

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

Executive Summary

Introduction

The CSUN Faculty 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. Eighty-two surveys were returned. See Appendix 1 for the survey

Demographics

The majority of the respondents (38.3%) were tenured, followed by probationary (29.6%), and lecturers (28.4%). Compared to 2006 campus data on full-time (42.1%) and part-time faculty (57.9%)¹, a much higher percentage of full-time faculty (probationary and tenured) took the survey than part-time faculty (lecturers). Faculty from departments within the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences were the largest group of respondents (27.9%), followed by Science and Mathematics (15.8%), Health and Human Development (13.5%), Business and Economics (12.2%), Humanities (11%), Arts, Media and Communication (9.7%), Education (7.2%), and Engineering and Computer Science (2.4%).

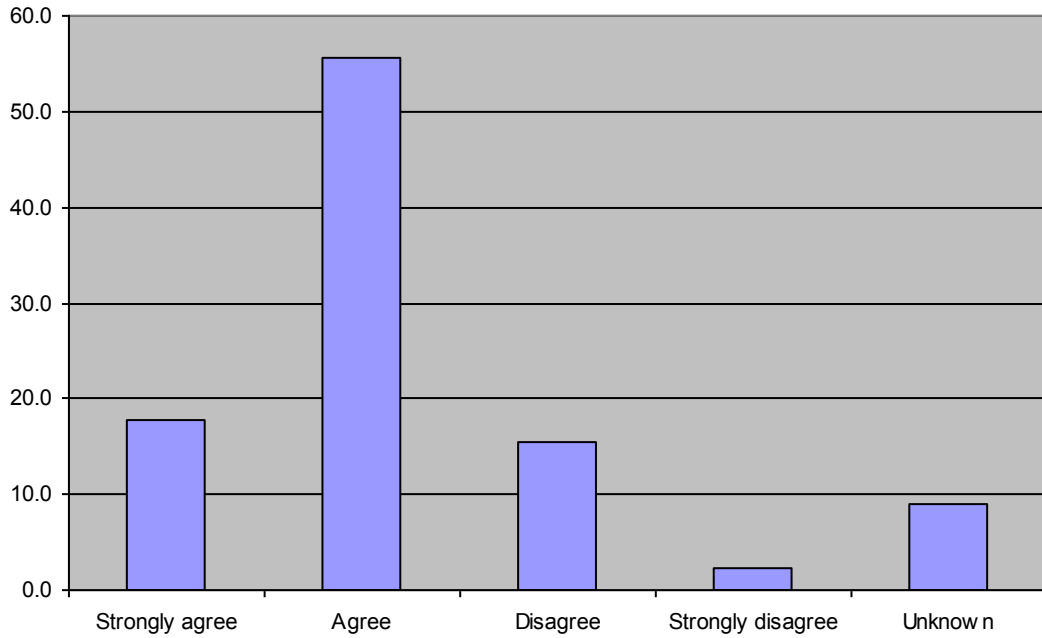
Perceptions of Library Collections for Course Assignments

Approximately 75% of the respondents gave their students research assignments and were asked for their perceptions of the quality of the Library's book collection related to satisfying their students' research needs, which was determined by their answers to questions 6, 7, and 8. For a list of the types of assignments and subjects their students researched this semester, see Appendix 2. An average of 57% of the respondents provided scaled answers (strongly agree→strongly disagree) or indicated "unknown" to questions 6, 7, and 8, which asked about their perceptions of quality, currency, and ease of locating books cited by students. Moreover, an average of 43% said that books were not applicable to their students' research needs. Out of the respondents who recommended or required books, approximately 73% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the quality of the books cited by their students,

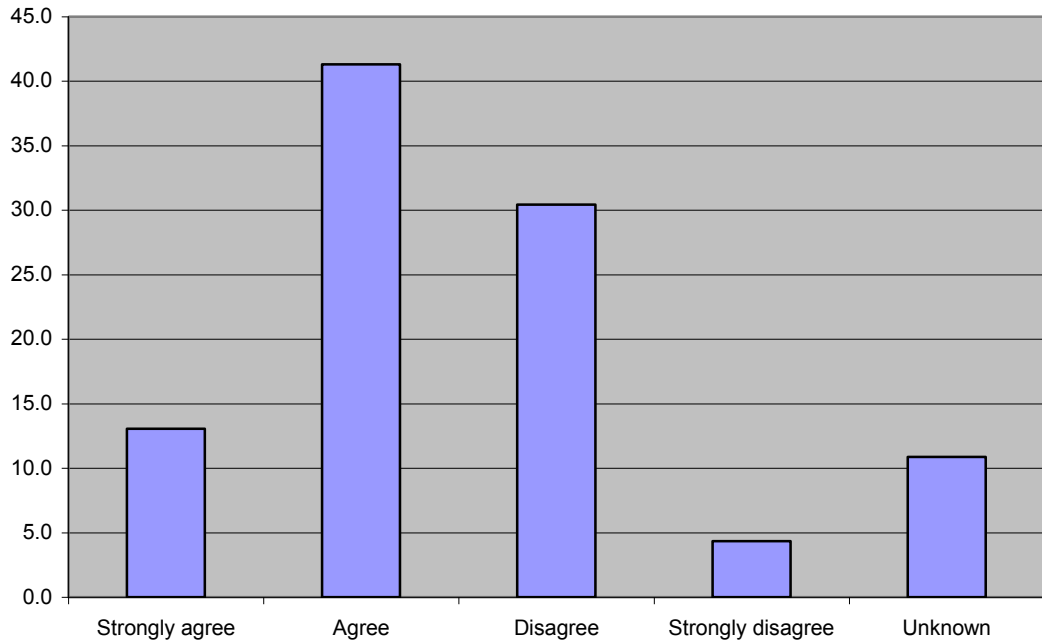
¹ Office of Institutional Research. *Profile 2006*. Northridge, CA: California State University Northridge, 2006. Accessed 7 July 2007 http://www.csun.edu/~instrsch/profile/profile_2006.xls.

about 18% either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were satisfied, and about 9% answered “unknown.”

Q6 Faculty satisfaction with the quality of books cited by students



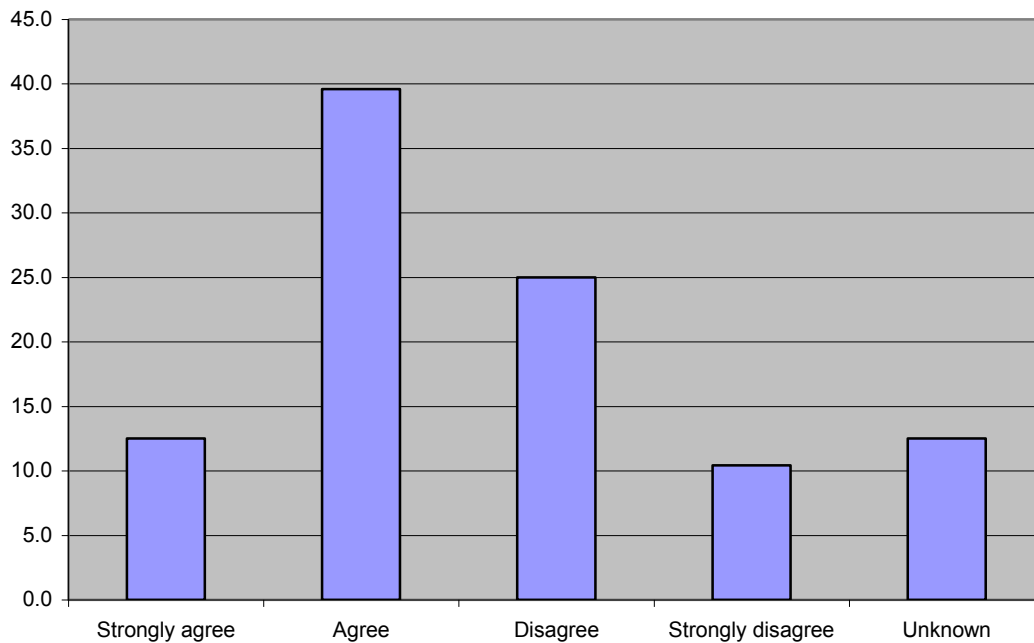
Q7 Faculty satisfied by currency of books cited by students



When asked about their satisfaction with the currency of the books cited by their students, about 54% agreed or strongly agreed, 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 11% answered “unknown.”

The survey also asked if faculty felt that their students were able to find most of the books they needed in the CSUN Library: approximately 52% agreed or strongly agreed and 35% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 12.5% answered “unknown.”

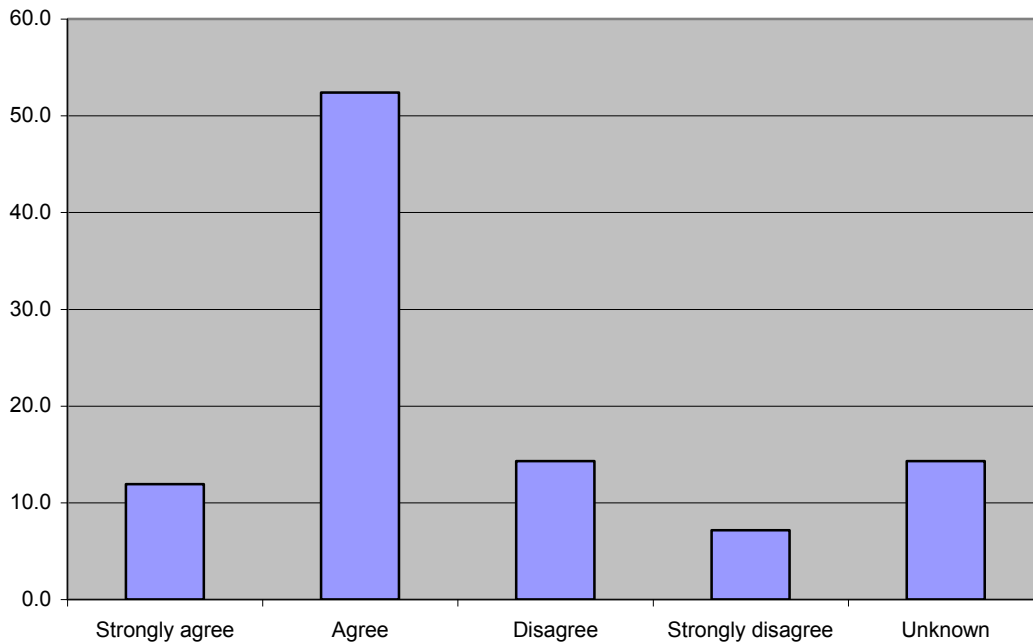
Q8 Faculty belief that students were able to find books in the Oviatt Library



For faculty who did not require/recommend that their students cite books, the most frequently given reason was that students found better or more current information in periodicals (28%), followed by books were not considered the best source for their assignments (18.3%). About 7% felt that the Internet was a better or more current source and the same amount indicated that CSUN did not have the books their students needed.

As far as audiovisual needs (CDs, DVDs, audio or video cassettes), 48.8% did not require or recommend that their students use AV collections for their research needs. Of the remaining who did require/recommend AV, 64% agreed or strongly agreed that the audiovisual collections at CSUN met their students’ research needs, 21% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 14% did not know.

Q10 CSUN Library's AV collections met students' needs

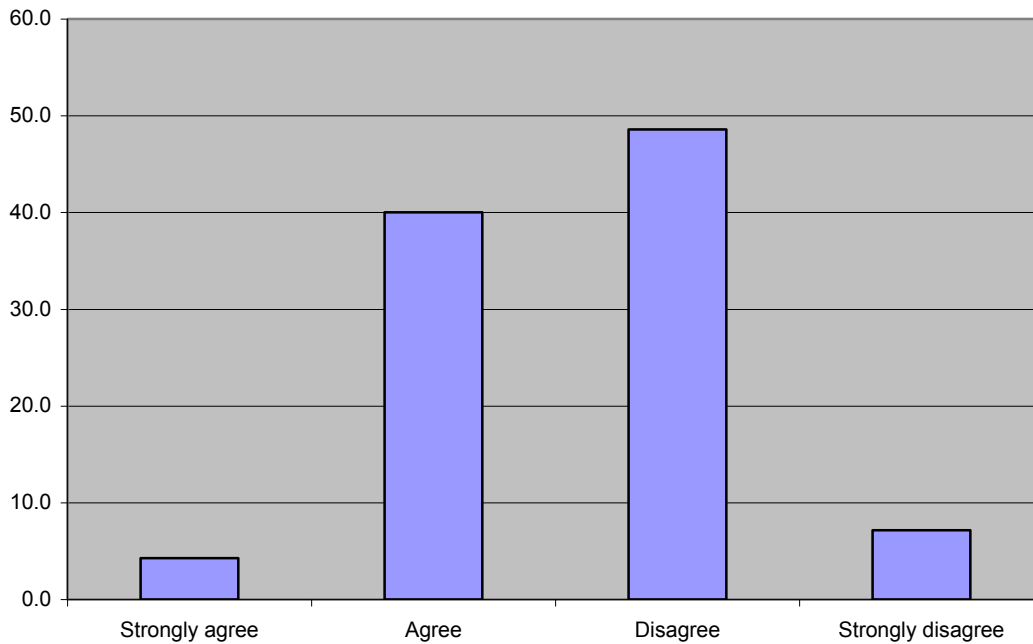


In terms of overall satisfaction with library collections and services, 79.8% always or usually encourage their undergraduates to use the CSUN Library for their research; 84.8% similarly encourage their graduate students.

Perceptions of Library Collections for Personal Research

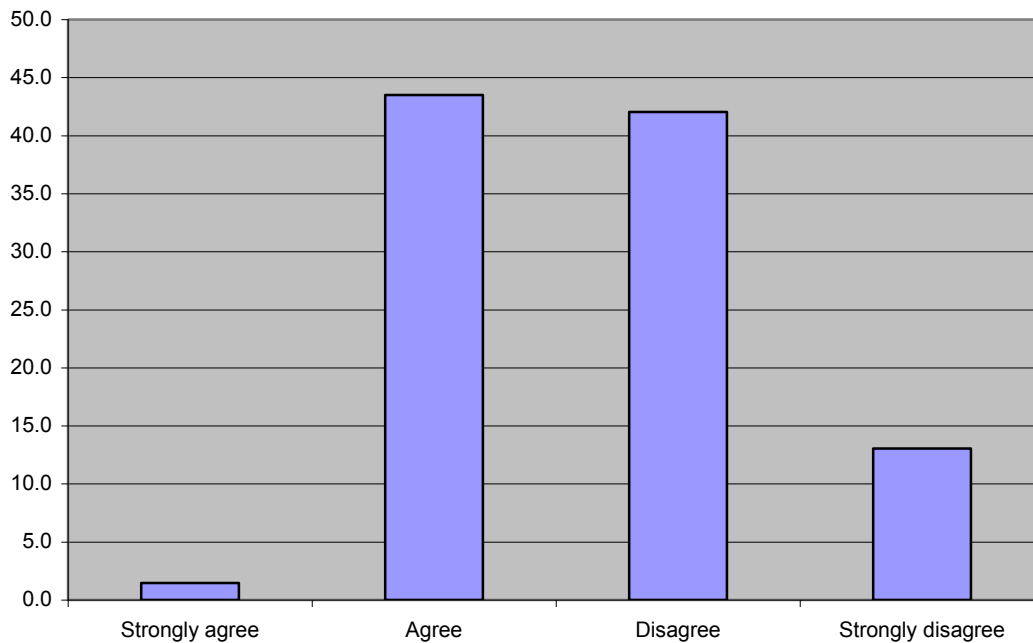
Faculty were asked about their use of the CSUN Library for their personal research: 74% indicated that they “always” or “usually” use the Library, 18.5% said “sometimes,” and 7.2% indicated that they “rarely” or “never” used the Library for their research. The survey also asked faculty how they felt about the quality of the Library’s book collections in terms of supporting their personal research. Out of the approximately 85% of respondents who do use books for their personal research, 56% percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Library had enough books to support their research, and 44% agreed or strongly agreed.

Q15 The Library has enough books to support faculty research



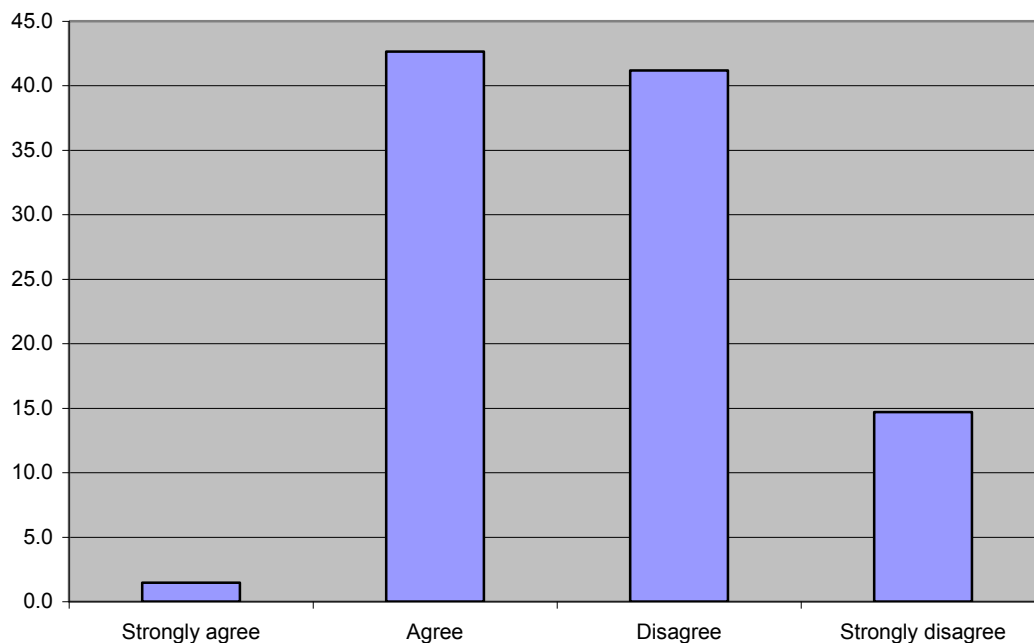
When asked how they felt about the currency of the book collection, again, about 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 45% agreed or strongly agreed that the collection was current enough to support faculty research.

Q16 The Library has enough current books to support faculty research



As for finding needed books, about 56% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 44% agreed or strongly agreed they usually find the books they need on the shelves in the Library.

Q17 Faculty find most needed books on the shelf



When asked to select from a variety of reasons as to why they do not use books for their personal research, faculty could check more than one answer. 30.5% said that they find better or more current information in periodicals, 19.5% indicated that books were not the best source for their topics, about 13% found better or more current information on the Internet, 11% said that the Library did not have the books they need, and 8.5% said “other.”

Experience with Librarians and Collection Development

With 75.3% of the total faculty respondents indicating that their courses required outside research, 59.3% did not arrange library instruction for their courses and 40.7% said that they did. Furthermore, about 90% said that they were aware that their department had an assigned librarian subject specialist and 70% indicated that they had made library purchase recommendations. The method they used most frequently was directly contacting a librarian (46.3%), followed by using the Library’s web-based purchase request form (36.6%), and passing it along to their department’s library liaison (20.7%). Virtually all respondents (97.5%) were aware of the Interlibrary Loan service and 86.3% were aware of the “place a hold” feature on the library catalog.

Open-Ended Descriptions of Course Assignments, Research Interests and Comments Summary

Forty-seven out of 81 respondents provided comments, which were judged as positive, negative, neutral, or a mix of positive and negative language. 59.5% were deemed negative, 15% were positive, 13% were mixed, and 13% were neutral. Common themes related to the lack of currency in some collections, positive interactions with library faculty and staff, a variety of comments related to the audiovisual collections, and specific suggestions of subjects and/or titles of resources that the Library should purchase. See Appendix 2 for all comments and open-ended responses.

Analysis

Clearly, one cannot generalize the survey results to the faculty at CSUN due to the low return rate and method of distribution. However, subject bibliographers can use the comments, research interests, and information on course assignments for collection development and outreach purposes. Overall data indicates that almost three quarters of the respondents who gave research assignments were satisfied with the quality of the books cited by their students (73.4%), but more than half (55.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there were enough books in the library to support their own research.

In terms of the currency of the Library's book collections, a little more than half (54.3%) thought that the books were current enough for their students' research needs, but less than half (44.9%) felt the same regarding their own research. The data collected by the student survey are consistent: Almost three quarters (73.6%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that there were enough books on their research topics and a similar number (69.2%) agreed that the books were current enough. However, faculty were not as enthusiastic about the currency of books cited by their students. In general, however, about 43% did not require or recommend that their students cite books and an average of 13% said that books were non-applicable for their own research. When asked why they did not require books for their students or use them for their own research, the numbers were similar in that faculty felt they found better information in periodicals (28% vs. 30.5%) and/or that books were not the best source (18.3% vs. 19.5%). As far as preferring the Internet to books, while 7.3% thought that it was better or more current for student assignments, almost double (13.4%) felt the same for their own research purposes. A similar discrepancy came up regarding why they did not require or use books: 7.3% said that they did not require their students to use books because the Library did not have what they needed, whereas, for their own research, 11% said that the Library did not have the books they needed. In the student survey, respondents were almost equal on their reasons for not citing books: they found better information in periodicals (15.8%), books were not required/recommended sources (14.4%), and better information was found on the Internet (13.4%). Clearly, students have more confidence in using the Internet as a source than the faculty feel they should.

As far as use of audiovisuals, three quarters of student respondents reported that they were not required (75.4%), but for those that did use AV, 75.5% agreed that they met their needs. On the other hand, while almost half (48.8%) of the faculty respondents did not require or recommend AV collections to their classes, of those that did, somewhat less (64.3%) found they met their students' needs. This is borne out by some of the comments in the faculty survey that suggested the video/DVD collections need a change in checkout policy and/or beefing up in certain areas.

A cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis of status (tenured, probationary, lecturer), having library instruction for classes, and knowing that a department has a subject bibliographer with the questions about the perceived quality of the collection and use of services (Q6-8, Q10, Q15-17, Q19-20, Q22-23) did not show any positive correlations ($\chi^2 \geq .000$).

Conclusion

Based on the answers tabulated from the multiple-choice questions on both the faculty and student surveys, the Library's book and audiovisual collections are meeting the needs of more than half of the students. However, for faculty, less than half are satisfied with the collections in terms of supporting their own research. Clearly, we need to do better in terms of library purchases of book and audiovisual materials. What is also telling are the reasons cited for not using books—the reliance on periodicals and the Internet, which is not surprising. Whether these sources are better than books due to subject

matter or a lack in our book and audiovisual collections, one would have to look in more depth at the information seeking skills and behaviors of students and faculty in the disciplines to draw any definitive conclusions. In fact, considering that 89.9% of faculty are aware their department has a subject specialist assigned to it could suggest that librarians need to beef up their outreach efforts as far as promoting our book and audiovisual collections. At the very least, librarians should encourage greater participation in collection development by faculty in order to help meet their and their students' information needs.