



## **The Library Summit**

**Now that you have LibQUAL+® survey data, what will you do with it?**

The LibQUAL+® notebook, full of feedback about service quality, is an ideal catalyst for constructive dialogue on your campus about where your library should focus its energy and financial resources.

A Library Summit gathers people together who have a stake in the library's future. These individuals spend a full or half day together in facilitated small-group discussions about the LibQUAL+® results, adding depth and context to the survey numbers, and generating fresh solutions and suggestions for service improvements.

### **Planning a Summit for Your Library**

Clemson University and the University of Texas at Austin are working with ARL to help other academic libraries put together their own Library Summits. Contact ARL or any Library Summit team member to for guidance on implementing your own Summit, or to discuss how a Summit could benefit your institution.

# Clemson University

## May-June 2000:

Clemson University sponsored Library Summit I, a full-day discussion about library issues with participants from the University community, including administrators and trustees, students, faculty, and librarians (who facilitated group roundtables). A month later, Summit II brought the staff of the Clemson Libraries together to respond to the set of tasks and challenges resulting from Summit I. The main themes from the Summits were used as the basis for the Libraries strategic and business plans.

## September 2003:

LibQUAL+® results provided the structure for discussing service priorities with Clemson faculty, staff, and students in Summit III. Town meetings with library staff turned Summit comments and ideas into new assessment and planning tools for the Libraries.

## December 2006:

A third Summit needed to help the new Dean of Libraries re-energize the campus community to re-imagine and renew support for the library. A Web page was created for invitees and library staff to keep them informed and involved before and after the Library Summit, <http://www.lib.clemson.edu/Summit2006>, and facilitators were provided several hypothetical scenarios as framework for discussions of the information needs of Clemson's stakeholders and research partners. After the Summit, Dean Kay Wall met with all library employees for town meetings to share the Summit results. Task forces were created to implement some immediate changes and to lay groundwork for library-wide planning. The discussion itself reminded campus opinion leaders and outside participants of the Libraries' relevance to their work and gave them new ideas about how to include the library in their projects.

### Clemson's Summit Team:

Kay Wall	Jan Comfort
Dean of Libraries	Assessment
<a href="mailto:kwall@clemson.edu">kwall@clemson.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:comforj@clemson.edu">comforj@clemson.edu</a>
(864) 656-3026	(864) 656-5168

Peg Tyler  
Outreach  
[ptyler@clemson.edu](mailto:ptyler@clemson.edu)  
(864) 656-5179

## University of Texas at Austin

In March, 2004, the University of Texas at Austin Libraries held a very successful Library Summit based on the Clemson model, with participants offering fresh perspectives on library issues. The qualitative data gathered at the Summit are being used in the Libraries strategic planning process and to better allocate scarce funds and staff. Major ideas gathered at the Summit include creating a library Web site that functions more like Amazon.com with personalization, seamless linking, and alert services; a proactive library staff that “roams” the library looking for opportunities to help users; and better marketing of library services to the University community.

The Summit generated increased support and a better understanding of library issues across the University community. Maintaining continued goodwill depends upon continued responsiveness, so a list of measurable objectives and a timetable for meeting them will be posted online to allow all library constituents to track progress.

### **UT at Austin’s Summit Team:**

Fred Heath  
Vice Provost  
fheath@austin.utexas.edu  
(512) 495-4350

Damon Jaggars  
Associate Director  
jaggars@austin.utexas.edu  
(512) 495-4321

## Assumption College

On October 4, 2006, a group of Assumption students, faculty, and administrators gathered in the Salon of the La Maison for a great dinner and to contribute their thoughts on making the library on campus even better. Vice President of Academic Affairs, David Marker, welcomed the group, followed by Library Director, Dawn Thistle, who provided an introduction and overview of the results from the previous semester's LibQUAL+® Survey. Dawn showed in graphs how the survey reflected the opinions of the college community and how each survey question area broke down.

Participants separated into four groups. Elaine Martin, Director of the Soutter Library of UMass Medical School, acted as facilitator for the evening and guided the group through the discussion of questions in areas of Public Access Services, Collections, Facilities, and Technology. Each table was asked to identify what they liked and what frustrated them about the library, and to suggest ideas for improvement in that particular area. At the end of the evening, everyone voted for ideas for improvement that they would like most, were they given money and power to make changes.

The suggestion that received the highest number of votes was to create a library café. The second largest number of votes was to build an addition to the library to create new spaces for lectures and programs, storage, instruction, archives and—of course—the collections. Other popular suggestions included providing more information to faculty about how they can order books, offering laptops for in-library lending, and improving the library's instructional handouts. Staff are evaluating the suggestions and looking at what is feasible and possible to do.

### **Assumption's Summit Team:**

Dawn Thistle  
Director of Library Services  
dthistle@assumption.edu  
(508) 767-7272

Carole Myles  
Head of Reference & Instructional Services  
cmyles@assumption.edu  
(508) 767-7020

## University of Maryland

In October 2007, the University of Maryland Libraries held a successful Library Summit with faculty and graduate students. Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Nariman Farvardin, Dean of Libraries Charles Lowry, and Chair of the University Library Council James Klumpp welcomed participants and discussed the rationale for the Summit. The results of the Information Control and Affect of Service dimensions of the LibQUAL+® survey were provided to participants prior to the Summit, and provided the backdrop for discussion.

The participants provided a wealth of information, ideas, and suggestions for improving access to information and other library services. Library staff will meet to discuss the comments and ideas and begin to prioritize and plan for the future. The response to the Summit by the participants was excellent and all felt it had been a productive morning.

### **UMD's Summit Team**

Irma Dillon  
Management Information Systems  
ifd@umd.edu  
(301) 405-9113

## University of Northern Colorado

In April 2006, President Kay Norton and Dean of Libraries Gary Pitkin welcomed participants from across University of Northern Colorado's campus to the University Libraries' Symposium, an event that began with a sit-down lunch and a discussion of LibQUAL+® results from the preceding year. The diverse group of participants took part in focus-group-style discussions of targeted "areas of concern"—as identified by the LibQUAL+® survey. These group discussions generated 75 flip-chart sheets of suggestions to improve the libraries' collections, facilities, service, Web site, technology and services. Suggestions were forwarded to library administration for integration into the planning process, and have resulted in significant and noticeable changes, including: materials acquisitions shifting to a greater emphasis on electronic resources; the creation of more accessible online resource guides; and enhancement of materials to support those users for whom English is a second language.

The Symposium provided valuable data for our planning process. Perhaps more importantly, it was a priceless opportunity to tell UNC's campus constituents that the Libraries care about their needs, with a special emphasis on the fact that the library employees are listening. And finally, the event created new advocates: those who feel they know, and are invested in, the Libraries.

### **UNC's Symposium Team:**

Gary Pitkin  
Dean of University Libraries  
gary.pitkin@unco.edu  
(970) 351-2601

Sarah Naper  
Past Chair, UL Assessment  
sarah.naper@unco.edu  
(970) 351-1533

Annie Epperson  
Present Chair, UL Assessment  
annie.epperson@unco.edu  
(970) 351-1535

## University of Southern Mississippi

On October 31, 2005, the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Libraries conducted its first Library Summit, inviting 45 students and faculty from all sites to share their experiences and offer comments for improvement of library services. The Summit obtained information from the university community in the following four areas: (1) Affect of Service, (2) Personal Control, (3) Access to Information, and (4) The Library as Place.

Issues highlighted in the Summit include a need for a presentation practice room, additional library hours, the desire for cultural activities at the library, and the creation of quiet floors. The libraries have begun resolving many of the issues highlighted at the Summit. For example, the presentation room concept is included in the Speaking Center as part of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

USM chose to hold a 3 hour Summit instead of a full-day program, and believed this shorter time commitment, especially during the busy fall semester, contributed to greater participation.

### **USM's Summit Team:**

Sherry Laughlin  
Associate University Librarian  
sherry.laughlin@usm.edu  
(601) 266-4270

## The Benefits of a Library Summit

- **Goodwill.** An organization that makes its weaknesses public and asks for advice and help gains positive regard. Participants and library staff also appreciate having their opinions taken seriously.
- **“Closing the Loop.”** Library plans based on LibQUAL+® survey results and Summit discussions provide good structure for showcasing positive outcomes in assessment.
- **Personal investment.** Participants tend to take ownership of their ideas and may stay more involved and connected with the library to see if their suggestions are implemented.
- **Outreach.** Everyone involved in a Library Summit learns something about library resources and services.
- **Original ideas.** Library “outsiders” provide fresh interpretations and insights that might not be generated internally.
- **More data.** Input from Library Summit participants provides richer and more detailed data for LibQUAL+® survey items.
- **Buy-in.** The Summit process is inclusive, so it reduces internal and external disagreements about priorities and decisions.
- **Climate change.** Administrative, faculty, staff, and student endorsement of a Summit sets the tone for campus-wide collaboration in library success.



ARL Statistics and Service Quality Programs  
21 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone 202-296-2296; Fax 202-872-0884  
libqual@arl.org

### Association of Research Libraries:

Duane Webster  
Executive Director  
duane@arl.org

Martha Kyrillidou  
Director, Statistics and  
Service Quality Programs  
martha@arl.org