The Clemson University Libraries recently participated in LibQUAL+™, a web-based survey administered by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) to assess user satisfaction with library services. LibQUAL+™ was initiated in 2000 as a pilot project for 13 ARL Libraries, and has matured into a standard assessment tool, collecting information from more than 50,000 library users each year. As of Spring 2006, more than 700 libraries have participated – including all types of libraries across the United States as well as in Canada, the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, South Africa, and Venezuela. 2200 Clemson users were randomly chosen and invited to participate, with 363 responding. This is the fifth time we have participated in the survey.

This year we offered an incentive to encourage people to complete the survey. Aynsley Zollinger, a freshman Civil Engineering major from Mandeville, Mississippi, was the lucky winner. (She is pictured here with the prize – a 30 GB iPod.)

Details about the Survey

The LibQUAL+™ survey has been refined over the years, and it now contains 22 core questions. Using a 9 point scale (with 1 being lowest and 9 being highest), respondents are asked to rate three things related to each question: their minimum expectation level for that particular service, their desired level of service, and their perception of how we are currently providing the service.

The core questions (listed below) are grouped into three categories, or dimensions:
- **Library as Place** (issues relating to facilities)
- **Information Control** (library collections, access to resources)
- **Affect of Service** (relating to library staff and services)

### Library as Place
- LP-1 Library space that inspires study and learning
- LP-2 Quiet space for individual activities
- LP-3 A comfortable and inviting location
- LP-4 A getaway for study, learning, or research
- LP-5 Community space for group learning and group study

### Information Control
- IC-1 Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office
- IC-2 A library website enabling me to locate information on my own
- IC-3 The printed library materials I need for my work
- IC-4 The electronic information resources I need
- IC-5 Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information
- IC-6 Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own
- IC-7 Making information easily accessible for independent use
- IC-8 Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work
Affect of Service
AS-1 Employees who instill confidence in users
AS-2 Giving users individual attention
AS-3 Employees who are consistently courteous
AS-4 Readiness to respond to users’ questions
AS-5 Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions
AS-6 Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion
AS-7 Employees who understand the needs of their users
AS-8 Willingness to help users
AS-9 Dependability in handling users’ service problems

The survey measures two service quality gaps – the difference between a user’s minimum acceptable level of service and the level of service they perceive (adequacy gap); and the difference between a user's highest desired level of service and the level of service they perceive (superiority gap).

The survey also asks 8 questions relating to general satisfaction, and the Libraries' role in providing information. Plus, respondents were invited to add written comments.

Summary of 2006 Survey Results

- We continue to meet the needs of our undergraduate students, as they give us consistently high marks. However, our scores dropped slightly this year in undergraduates’ perceptions relating to the Affect of Service area.
- Remote access to electronic resources is the most highly desired service for Graduate Students. We have made incremental improvements in their perceptions in this area.
- Our scores have fallen in relation to the library as a quiet space, and this is reflected in the written comments as well. We are taking steps to improve the noise level, by arranging furniture to promote quiet study, promoting the use of group study areas, and increasing enforcement of quiet areas.
- Faculty are most concerned about remote access to services, and we are improving – particularly in offering access to electronic resources, and making them easy to use.

(A radar chart summarizing Clemson’s results for the 2006 Core survey questions is attached)

More Complete Results

All libraries that participated in the LibQUAL+™ project were provided with a notebook containing detailed analysis and graphic representations of the survey results. Because the survey is not designed for libraries to compare their level of quality against other libraries, only aggregate data is available for the entire survey population. Detailed results at the individual library level were only provided to that library. The results for Clemson University are available to any Clemson University student, faculty, or staff member. Please contact Jan Comfort for further information (comforj@clemson.edu or 656-5168).

Clemson University Libraries appreciates everyone who responds to the LibQUAL+™ surveys. We hope that if you are invited to participate in future surveys that you will take the opportunity to respond. We assure you that we value your feedback, and will use the survey results and your comments to continue to improve library services. Further analysis of 2006 survey data is ongoing as part of our comprehensive assessment plan. If you are interested in learning more about assessment activities at the Libraries, please visit the About the Libraries section of our homepage: www.lib.clemson.edu/aboutlib/overview/overview.htm
3 Survey Item Summary for Clemson University Libraries

3.1 Core Questions Summary

This radar chart shows aggregate results for the core survey questions. Each axis represents one question. A code to identify each question is displayed at the outer point of each axis. While questions for each dimension of library service quality are scattered randomly throughout the survey, on this chart they are grouped into sections: Affect of Service, Library as Place, and Information Control.

On each axis, respondents' minimum, desired, and perceived levels of service quality are plotted, and the resulting "gaps" between the three levels (representing service adequacy or service superiority) are shaded in blue, yellow, green, and red.

The two following tables show mean scores and standard deviations for each question, where n is the number of respondents for each particular question. (For a more detailed explanation of the headings, see the Introduction to this notebook.)