

# **School of Theology & Religious Studies Survey of Library Services at The Catholic University of America**

## **Executive Summary May 2008**

This past fall, the School of Theology and Religious Studies Library Committee surveyed a population of library users in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the library, its collection and its staff, and what changes could be made to better serve the community. The target group for the survey was graduate students and faculty of the school. Students and faculty received a link to the online survey in their e-mails at the beginning of December. The survey was also advertised on the library website and with signs posted on the third floor of Mullen Library. Between December 5<sup>th</sup> and February 5<sup>th</sup>, the survey received 113 responses. 90 of these responses came from graduate students, 17 from faculty, and 6 from staff and undergraduate students. The number of graduate students enrolled in the STRS in fall 2007 was 375 and the number of faculty was 37. The response rate was 27.4%.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with several aspects of the library's resources, facility and services. 71% of those taking the survey agreed that the reference collection meets their course needs, while only 58% indicated that the circulating collection is meeting their needs. Additionally, 66% indicated satisfaction with the online databases offered by the library. Specific to the Religious Studies & Philosophy Library, 73% showed high or very high satisfaction with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor reference collection, and 70% showed high or very high satisfaction with the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor journals. A smaller percentage, about 62%, showed high or very high satisfaction with the electronic journal collection.

Almost 74% of survey takers indicated that buying books was very important, with 30% indicating it should be the number one priority of the library. Conversely, 35% of respondents felt that buying electronic books was not important and only 3% suggested this should be our number one priority. Journal preference shows a different pattern. 51% of users rated print subscriptions as very important and over 75% of users rated electronic journal subscriptions as very important. 43% indicated that adding print journals should be among the top five priorities of the library, while over 71% placed electronic journal subscriptions among the top five.

When questioned about the library facilities, few features drew strong satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Over 50% indicated high or very high satisfaction with noise level and climate control. 44% indicated low or very low satisfaction with the photocopiers. 50% of survey takers rated improving the photocopiers as very important, and 39% indicated this should be among the library's top five priorities. Several questions showed a split, with over 25% indicating high or very high satisfaction, while over 25% expressed low or very low satisfaction. The areas concerned here are the arrangement and shelving of the collection, the private study areas, and the library furniture. 37% placed improving

private study space among the library's top five priorities, with 11% identifying it as the number 1 priority. 56% of users rated increasing group study space as not important, and 62% rated increase space for socialization, eating and drinking as not important.

The survey found that two thirds of respondents had attended a library instruction session as part of their coursework and of those who had, over 70% had found it to be helpful in using the library catalog, subscription databases, and the print resources in the Religious Studies & Philosophy Library.

Over 80% of participants indicated that the loan periods for undergraduates and graduates were "just right." On the other hand, only 50% indicated the same level of satisfaction with the loan period for faculty with the other 50% suggesting that the faculty loan period is too long. Of the students who responded, 68% indicated that the faculty loan period was too long, and 31% of faculty agreed with that assessment.

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