

LibQUAL+ Survey Analysis of Comments re: Security Summer 2003

I. Reception and Interaction

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

Feedback from students and faculty centered on Security staff interaction with the public, response to theft of personal belongings, and enforcement of Library rules:

- *"The security guards could try to be more courteous."*
- *"My main problem with the employees is the security staff. They have never been friendly or understanding."*
- *"The people are the absolute best, starting with Henry at the front desk."*

>> LIBRARY RESPONSE:

Security staff determine that every person entering the building is either a "free-to-pass" member of the GT community, or a visitor to be registered. This level of awareness and record-keeping helps to thwart petty crime and make the Library a safe space for the 140 hours we are open each week. 1,000 to 5,000 individuals visit the Library each day, and our Security staff make the acquaintance of many of you (approximately 830,000 visits annually). On occasion, visitors to the Library do not want to show a picture ID. Security staff must be diplomatic but unyielding on these occasions. Usually our Security staff are successful at minimizing conflict.

Every person entering the Library should receive a friendly welcome and helpful assistance. We expect Security staff to interact effectively with each of you. Usually we do a good job with this, indicated by one of the responses above. One Security employee was honored a few years ago with a Student Government Association "Friend of the Students" award. We regret that some GT visitors feel Security's reception is inadequate.

We encourage customers to report any Library staff behavior that is impolite, rude or insensitive, Security staff being no exception. With this survey's feedback, our Security staff are reminded of the importance of providing a cordial reception to everyone who enters the Library.

II. Interpretation and Enforcement of Policies

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

- *"For the most part, the library staff is very courteous and helpful with the exception of the security guards. The guards can be friendly, but at times they can be overzealous. I have seen a guard yell at a student for having a bottle of water attached to their bag in LWC, even though she wasn't drinking out of it. It was just sitting on the ground along with her bag and he yelled at her for it."*

>> LIBRARY'S RESPONSE:

Rule enforcement is not a fun task. Security staff constantly remind our customers of food and drink policy (occasionally repeated to the same individuals). This is especially true in the popular Library West Commons (LWC), where food and drink are strictly prohibited. On the other hand, Security staff must be effective at their work without unnecessarily offending customers.

We believe that customer compliance with Library rules is most likely to occur when individuals *understand* why a rule exists. When individuals do not comply with Library rules, Library staff

should point this out in a constructive, calm manner. We have reminded our Security staff to show restraint and patience with rule enforcement.

III. Attempted Theft of Personal Belongings

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

- *“The only thing which is awful in the library is security service. My books have been stolen several times, once I wanted to take a break. Security does not care and he just says “sorry”. I suggested several ways to catch the thief but they don’t do anything. That is my input. Good luck.”*

>> LIBRARY’S RESPONSE:

It’s heartbreaking when a student suffers the theft of personal belongings while in the Library. Some students hold the (incorrect) assumption that libraries are safe from ne’er-do-wells and thieves, especially with the amount of Security personnel and security equipment we invest in making the Library a safe environment.

While making their building surveillance rounds, Security staff remind students to look after their personal belongings at all times. A thief only needs a few seconds to carry out his mission. The student who complains that his “books have been stolen several times” is naively looking to the Library to catch a thief. The solution begins and ends with personal responsibility. The good news is that most of our visitors are cautious when in the Library. When a theft of personal textbooks occurs, we notify local engineer’s bookstores (books with one’s name or other unique characteristics are returned to rightful owners) along with notifying Campus Security.

The rate of theft is less than one incident per month. Other forms of harassment and petty crime are virtually non-existent.