net)	<u>78</u>	<u>71</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>85</u>				
Through electronic databases in terminals located in the Melville library, or one of the branches	5	7	3	9	13	19				
Through electronic databases accessed remotely from office, home, or another location	73	64	88	76	55	66				
From hard copies (Net)	<u>19</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>13</u>				
From hard copies of journals located in one of the libraries	4	3	4	4	2	3				
From hard copies of books, videos, CDs and other resource materials in one of the libraries	15	22	4	7	27	10				
Other	3	3	1	4	3	2				

Q4 Types of Library Materials Upon Which You Rely										
		Faculty		Graduate Students						
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences				
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)				
Dase.	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Much more/Somewhat more on materials that physically reside in the library (Net)	<u>37</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>27</u>				
Much more on materials that physically reside in the library	26	31	7	17	21	18				
Somewhat more on materials that physically reside in the library	11	20	5	3	24	9				
Much more/Somewhat more on materials that are stored digitally	<u>53</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>56</u>				
Somewhat more on materials that are stored digitally	14	16	14	22	13	17				
Much more on materials that are stored digitally	39	15	58	42	17	39				
Both equally	9	15	14	11	24	13				
Don't know	2	3	3	4	3	5				

Q5 Overall Rating of Campus Library Resources, in Terms of Their Breadth and Ease of Access									
		Faculty		Gr	aduate Studen	ts			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences			
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)			
Base:	%	%	%	%	%	%			
Excellent/Good (Net)	<u>51</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>57</u>			
Excellent	18	16	22	14	13	17			
Good	33	35	55	45	45	40			
Fair	23	32	17	28	24	30			
Poor	24	13	6	10	13	11			
Don't Know	2	3	1	3	3	3			

Q6 Comparison of Campus Library Resources and the Library Where Ph.D. Completed										
		Faculty								
	Social Sciences	Social Sciences Humanities Natural Science								
Base: FACULTY ONLY	(105)	(116)	(163)							
	%	%	%							
Much better/Somewhat better (Net)	<u>10</u>	7	<u>17</u>							
Much better	5	5 4 10								
Somewhat better	5	3	7							
Roughly the same	18	16	22							
Somewhat worse/Much worse (Net)	<u>62</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>49</u>							
Somewhat worse	21	20	33							
Much worse	41	30	16							
Don't know	3	1	9							
Don't have Ph.D.	7	23	4							

Q7 Rating of Library's Book and Monograph Collection, in Terms of Its Breadth and Ease of Access									
		Faculty		Gr	aduate Student	ts			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences			
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)			
Dase:	%	%	%	%	%	%			
Excellent/Good (Net)	<u>27</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>38</u>			
Excellent	6	5	7	8	13	6			
Good	21	31	35	28	33	32			
Fair	31	32	24	32	31	26			
Poor	28	22	12	11	10	10			
Don't Know	14	9	22	21	13	25			

Q8 Rating of Library's Physical and Electronic Journal and Magazine Collection, in Terms of Its Breadth and Ease of Access									
		Faculty Graduate Students							
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences			
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)			
Base:	%	%	%	%	%	%			
Excellent/Good (Net)	<u>61</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>56</u>			
Excellent	27	10	21	15	13	15			
Good	34	47	43	45	40	41			
Fair	29	21	28	24	27	25			
Poor	8	8	6	9	8	8			
Don't Know	3	11	3	7	12	10			

Q9 Rating of Library's Video and CD Collection (Including Musical Scores) in Terms of Its Breadth and Ease of Access										
		Faculty Graduate Students								
	Social Sciences	Humanities								
Pasa	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)				
Base:	%	%	%	%	%	%				
Excellent/Good (Net)	<u>20</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>17</u>				
Excellent	4	8	2	6	8	2				
Good	16	26	8	15	21	15				
Fair	15	24	6	12	19	12				
Poor	7	9	4	6	8	6				
Don't Know	58	32	80	60	43	65				

Q10 Balance Between the Library's Physical and Electronic Holdings											
		Faculty		Graduate Students							
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences					
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)					
Dase.	%	%	%	%	%	%					
Severe/Some imbalance with too few physical holdings (Net)	<u>47</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>24</u>					
Severe imbalance with too few physical holdings	25	22	1	5	7	3					
Some imbalance with too few physical holdings	22	27	15	18	18	21					
An appropriate balance between physical and electronic holdings	20	22	32	25	27	24					
Severe/Some imbalance with too few electronic holdings	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>23</u>					
Some imbalance with too few electronic holdings	6	9	19	15	12	20					
Severe imbalance with too few electronic holdings	_	-	4	7	3	3					
Don't Know	28	18	28	30	33	29					

Q11 How Adequate are Current Stony Brook University Library Resources to Successfully Conduct and Complete Research							
	Faculty			Graduate Students			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)	
Dase.	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Very/Somewhat adequate (Net)	<u>57</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>71</u>	
Very adequate	23	12	30	20	25	19	
Somewhat adequate	34	39	49	54	45	52	
Very/Somewhat inadequate (Net)	<u>38</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>24</u>	
Somewhat inadequate	14	26	15	18	15	18	
Very inadequate	24	14	4	6	11	6	
Don't Know	5	7	2	3	4	5	

Q12 Impact of Changes in Library Resources and Service on the Quality of Research in the Last Five Years							
	Faculty			Graduate Students			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)	
Base:	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Changes have had a very/somewhat positive impact (Net)	32	<u>21</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>18</u>	
Changes have had a very positive impact	12	5	9	6	6	6	
Changes have had a somewhat positive impact	20	16	33	17	10	12	
The impact of changes have been neither positive nor negative	12	20	16	17	14	16	
Changes have had a very/somewhat negative impact (Net)	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>6</u>	7	7	
Changes have had a somewhat negative impact	20	22	13	4	3	6	
Changes have had a very negative impact	11	10	1	2	4	1	
Unaware of any changes to library resources in the last five years	11	4	13	34	29	25	
Not Applicable	12	20	15	19	33	34	

Q13 How Adequate are Current Stony Brook University Library Resources to Successfully Teach a Course							
		Faculty		Graduate Students			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Very/Somewhat adequate (Net)	<u>63</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>31</u>	
Very adequate	28	28	31	13	11	10	
Somewhat adequate	35	35	42	33	26	21	
Very/Somewhat inadequate (Net)	<u>29</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	
Somewhat inadequate	17	17	9	9	11	8	
Very inadequate	12	10	1	3	2	2	
Don't Know	4	3	9	6	8	11	
Don't teach any courses	4	5	6	37	42	48	

Q14 Impact of Changes in Library Resources and Service on the Quality of Teaching in the Last Five Years							
	Faculty			Graduate Students			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	
Deee	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)	
Base:	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Changes have had a very/somewhat positive impact (Net)	<u>29</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>	
Changes have had a very positive impact	8	9	6	2	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	
Changes have had a somewhat positive impact	21	16	12	7	6	8	
The impact of changes have been neither positive nor negative	22	31	37	19	13	8	
Changes have had a very/somewhat negative impact (Net)	22	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	
Changes have had a somewhat negative impact	13	16	6	2	2	2	
Changes have had a very negative impact	9	2	-	1	3	1	
Unaware of any changes to library resources in the last five years	15	4	14	29	21	22	
Not Applicable	12	21	25	41	54	56	

Q15 and Q16 Utilization of Other Academic or Research Libraries							
	Faculty			Graduate Students			
	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Humanities	Natural Sciences	
Base:	(105)	(116)	(163)	(163)	(119)	(290)	
Dase.	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Q15 Ever visit academic or rese	earch libraries	other than the	e libraries lo	ocated on the	e Stony Brook	campus	
Yes	60	75	45	55	61	39	
No	40	23	55	45	39	61	
Q16 Reasons why you use libra	ries other that	in the libraries	at Stony Br	ook Universi	ity		
Other libraries are closer to where I work and live	21	25	14	32	53	33	
Other libraries contain specialized archives and holdings that I need	49	55	15	38	34	28	
Other libraries contain materials that should be available at Stony Brook but are not	59	54	44	57	58	45	
Some other reason	13	8	40	11	14	18	