Loyola University Chicago
LibQual 2010
Executive Summary

The University Libraries last participated in LibQual in Spring 2006, as part of the AJCU consortium. Although we have conducted annual surveys each year, they are difficult to compare with the LibQual results as the survey instruments differ. For Spring 2010, we chose to once again use the LibQual survey instrument with the intent to gain some comparative data across the 4-year span.

The survey was open for responses from March 15 to April 5. It was promoted in a number of ways, from a listing on the university homepage to an ad in the Phoenix. We offered incentive prizes including a netbook computer to encourage responses. In total, there were 520 responses. Of these, 36.9% were undergraduates, 37.5% graduate students, 20.63% faculty, and 4.97% staff. Although this is somewhat lower than we would have liked, we were competing against a number of other university surveys that were running at the same time, including Dining Services.

The LibQual survey asks users to assign three scores, ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 9, to each of 22 aspects of library performance. The "Minimum Service Level" refers to the baseline of what the user considers acceptable. The "Desired Service Level" reflects what they would ideally like. Finally, the "Perceived Service Level" reflects their interpretation of existing service.

Overall, the results for 2010 were quite positive and showed a marked improvement over the 2006 results (see appendix for charts). The overall mean for the adequacy gap (which is the difference between minimum expected levels and perceived levels) jumped from a -0.03 to 0.40. This is even more significant when you see that the minimum expectations increased in almost every area. The largest gains were in the Library as Place section, perhaps unsurprisingly as the Information Commons has had a tremendous impact on the quality of our spaces. But perceptions of service quality and professionalism are also up markedly. Questions related to collections and other resources have a more mixed result, with the largest gains in "the printed materials I need for my work" and "modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information." The one element that has declined rather than improved is "A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own", indicating a need for more work in that area.

Information Control, which contains questions related to collections as well as online finding aids, is the area in which our user's expectations are the highest. "The electronic information resources I need"; "modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information", and "print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work" have the three highest minimum expectations. Conversely, the lowest minimum expected levels are both from the Affect of Service section, assigned to "giving users individual attention" and "employees who instill confidence in users."

When we look at the perceived mean, or how users rate our current offerings, survey respondents assigned the highest score to "willingness to help users" followed by "modern

equipment that lets me easily access needed information". The lowest perceived scores are for "Library space that invites study and learning" and "quiet space for individual activities".

We also received 221 free-text comments. As before, the greatest number (39) reflect concerns about the entry point to Cudahy Library. Following that are 36 positive comments about service, and 27 comments that are generally positive.   Some examples of positive comments:
"The Libraries on campus run excellently."
"Overall, I am very pleased with the library services and staff. I have always received prompt, polite, and useful responses whenever I needed assistance. I often comment to colleagues that I am fortunate (and proud) to have access to such a great library."

There are also 24 complaints about noise, and 14 stating that study space is lacking. Some examples:
"Only major complaint is that both Cudahy and the IC are not quiet and inviting places to study....it is loud in the areas that are inviting and quiet spaces tend to be less inviting areas of the library. Otherwise service has always been good."
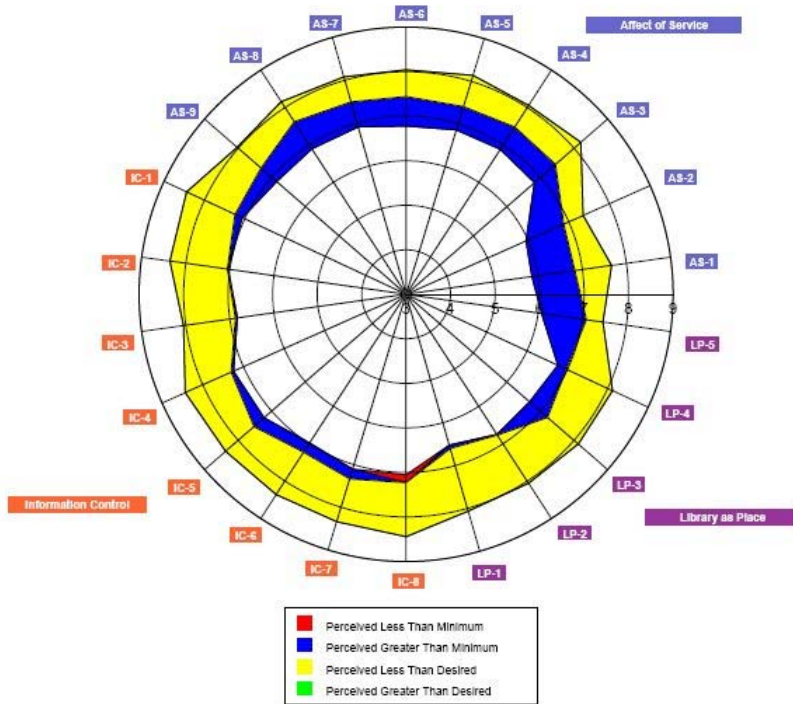"I do not think there is enough space for individual quiet study. especially during midterms and finals, it is hard to even find a place to sit. I have had to sit on the floor numerous times, so I stopped coming to the library during finals and midterms."

A number of respondents also left specific suggestions for changes they would like to see in our policies or procedures, some of which could perhaps be implemented soon. Some, in fact, have already been put into place. One such comment is from a faculty member stating, "It would be helpful if print journals could be checked out for short periods of time, even a few hours. Most are too tightly bound to be scanned, and reading lengthy works in the library (esp. in a foreign language) is near impossible at times of the day when the library is filled with undergraduates." Another example: "I transferred in from Saint Louis University & their website is fabulous. It's also great because you can request books online & have them pulled & ready for you at the front desk. I loved their website so I am doubly disappointed with Loyola's." Our new paging service addresses this need and moving to the new request system in May should make it even easier.

Many suggestions and comments reflect the same issues the library has designated for development in our strategic plan, notably improvement of the web site and access to online resources; creation of a variety of study spaces to address needs for quiet and group study; and strengthening the collections to support research.

Appendix

2010 Overall Results

2006 Overall Results