

CONGRESSMAN FRANK J. GUARINI LIBRARY NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY

Student Library Survey Results

Total Responses

Print surveys returned	994
Online surveys returned	366
Total surveys returned	1,360
Students enrolled Fall 2005	8,464
% of students who completed survey:	16%*

*We distributed a total of approximately 4,000 print surveys. 994 print surveys were completed for a response rate of 24.8% for the print survey because we also used an online survey form, it is difficult to compute an overall response rate given that the total number of students who were exposed to the survey instrument is unknown.

NJCU Status

Undergraduates: 1,147 (85.6%)

Graduate: 172 (12.8%)

Other: 21* (1.6%)

* The other category included a variety of library users: some students who were visiting, community members, and a few staff members. Due to technical difficulties, these responses could not be removed from the response set, so they are included in all the totals.

Transfer Students

519 (38.7%) students identified themselves as transfer students.

Majors

All the majors represented at NJCU took part in the survey, but the top 10 majors were fairly reflective of our student body.

1. Education	262	19.5%*
2. Business	242	18%
3. Psychology	101	7.5%**
4. Criminal Justice/Security	88	6.6%
5. Biology	82	6.1%
6. English	66	4.9%
7. Art:	52	3.8%
8. Computer Science	49	3.6%
9. Media Arts	44	3.3%
10. Health Sciences	32	2.4%
10. Mathematics	32	2.4%

109 (8.1%) students had not yet declared a major.

(This category includes both graduate and undergraduate students.)

* Specific education majors, both graduate and undergraduate, are included under Education.

** Psychology also includes several programs, both graduate and undergraduate.

Courses Taken

54.1% of students who replied to the survey had taken 20 courses or fewer at NJCU. It appears that the majority of students taking the survey was first or second year students. However, this number is somewhat misleading because it fails to differentiate between graduate and undergraduate students.

1-10	400	29.9%
11-20 (2 nd Year):	324	24.2%
21-30: (3 rd Year	185	13.8%
31-40	181	13.5%
More than 40	250	18.7%

How many courses required library research?

86.4% of students said that at least one of their courses had required library research, while 13.5% said that none of their courses had required it.

None	181	13.5%
1-5	650	48.5%
6-10	257	19.2%
11-15	115	8.6%
16 or more	137	10.2%

How many of your professors provided you with information about resources/services?

85.1% of students said that at least one of their professors had provided them with information about library resources/services. 14.9% said that none of their professors had ever provided them with information about the library. These percentages closely parallel those in the question above regarding number of courses requiring library research. When research is not required, it may be that professors do not feel the need to inform students about library resources.

None	199	14.9%
1-5	840	62.7%
6-10	204	15.2%
11-15	59	4.4%
16 or more	38	2.8%

How often do you visit the library?

61.7% of students surveyed said they visit the library at least a few times a week. This is not surprising given that the survey was administered primarily INSIDE the library and may have led to a biased sample of frequent library users. It is possible that a random sample would have found lower library usage rates. 9.3% of students surveyed said they use the library rarely or never.

Every day	238	17.8%
few times a week	588	43.9%
few times a month	211	15.7%
few times a semester	153	11.4%

few times a year	25	1.9%
Rarely	98	7.3%
Never	27	2.0%

Have you ever attended an Information Literacy Session?

Yes	614 (45.8%)	No	726 (54.2%)
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We were not surprised to see that nearly half of the students who responded to the survey had been to the library for an information literacy session. For the past several years about 200 instructional sessions have been conducted every year with a combined attendance of about 4,000. In other words, about 50% of NJCU students have been to at least one BI session, the survey lends evidence to this hunch. It is also possible that students who had come in for an instructional session did not recognize the term “information literacy” and answered no to this question, when they were in fact brought in by a professor.

How often do you use the library’s online resources?

Most students (33.8%) use the library’s online resources at least a few times a week and 61% use these resources at least a few times per month. One fifth of survey responders use the library’s online resources rarely or never.

Every day	106	7.9%
few times a week	453	33.8%
few times a month	259	19.3%
few times a semester	191	14.3%
few times a year	57	4.3%
Rarely	191	14.3%
Never	83	6.2%

From which location do you access the library’s resources most frequently?

More than half of survey responders used the library’s online resources from within the library. But this finding, again, may point to a sample biased by heavy library users. A random sample may have found greater use of online resources offsite. And among the users who chose to answer the Web survey, a higher percentage use the library’s resources from home more often than inside the library.

Inside the Library	703	52.5%
Home	396	29.6%
Work	47	3.5%
Public Library	14	1%
Elsewhere on Campus	61	4.6%
I do not use them	105	7.8%
Other	14	1%

Which of the following library resources do you use?

It is not surprising that databases and OSCAR were the two top resources, since these are always covered in instructional sessions. It is interesting to note however that nearly a third of students still borrow books and 24.2% state they use reference books. This disconfirms the often heard plaint that students no longer use books. NJCU students do borrow books and still use print reference sources.

1. Databases	750	57.7%
2. OSCAR	674	51.8%
3. Periodicals List A to Z	469	36%
4. Borrowing Books	385	29.6%
5. PCs to access e-mail, WebCT	340	26.2%
6. Magazines and Journals on 2 nd Floor	325	25%
7. Reference Books	315	24.2%
8. Online Resources Subject Guides	230	17.1%
9. Ask a Librarian	220	16.4%
10. Group Study Rooms	175	13%



Which of the following other resources/services do you use?

1. Web sites found through search engines	1158	89.1%
2. Web sites recommended by friends	755	58.1%
3. My own books and articles	475	36.5%
4. Online resources provided by my teacher	407	31.3%
5. Public Libraries	377	29%
6. Reserve Materials	332	25.5%
7. Course-packs provided by teacher	232	17.3%
8. Other university libraries	220	16.4%

It is not surprising that Web sites found through search engines and web sites recommended by friends were the two types of non-library resources most often used. Also of interest in this list however, is that many students use their own books and articles. They also make use of other university libraries and public libraries to find materials to help them with assignments.

Combined list of use of library and non-library resources

Other library surveys and anecdotal evidence suggest that students rely on the Web to do the research required for their courses, and our survey confirmed this. Web sites found through search engines and web sites recommended by friends were the two most used resources. But more than half of the students who responded to our survey also rely on library resources: databases, OSCAR the library’s catalog and the Periodicals List A to Z, which allows them to determine which journals are available in print, on microfiche and through our many subscription databases. More than half of students who responded have used OSCAR, the library’s catalog. This seems to belie the often heard plaint that students no longer use books. As well, students use public libraries and other university libraries to help them complete coursework and nearly a third had borrowed books from the library.

1. Web sites found through search engines	1,158	89.1%
2. Web sites recommended by friends	755	58.1%
3. Databases	750	57.7%

4. OSCAR Library Catalog	674	51.8%
5. My own books and articles	475	36.5%
6. Periodicals List A to Z	469	36%
7. Online resources provided by teacher	407	31.3%
8. Borrowing Books	385	29.6%
9. Public Libraries	377	29%
10. PCs to access email, WebCT, etc.	340	26.2%
11. Materials put on reserve	332	25.5%
12. Course-packs provided by professor	232	17.3%
13. Online resources subject guides	230	17.2%
14. Ask a librarian	220	16.4%
15. Other university libraries	220	16.4%

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Difficulties Encountered

Traditionally, library surveys have tended to reveal that users are generally happy with services provided. In this survey we specifically asked about difficulties encountered to encourage students to report trouble they had experienced so that we could improve our services. Of the 548 students who wrote something in this section, 290 had nothing to say or said something positive. The remaining 258 (7.2% of the total number of students who completed a survey) reported a variety of difficulties.

The primary difficulty reported was with computers and printers. Students asked for newer, faster computers and more printers. They would also like more computers with Word and other programs like Excel and Power Point. Students also expressed frustration with copiers often being out of order, not giving change and having to wait on long lines to use them. They also mentioned having difficulty finding books and wanting newer books as well as textbooks. They also expressed confusion about searching for articles in databases and searching the catalog. While many students praised staff for their patience and helpfulness, a few cited rude or unhelpful staff members. Some mentioned disruptions caused by Facilities staff using walky-talkies and staff members talking on their cell phones.

Several students mentioned that there was too much noise in the library and some of them expressed concern about unaffiliated users (local kids and high school students) being allowed to use the library. A few students complained about the rudeness of cell phone users and asked us to enforce the policy against cell phone use.

Comments and Suggestions

We also asked students to give us comments and suggestions for improving library services. 503 students wrote something in this section. 103 of these wrote some version of "nothing to say" but 400 students had a total of 536 comments. It is not surprising that the issues raised in this section were similar to those raised in the "difficulties encountered" section. There was substantial overlap.

The most frequently mentioned request was that more computers have Microsoft Word. They also requested newer computers, faster computers, more printers and color printers and scanners. Finally, they mentioned want more people to help with printing and other pc problems.

Students also had much praise for library staff, services and the building and environment. Several mentioned the peacefulness of the library. One student said he loved to sleep on the couches, adding,

“it’s awesome.” Positive comments included:

- ✓ Just keep up the good work.
- ✓ It’s perfect the way it is.
- ✓ I enjoy the library because I know when I go there my work will get done because it is so peaceful.
- ✓ I love this library.
- ✓ Home away from home.
- ✓ The library orientation classes are particularly helpful. They have greatly assisted me in accessing the resources that the library offers.

Some students requested newer, more current materials, while others wanted us to keep print journals longer and wanted more books rather than electronic resources. Several students asked that we purchase more books in specific disciplines, such as Nursing, Spanish, Sports Management, Philosophy and others. Some asked for more fiction and best-sellers. Overall, there were requests for more books and newer editions.

Several students mentioned missing the lounge in the lobby and wanting it back. Students miss having a place to eat and study simultaneously. Several students expressed a desire for an area within the library where they could eat and drink. Others said the building was consistently too hot or too cold. Still others mentioned elevators being out of order too often. Several students said they loved the couches and would like to have more, for lounging and relaxing. One student said she would like music in the library and suggested soft jazz.

Several students expressed a desire for more help using the library. Some requested seminars, workshops, tutorials or written material that would help them use library resources. One student suggested having an FYE course for library skills. In general these students seemed to want more help from us with various tasks, from searching OSCAR to finding books to using databases to find journal articles. Some students wished we would help them find books on the shelves. Several suggested we have librarians walk around asking students if they need help, citing the occasional unwillingness (on students’ parts) to ask for help.

It is not surprising that many students wanted longer library hours. They would like us to be open after 10 p.m. and later on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. A few students wished we would be open longer hours during holidays and intersession.

Under comments students also mentioned noise and asked that we enforce the library’s quiet policy. They also asked for more copiers and better maintenance of copiers. The attached chart shows a combined list of comments/suggestions and difficulties encountered combined.

As you can see from the chart, students provided us with a very thorough and detailed list of their needs. We are doing our best to meet these needs, where staffing and budget allows, and we will be reporting on our progress during the Fall 2006 semester.

Student Survey Comment Categories			

Collections and Materials	93	Hours	45
General Collections	35		
Specific Subject Areas	21	Information Search Process	82
Textbooks	8	Diff w/catalog & finding books	33
Online Resources	8	General difficulties	17
Specific Books	4	Diff w/offsite access	15
Different Formats	4	Diff w/databases	11
Other	13	Diff finding journals/articles	6
Comfort & Convenience	71	Noise & Unaffiliated Users	68
Food & Drink	22	Children & HS students	19
Furniture	19	NJCU Students	17
Temperature	11	Cell phones	12
Lounge or lounging areas	7	Other	20
Elevators	6		
Other	6	Positive Comments & Compliments	76
Computers and Printers	264	Staff	56
MS Word & other MS Office Suite programs	61	Negative experiences	30
Printers	59	Positive experiences	21
PCs old, slow & need to be upgraded	37	Other	5
Don't like paying for paper	18		
General technical difficulties	15	Other or unclear	49
Need more computers	14	Cell phones	3
Slow connection	12	Events	2
Computers freeze	9	Handicapped entrance	2
Wireless	6	Interlibrary loan	3
Disk drives (especially CD drives)	5	Signage	3
Other	28	Sunday access	2
		Survey	4
Copiers	44	Too general/unclear	10
		Video policy	3
Help Using Library	60	Web site	2
Need more help from staff/more staff	31	Other	15
Workshops, Seminars, Info Sessions, Tours	19		
Print or Web-based help	6	Grand Total	908
Other	4		

Contact Information:

Grace Bulaong, Library Director
Congressman Frank J. Guarini Library
New Jersey City University
2039 Kennedy Blvd.
Jersey City, NJ 07305
Telephone: 201-200-2036
Fax: 201-200-2330
gbulaong@njcu.edu