

APPENDIX II-N: COMMENTS ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FROM WESTERN CIVILIZATION I DISCUSSION SECTIONS

An ongoing effort to gather information about the University Libraries involves focus group-style discussions with students. In spring 2006, 206 students enrolled in 12 discussion sections of Western Civilization I participated in focus groups and discussed—among other topics of interest—why some of them do not use the Libraries. Following is a summary of their comments.

Reasons students come to the library

- To study, especially for final exams
- Work on group projects
- Hang out between classes
- Instructors tell them to come
- Check out books
- Work on papers/projects – get magazine/journal articles
- Came with a class/have a class in the library

Reasons students don't come to the library

- No need, haven't had any assignments requiring it yet
- Get what they need online (InfoHawk, Google, Wikipedia)
- Use the lounges/computers in the dorms
- Too big/overwhelming/confusing
- Too far or otherwise inconveniently located
- Too quiet
- Too crowded/loud
- Don't like to pay for parking
- Hours
 - Not open late enough, study at the engineering building as it's open 24 hours
 - Don't study at night because don't like walking alone at 2:00 a.m.

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Library staff

- Friendly and helpful
- Seem to know what they're doing
- Answer questions/get back to students promptly
- Like the idea of librarians roaming to answer question on upper floors

Computers

- Many only come to use the ITC (instructional technology center)
- More computers needed all over the building
- More with word processing programs needed
- More laptops needed (ITC checkout)
- More printers
- Have problems with wireless connectivity

Databases

- Academic Universe, EBSCOhost/Academic Search Elite, JSTOR mentioned by name as being databases students used and found helpful
- Tend to use only the databases their instructor tells them to, or those demonstrated in The College Transition or their rhetoric courses
- If an article isn't full-text students will usually try to find one that is rather than seeking out the hard copy
- Databases are great; used a lot because don't have to come to the library to use them

Resources/services students have used

- Media services
- Reserve
- Research consultations
- ITC (instructional technology center) – often check out laptops

Study space

- Need more group study spaces
- Group study spaces need to be more clearly identified
- Can hear everything from room 2054 when in use (a surprisingly common complaint)
- Like the study lounge on 5th floor
- 3rd floor is uncomfortable
- Would like more “reading rooms”

Seating

- Need more seating in general but specifically “comfy” chairs and couches
- Replace the 6 person tables on 2nd floor, not likely to sit there if someone else is, waste of space
- Hard to find seating during finals
- Like the small/“hidden” desks on 4th and 5th floors

Facilities

- Don't like that the South entrance closes early
 - Can't drive up to north entrance to pick someone up or drop them off
 - Hassle if you're parked at the meters and have to go around the building
- Media services viewing rooms are horrible and uncomfortable
- Government Publications smells funny
- Psychology library is scary
- Ceiling of Art Library looks like it's going to collapse
- Like that there is a café, if not the food offerings, prices, and hours
- Like the exhibit space
- Wall murals would make library more inviting
- Elevators make people nervous
- Toilets always flushing, especially on 1st floor across from auditorium

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Good ways to advertise services/resources to students

- Orientation
- Librarian visits to intro classes
- Bars
- Posters
- Library website
- Flyers
- Daily Iowan
- Cambus
- No e-mail, will just delete

Wishful thinking

- Add video games to the collection
- Do away with late fees
- Free printing/copying (or at least cheaper printing/copying)
- Free parking
- Free mugs
- A Kinko's-like area: color copying, faxing, transparencies, typewriter

Other

- Media Services closes too early
- Many have taken the Online@Iowa course
- Like that there is a lot of subject depth in the collection
- More how-to type handouts
- Miss the card catalog
- Like the A-Z on the website
- Many said they would attend a library/research skills workshop if offered
- Offer more tours