

**Forrest R. Polk Library**  
**Actions Taken in Response to 2004 LibQUAL Survey**  
**July 1, 2006**

**Background**

- Polk Library participated in a survey in spring 2004 that measured users' perceptions and expectations of library service quality. 1,054 undergraduates, graduate students and faculty responded to this online survey.
- The Association of Research Libraries conducted the survey for 202 libraries in the United States and other areas in the developed world.
- All UW Universities participated in the survey with one exception.
- The survey measured affect of service (AS), information control (IC - print and electronic collections & access to information) and the library as place (LP).
- It asked respondents to rank their expectations of minimum acceptable, desired and actual perception of service on a scale of 1 - 9.
- If the perceived mean is between the minimum and desired mean, it is considered a positive gap. If the perceived mean is below the minimum, it is considered a negative gap.

**Overall Evaluation**

- Polk Library rated positively in all three general categories: Affect of Service<sup>1</sup> (.70), Information Control<sup>2</sup> (.58) and Library as Place<sup>3</sup> (.64).
- In all three areas, Polk Library rated higher or slightly higher than the averages for all colleges and universities in the survey. Also, the UWS averages were higher than for all colleges and universities.
- Within UWS, Polk Library's adequacy ranking was (.64) slightly higher than the system's overall average (.63). Polk Library's ranked highest above system average in Information Control (.58/.43). It ranked furthest below the system average for library as place (.64/.75).

**Actions Taken Since Spring 2004**

The Association of Research Libraries encouraged libraries, after they reviewed the survey results, to focus on one or two major areas for their improvement efforts. The survey results demonstrated to the staff of Polk Library that their efforts should be focused towards improving Information Control and Library as Place.

## Information Control – Polk Library Actions

Under Information control, one major concern was about access to print/electronic journals, printed library materials and electronic information resources for research, study and teaching. This concern was shared across UW System and the nation, especially by faculty and graduate students. UW Oshkosh faculty seemed to have slightly higher expectations in this area than other UW System faculty and also perceive the library's level of service as slightly higher. In general, this specific concern highlights the real problem with the crisis in scholarly publishing and its impact on higher education. Actions taken in response to the survey include:

- Started desktop delivery of journal articles through the library's interlibrary loan system for students, faculty and staff. This service, on average, provides 2 – 3 day delivery service for articles not held by UW Oshkosh.
- Started a document on demand service. This service provides desktop delivery of journal articles in less than 48 hours (often in the same day) if a faculty member or graduate student needs an article as soon as possible. Polk Library pays the \$30 - \$50 per article charge to buy the article from a commercial document vendor.
- Started a book retrieval service for faculty and staff. This service allows faculty and staff to place a request for a book in the library's collection through the library catalog. Library staff retrieves the item from the collection and holds the material at the circulation desk.
- Started a new discovery service called BadgerCat which is based on the Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) database of over 70 million items worldwide. This allows users to conduct a search of the complete database or parts of it. Get a list of results and easily tell if Polk Library has it. If not, the patron can immediately request online the item through Universal Borrowing (within UWS) or interlibrary loan (outside of UWS) and have it delivered to the circulation desk. This service is used mainly for books, videos, etc.

Another major concern under information control by respondents was the difficulty of locating library information. This was another common concern within UWS and beyond. It reflects the problem of making a complex world of information and scholarly resources as easy to use as Google. Actions taken in response to the survey include:

- Provided a single search of the collections of Polk Library, UWS libraries and libraries across the world (BadgerCat mentioned

- above). It provides enhanced searching and format limiting features.
- Redesigned the library's web presence. The main page was designed with undergraduates specifically in mind. It stresses giving students opportunities to conduct searches from the main page.
  - Added software to the library web site that allows linking full-text retrieval with the discovery of online citations and cross-database searching.
  - Will offer in spring 2007 a one-credit-hour "information lab" component to an English Department's composition course as a "pilot." (This is in addition to our highly successful library instruction program that serves over 300 class sessions and 7,000 students each year.)
  - Organized and implemented a more coordinated approach to de-selecting from the collection out-of-date books and journals (in consultation with faculty).
  - Added several major online resources such as Communication & Mass Media Complete, Psych Articles (Full Text), ValueLine Investment Survey, etc. to the library's over 100 databases.

### **Library as Place – Polk Library Actions**

The two wings of the library were built in 1961 and 1968. The last major renovation to the building took place 20 years ago (mid-1980s). A library consultant who studied the building in 2000 – 2001 stated: *"THE POLK LIBRARY FACES PROBLEMS COMMON TO MOST OTHER ACADEMIC LIBRARIES BUILT IN THE 1960'S AND 70'S . . . THE CURRENT PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IS OUTDATED AND INFLEXIBLE FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY, AND HAS SCATTERED COLLECTIONS FROM THEIR LOGICAL SERVICE POINTS."*

The "outdated" facilities were recognized by the respondents to the survey and frequently commented upon in general responses. Since there is little possibility of a major renovation of the building for a decade, the library followed a strategy of focusing on specific improvements to make the building more inviting for students and more functional. Actions taken in response to the survey include:

- Created its first group study room (Polk 205D). With a Student Technology Fee grant, the library will be enhancing a/v equipment in the room during the summer 2006.
- Created its second quiet study area.

- Designed and built a modern, secure and enlarged area for Archives and Special Collections. (This area had the most dysfunctional space in the library.)
- Reorganized Polk 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor North as a result of the Archives and Special Collections project. It also improved the organization for other collections (government publications) on the floor.
- Initiated building maintenance talks with Facilities Management. This resulted in the entire library being repainted and many damaged ceiling tiles and discolored light filters being replaced.
- Created an “art gallery” on Polk 1<sup>st</sup> Floor North for revolving exhibits of student and faculty work.
- Installed open data jacks and wireless connections throughout the library. Will be providing laptop check-out starting in fall 2006.

## Future Assessment

The libraries of UWS will participate in the LibQual survey again either in the spring of 2007 or 2008. The date will be decided in July 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> **Affect of Service** (Employees who instill confidence in users; Readiness to respond to users' questions; Willingness to help users; Dependability in handling users' service problems; Giving users individual attention; Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions; Employees who are consistently courteous; Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion; Employees who understand the needs of their users;)

<sup>2</sup> **Information Control** (Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office; A library website enabling me to locate information on my own; The printed library materials I need for my work; The electronic information resources I need; Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information; Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own; Making information easily accessible for independent use; Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work;)

<sup>3</sup> **Library as place** (Quiet space for individual activities; A comfortable and inviting location; Library space that inspires study and learning; Community space for group learning and group study; A getaway for study, learning or research ;)