

# The University Library Tipping Point Presentation

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The University Library does not yet have a Learning-Centered Plan. This Tipping Point report provides a foundation to draft a Learning-Centered Plan for the Library by August 2009.

## Recent examples of effective methods used to measure customer satisfaction

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With the Library expansion completed, it is critical for the Library to reflect on the role it currently plays in the university. We began this process with a basic question: *Is the University Library providing the products (books, electronic databases, computer workstations, etc.) and services (research help, information literacy classes, technology help, open hours, etc.) that students and faculty currently require and want?*

**How do students and faculty currently use the University Library?** Comparing data from Fall 2004 (pre-renovation and expansion) to Fall 2008 (re-opening of the Library) reveals significant changes in the use of the University Library:

	Fall 2004	Fall 2008	Percent Change
Library Entrance Count	219,838	302,591	37% Increase
Number of Check Outs	64,627	12,895	80% Decrease
Volumes Re-Shelved	89,404	50,186	43% Decrease
Reserve Transactions	7,721	4,121	47% Decrease
Total Reserve Collection	3,375	1,943	42% Decrease
Computer Workstations	86	321	373% increase
Inter-Library Borrowing	5,286	3,533	33% Decrease
Research Desk Questions	10,529	3,731	65% Decrease
AskNOW Inquiries	318	429	35% Increase
eMail Inquiries	95	289	204% Increase
Off-Desk Contacts	158	148	6% Decrease

- More individuals are entering the Library since re-opening (37% increase), but fewer check out books (80% decrease) or are using books while in the library (43% decrease in re-shelving);
- The number of books placed on Reserve by faculty and the use of Reserve materials has decreased significantly (47% decrease and 42% decrease, respectively);
- The number and use of computer workstations increased significantly;
- Requests for books from other libraries (Inter-library borrowing) have decreased by 1/3;
- Traditional formats for Reference Librarian Inquiries have decreased (Research Help Desk questions down 65% and off-desk contacts down 6%), whereas computer format inquiries have increased (35% for Ask NOW and 204% increase in eMail inquiries).

In order to better understand the basis for these changes, the Library hosted Faculty and Student Focus Groups during the month of March. Additional Student feedback was obtained from a student survey distributed between March 2 and March 6 (N=100).

**Student Feedback:** Students principally come to the library to study, to use computer workstations and to do homework. Students rarely use the library's Media collection, reserve materials, or borrow books from other libraries, and rarely do they seek research help from reference librarians. Students come to

the library frequently (more than once a week), and 88% said that the Library is currently meeting all of their information and research needs, and 93% said the Library contributed to their academic success. Suggestions for improvement included increasing the number of computer workstations, extending the hours of operation, providing more current books, creating quiet areas, and providing more outlets for laptops, more group study rooms and more printers that use printing cards.

**Faculty Feedback:** Faculty members rarely, or at best only quarterly, send students to the library for assistance with course assignments and faculty rarely utilize the expertise of reference librarians for their own teaching and research needs. Faculty are unaware of the resources the Library provides, and because of their busy schedules do not have time to initiate contact with a reference librarian. Some faculty have given up coming to the Library because books are outdated or are rarely available.

### **Conclusions from Student and Faculty Focus Groups:**

Student and faculty feedback point out that the University Library faces a transformational challenge. Traditional products and services provided by the University Library are utilized considerably less than in the recent past, whereas technology-based access to knowledge and use of computer workstations are used at a high rate. There was a consensus for the Library to adopt a more “service oriented” philosophy. Other issues included:

1. Uncertainty about available Library Resources:
  - a. Design a handout on “What a Reference Librarian can do for you”;
  - b. Librarians are encouraged to develop a brief presentation of available Library services to be given to all students during Orientation or in First Year Experience courses and to all faculty at department meetings;
2. Post clear and bold directions in order to increase direction effectiveness and reduce confusion in the library. Follow the model of a shopping Mall directory;
3. Teach all students how to access credible information and how to use the library effectively;
4. Faculty members should know which reference librarian is assigned to their discipline;
5. There is a need for constant dialog between faculty members and Collection Management Librarians about which books and electronic databases are purchased;
6. The Library should establish a Faculty and Student Advisory Committee to provide input and information exchange on library operation and goals;
7. Have more focus groups and/or brown-bag discussions;
8. Faculty members should be aware of the library’s budget, particularly funds for collections in their areas;
9. Student assistants should be at the Research Help desk to help alleviate the intimidation many students feel about asking for assistance from a reference librarian;
10. Borrowed books should be sent to faculty and book renewal should be made easy. Particularly, Link+ books should be available for longer periods.

Current Library operation and patron use/demand appear out of synchrony. Members of the University Library faculty and staff will consider all feedback and use data as they develop a learning-centered plan for the University Library’s services and operations.