

LibQUAL+ Survey Analysis of Comments re: Library Collections Summer 2003

The largest number of comments to the Spring 2003 LibQUAL+ Survey (100) concerned our collections. Predominant themes were acquiring more digital content, and acquiring more materials in all areas, especially in non-engineering disciplines.

I. Electronic access to resources, primarily e-journals

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

While we received a few compliments . . .

- *“Electronic journals access is proving to be a great boom, as I can retrieve information sitting at my study desk.”*
- *“The electronic access to journals I greatly appreciate since I save time by not walking to the library to acquire an article.”*

. . . the majority of comments requested more electronic access to journals; in many cases specific journals or subject areas were noted.

- *“If the library also gave me full text ELECTRONIC access to all the conference and journal publications in my area, that would provide nearly all of what I need. I need to access this anytime, anywhere I have web access; I don’t need a physical location to go to.”*
- *“What I need more than anything else is access to more journals on-line.”*
- *“There are a lot of journals that would be nice to have online, specifically the medical/bioengineering journals that Emory students have access to.”*
- *“Being able to have full article access to science and medical journals is important to me and my colleagues. How fast are we moving in that direction?”*
- *“We need more electronic journals that are not included in the package the library subscribes to (such as Microprocessor report).”*
- *“Please make Science and Nature available for online access. Thank you.”*

>> LIBRARY’S RESPONSE:

The Library considers the transition to electronic full text of journal and conference literature to be a critical priority. In Spring 2002, the GT Faculty Senate endorsed an acquisitions policy that drops print journal subscriptions in favor of e-journals. To date, we are reviewing the specific titles and publishers mentioned in the LibQUAL+ responses and targeting these titles / publisher packages for electronic access. In addition, Library staff are aggressively adding electronic access for our print journals when available. Check here for a frequently updated list of e-journals http://www.library.gatech.edu/search_locate/electronic_journals.html. Many of our subscriptions are based on the calendar year, so electronic access will not be available until January 2004. We expect by the start of 2005 to receive the majority of our journals electronically.

We participate in a Georgia consortium comprised of UGA, GSU, Emory and the Medical College of Georgia to license some of our electronic resources. In this cooperative arrangement we

leverage our buying power so that electronic journals ordered by one member are available to all in the consortium. This has greatly increased our access to electronic journals, especially in the medical and biological sciences.

II. Improving comprehensiveness of collections

42 individuals commented on the poor quality of our collections and their frustrations at having to use Emory, Georgia State and UGA libraries. Some frequently mentioned subject areas included the humanities and social sciences (especially public policy), biology, biomedical and even engineering.

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

- *“The spottiness in book holdings in my areas of research and teaching specialization are my biggest concern, while similar lacks in journals come in a close second.”*
- *“Not enough books, articles, journals for the non-science or engineering majors here at Georgia Tech. I am a Liberal Arts major and must oftentimes go to libraries at other universities to find the materials I need.”*
- *“It is important for those in the Humanities/Ivan Allen College that the library maintains a budget for the purchase of books & journals – many times I am forced to go to Ga State or Emory for materials in the humanities/social sciences.”*
- *“It seems that the needs of Public Policy students have not been given even cursory attention by the library. The books we need are not in the collection, our journals are not available in print. Overall one can tell that little resources have been allocated for Public Policy.”*
- *“Although the service is OK, in many cases, the books I request are not in our library and has to be obtained via interlibrary loans. In many cases, these books come from Georgia State U library or some other small school. Since these are new books in engineering fields and it is strange that a library for a top engineering school do not have the latest books.”*
- *“The library has totally inadequate collections in the biological sciences.”*

>> LIBRARY'S RESPONSE:

The Library has experienced a flat materials budget for the past six years coupled with an average inflation for these materials of approximately 10% per year. This, combined with increased growth both in enrollment and in subject areas within the Ivan Allen College and the biological sciences, has eroded our ability to add new journals and to purchase books and other materials.

No longer can any library aspire to own everything that students, faculty and researchers request. Collaboration among libraries is essential in providing materials needed by the GT community. Examples of these collaborations include:

- Interlibrary loan
- Consortia agreements for licensing electronic materials
- Reciprocal borrowing privileges with local colleges and universities

We hope soon to be able to improve the comprehensiveness of our collections. Three factors have converged this year to enable us to increase funding to selected areas:

- We conducted a serials review in spring 2003 to free up money for new journals.
- Research focuses change, so we continually review our collections for relevancy.

- We cancel print subscriptions when electronic archival rights are guaranteed. In many cases, this involves a one-time cost savings, which we can use to add new electronic journals.
- The Library received a generous 13% increase in its materials budget in this difficult fiscal year. We have increased book expenditures and are in the process of adding electronic resources frequently requested by faculty.

With sustained financial support we will continue to build our collections to support the research and teaching needs of the GT community. For books, journals, conference proceedings or other materials that you believe the Library should acquire, please complete a 'Purchase Request' form at: http://www.library.gatech.edu/borrow_order/purchase_request.html.

III. Why the paucity of fiction and popular reading materials?

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

- *"I would like to see an increase in the fiction collection. The number and quality of fiction books available is embarrassing. I had a list of 5 or 6 different classic authors that I wanted to read and none of them were available on the shelf."*
- *"It would be nice if there were more popular fiction and best seller books."*

>> LIBRARY'S RESPONSE:

The Library has a small Popular Reading collection of approximately 200 best sellers leased from McNaughton Book Service. These books are located on 1st floor East. A current listing is available at http://www.library.gatech.edu/search_locate/books.html (and then select "Browse our popular reading collection"). As a result of responses to this survey, we have decided to double our allocation for Popular Reading this year.

There currently is no specific budget for fiction. We have asked the librarian responsible for Literature, Communication & Culture to assess our fiction/literature collection for coverage of classic authors and works. We hope to use this assessment to fill in identified gaps, perhaps beginning as early as this fiscal year.

IV. Providing textbooks for classes and 2nd copies of books.

>> FACULTY / STUDENT COMMENTS:

- *"Should provide textbooks for classes."*
- *"I would like to see our library having more books than just one copy each."*

>> LIBRARY'S RESPONSE:

The Library does not automatically purchase a copy of every textbook used for classes. We are happy to purchase one copy if requested by a faculty member. Textbooks purchased for a class are placed on Reserve for 2-hour check out and overnight use. When no longer needed for class, these books are placed into the regular circulating collection.

The Library has a policy of purchasing only one copy of each item. The one copy policy is based both on budgetary considerations and space constraints. Our book stacks are virtually full and cannot support duplicate copies.