

CSUN Student Survey of Library Book and Audiovisual Collections, Fall 2006

Executive Summary: August 2007 Update

Introduction

The CSUN Student Survey of Library Book and Audiovisual Collections was an online survey posted on the Library's home page from November 30, 2006 through January 30, 2007. Email announcements of the availability of the survey were sent to various campus listservs for further distribution including those subscribed to by deans, associate deans, chairs, and their secretaries; librarians, members of the Faculty Senate Library Committee, and the campus assessment liaisons. Recipients of the email were asked to forward the announcement to their faculty, who were in turn, asked to forward it to their students. Two hundred and three surveys were returned, but responses do not always add up to 203 due to missing or non-applicable answers.

Demographics

Of the 203 student respondents, the majority (56.4%) were juniors or seniors; followed by freshmen (18.3%), graduate students (11.9%), and sophomores (10.9%). Compared to fall 2006 campus data¹, these statistics are consistent with student enrollment. About half of the respondents (47.8%) started as freshmen and the other half (43.3%) started as transfers; and 5.5% began as graduate students. Overwhelmingly, 95.5% indicated that they had majors, most of which were in the departments of Biology (13%), Deaf Studies (11.5%), Anthropology (9.9%), Psychology (8.3%), and Kinesiology (6.3%). However, these majors do not reflect in the same proportions the majority of majors at CSUN, and most likely reflect the departments of the faculty who encouraged their students to take the survey.

Library Instruction and Research Experience

The majority of respondents (63%) indicated that they had library instruction during the past year. 76.1% had classes requiring library/Internet research during the fall 2006 semester, and their assignments ranged from papers to speeches, but mostly were not reported. The courses themselves came from all of the colleges except for Extended Learning. The largest numbers of reported assignments were for ENGL 155 and UNIV 100 courses and the topics varied (See Table Q7 in the Data Summary).

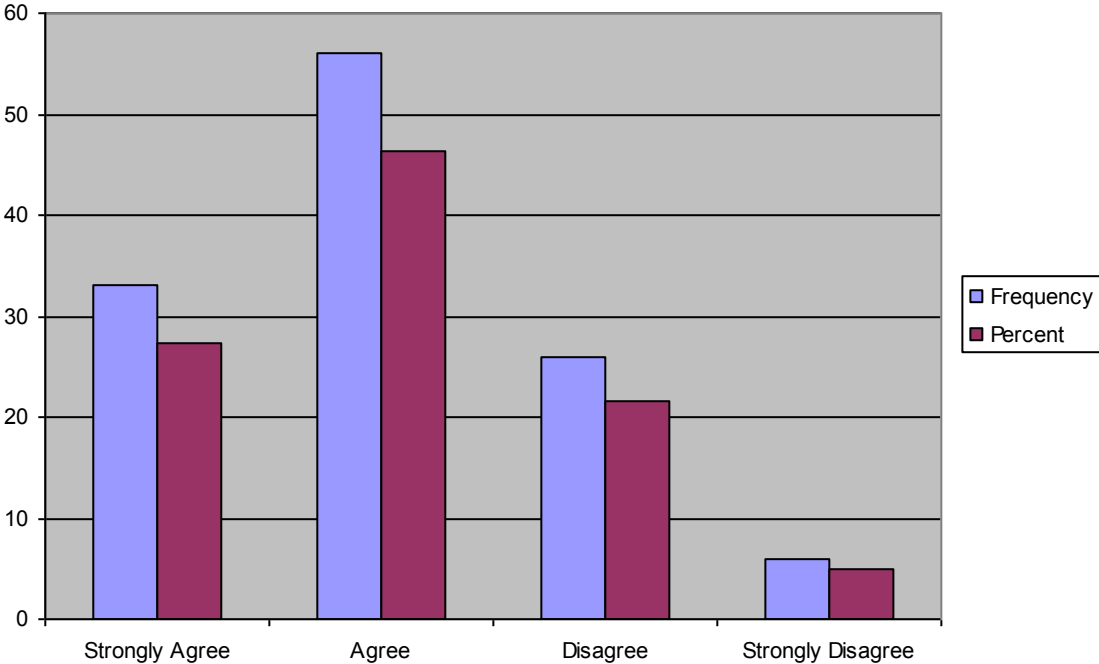
Library Books and Audiovisual Materials Usage

One should keep in mind that the survey only asked for book and audiovisual materials usage during the fall 2006 semester; a survey of periodicals usage was planned for a future survey. Furthermore, despite a return rate of a maximum of 203 surveys, when it came to answering the questions at the heart of the survey (Q 7-14), the total number of respondents dropped since students who did not have assignments requiring library or Internet research were asked to skip those questions. Furthermore, to account for students who did have research assignments but did not use books, "non-applicable" was one of the response choices. Therefore, level of agreement regarding the perceived quality of the Library's book collections was calculated based on the total number of respondents who indicated that they had assignments requiring research and did use books. This methodology was chosen to help ensure that responses were based on actual use of the collection versus assumptions or hearsay.

¹ Office of Institutional Research. *Profile 2006*. Northridge, CA: California State University Northridge, 2006. Accessed 3 July 2007 http://www.csun.edu/~instrsch/profile/profile_2006.xls.

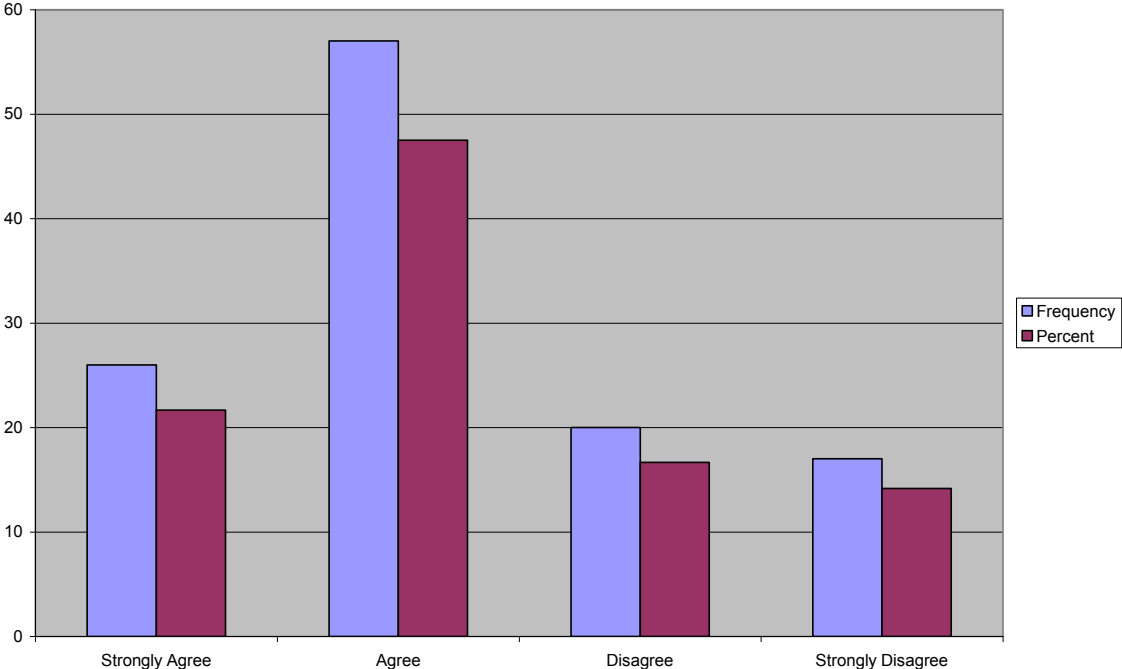
When asked about their level of agreement with the statement that there were enough books on their research topics, the majority (73.6%) agreed or strongly agreed, and 26.4% disagreed or strongly

Q8 Enough books on subjects



disagreed. Similar numbers agreed or strongly agreed that the Library's books were current enough for their subjects (69.2%), and 30.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Q9 Books current enough



Of the 87 respondents who used reference books for their research assignments, the majority (81.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that there were enough and 70.1% said they were current enough. For the 105 respondents who used electronic books, the majority (89.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they met their research needs.

When asked to select reasons for non-use of books (more than one answer was possible), the highest frequency of responses were that “better information was found in periodicals,” “books were not required or recommended sources,” and “better information was found on the Internet.”

Q14 Reasons books not used this semester (check all that apply)

	Frequency	Percent
Better info from periodicals	32	15.8
Not required/recommended	29	14.4
Better info from Internet	27	13.4
No time to read books	13	6.4
Library did not own/not on shelf	11	5.4
Used another library	9	4.5
Too difficult to locate	5	2.5
Other, explain in Q21	2	1.0

The majority of respondents did not have classes requiring the use of audiovisual materials during the fall 2006 semester. However, when asked to respond to the statement that the Library’s AV collections met their research needs, of the 49 who indicated they used them, 75.5% agreed or strongly agreed.

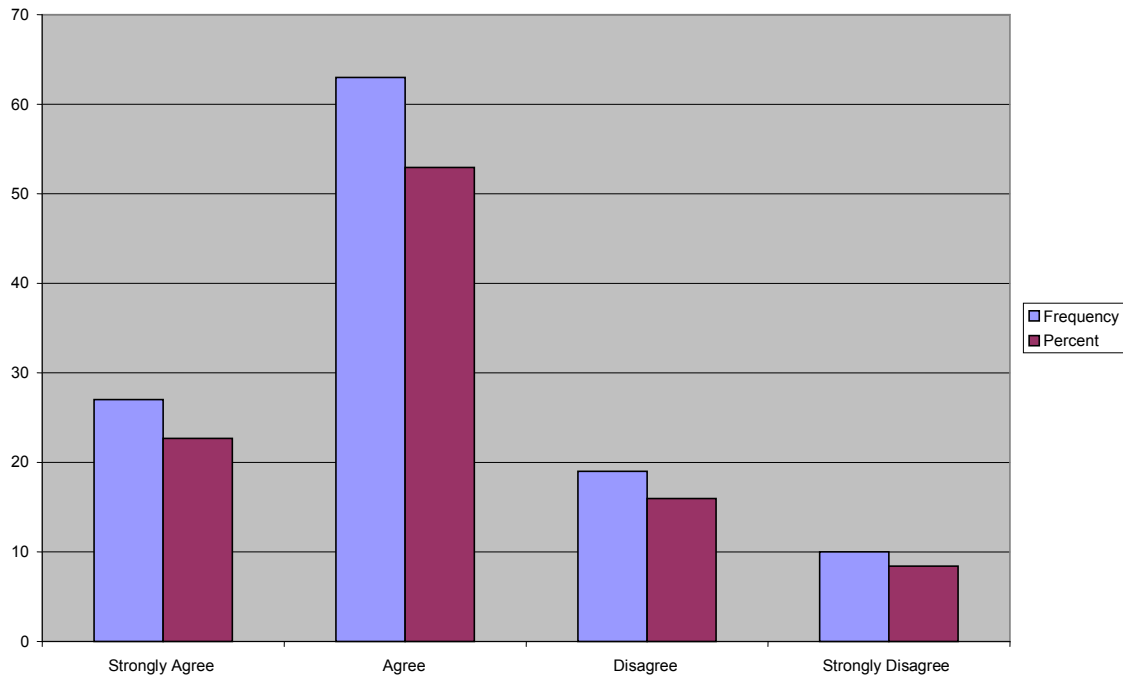
Q15 Classes required AV this semester?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	24.6
No	150	75.4
Total	199	100.0

Locating Books and Audiovisual Materials

When asked about the availability of books for their research needs during the fall 2006 semester, the majority (75.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the books were on the shelves. Furthermore, when asked their level of agreement with the statement that books and/or audiovisual materials are easy to find in the CSUN Library, the majority (79.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. 88.1% agreed or strongly agreed that the OPAC was easy to use and 68.3% were aware they could place a hold on checked-out books. Additionally, 59.9% were aware of the Inter-Library Loan service, but 40.1% were not.

Q10 Most books were on the shelf



Comments Summary

There were 38 comments provided by respondents. Most comments (65.8%) were considered negative, 15.8% were positive, 13% were neutral, and 5.3% were mixed. The majority of the negative comments offered suggestions on how the Library might improve its collections and/or services. See Summary Data for the full-text comments.

Discussion

In terms of the demographics of the respondents, class levels and entrance to CSUN (as freshmen or transfers) were representative of the overall student population. However, the majors were clearly skewed in favor of the faculty from those departments who forwarded the survey link. Therefore, given the limitations of the method of distribution of the survey link, one must exercise caution in drawing definitive conclusions from the data, which is why this report is purely descriptive. On the other hand, the courses listed for which they had library assignments were much broader in scope, and at the very least, the data can be used by librarians for outreach purposes as well as understanding the information needs of some CSUN students.

More than half of the respondents found enough current books on their topics. Not surprisingly, for those who did not use books, periodicals, the Internet, and the lack of a recommendation or requirement to use books were cited most frequently as reasons for non-use. Furthermore, three quarters of the respondents did not have classes requiring the use of audiovisual materials during the fall 2006 semester, and a similar number said that AV collections were not applicable to their research needs. Some of the comments suggested that restrictive loan policies or lack of knowledge of the audiovisual collections might explain this low use.

A cross-tabulation of answers to the questions about book and audiovisual materials summarized above did not reveal a statistically significant link between whether students started CSUN as freshmen or transfer students. Furthermore, whether or not a student indicated that they had library instruction did not influence their answers. However, a Chi-square test of question number eight, which asked if there were enough books in the library on their topics, found that library instruction experience was significant ($\chi^2=.000$).

Crosstab of Library Instruction with Enough Books				
Q5 Had library instruction?		Q8 Enough books on my topics?		Total
		Agree / Strongly agree	Disagree / Strongly disagree	
Yes	Count	74	15	89
	Percent	83.1%	46.9%	73.6%
No	Count	15	17	32
	Percent	16.9%	53.1%	26.4%
Total	Count	89	32	121
	Percent	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A majority of respondents said the OPAC was easy to use, knew about the “place a hold” feature for checked out materials, and three quarters found the books or audiovisual materials they needed for their research on the shelf and/or easy to find. On the other hand, a little more than half were aware of the ILL service.

Conclusion

Based on the answers tabulated from the multiple-choice questions on the survey, the Library’s book collections are meeting the needs of more than half of the respondents. Yet, the reasons cited for not using books, including reliance on periodicals and the Internet, as well as books not being recommended as a source for assignments, along with the comments indicates that we could do better. While one would hope that library instruction, which 63% indicated they had experienced during the past year, had a positive influence on library book and audiovisual materials usage, as well as knowledge of ILL and hold services, based on the cross-tabulations, this was not the case, with one exception. Students who had library instruction also agreed that there were enough books in the Library on their research topics. One could conclude that students who learn how to effectively search the library catalog would have a better chance at finding books on their topics than those who did not receive such instruction. However, many other variables were not considered in this survey. Indeed, one could also conclude that students might use books and audiovisuals more often if they were recommended or required by the faculty, if they were considered more relevant and current enough by the faculty and/or students, and if more students knew about placing holds and/or requesting books from other libraries when relevant materials were not available. Clearly, further assessment of the Library’s collections, and the effects of library instruction and/or faculty influence with a larger, randomly selected population of students is needed to make these determinations.