Enhancing the quality of service is an ongoing concern for academic and research libraries. In order to grow and develop as an organization, it is necessary to assess services and mission on a regular basis. Output measures provide objective data on the scope and effectiveness of library services. These output measures can also be used to evaluate the library's services, to demonstrate the library's value, and to guide resource allocation decisions (Van House 1990). An evaluation of services was recently done by the Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University (Catherwood Library). This report provides an overview of this assessment.
Executive Summary
Enhancing the quality of service is an ongoing concern for academic and research libraries. In order to grow and develop as an organization, it is necessary to assess services and mission on a regular basis. Output measures provide objective data on the scope and effectiveness of library services. These output measures can also be used to evaluate the library’s services, to demonstrate the library’s value, and to guide resource allocation decisions (Van House 1990).

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Catherwood Library serves the School of Industrial and Labor Relations (ILR) at Cornell University. ILR is the nation's only institution of higher education to offer a four-year undergraduate program focused on the workplace, several types of graduate degrees, programs and workshops for adult learners, and customized services. In addition to its on-campus offerings, ILR also has five Extension sites throughout New York State.

As with many other professions currently, a significant portion of faculty members in ILR are approaching retirement age. In January 2006, Catherwood Library administered a survey specifically designed to identify generational differences in the approaches to research by faculty at ILR. The intent of this survey was to ascertain: 1) the information-seeking behavior patterns of ILR faculty (specifically how faculty approach information resources for research, as well as the value they place on these resources and on the
library’s role in the research process), and 2) how the library can take a stronger lead in addressing faculty research concerns.

By examining junior and tenured faculty’s divergent approaches to using library-related research sources, Catherwood Library has begun planning for the information needs of the next generation of faculty at ILR. For similar planning purposes, the survey also identified usage patterns by academic department, and by Extension versus non-Extension (resident) faculty.

**Design and Delivery of the Survey**

The survey instrument was designed by Deborah Schmidle, Catherwood Collection Development Librarian, with feedback from Catherwood Library staff, the Catherwood Library Advisory Council, and the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University.

The survey had four sections: research; teaching; related questions; and demographics. The first two sections focused on the frequency of usage and value of information resources for research and teaching, while the third section queried survey subjects on desired services and on resources they utilize to remain current in their field. A copy of the survey instrument is attached to this report.

A telephone survey was administered by SRI over a two-week period in January 2006. There was an 82% response rate, which is an unusually high return rate. SRI subsequently provided Catherwood Library with a detailed code book and a CD of raw data available in SPSS.

**Survey subjects**

Survey subjects consisted of 110 resident and Extension faculty, as well as two professor emeriti and two instructors. Resident faculty are responsible for teaching undergraduate and graduate students; Extension faculty work primarily with practitioners in the field. Unlike resident faculty, Extension faculty are not in tenure-track positions. Both resident and Extension faculty conduct research.
**Demographics**
Over half of the subjects surveyed have been associated with the ILR School for sixteen or more years. Of the 41 resident faculty surveyed, 56% were full professors, 27.5% were associate faculty, and 17% were assistant faculty.

**Survey Terminology**
The following terminology was used when survey respondents were queried about the frequency of use:

- Never/infrequently—never to 1-2 times per semester
- Occasionally—once a month at most
- Frequently/Always—once a week or more

For the purposes of this survey, the term “all respondents” refers to both resident and Extension faculty. Queries concerning journals refer to paper and/or electronic journals.

**Summary of survey results**
The survey results have been parsed to compare differences by department, rank, and resident-versus-Extension faculty. Given the extensive scope of these results, this report will primarily focus on responses by resident faculty (disaggregated by rank) and by Extension faculty. Departmental differences will be noted in the narrative of this report when the findings are deemed significant. Additional data concerning departmental differences can be found on the attached slides. In addition, a CD of raw data also accompanies this report.

Summary findings are categorized into the following subjects, based on frequency of use and on the perceived value: the library and its services (this includes both the physical use of Catherwood, in general, and of the Kheel Center, specifically, as well as topics pertaining to Catherwood staff and services provided); electronic resources (including Internet search engines, the Catherwood Library web site, and the Library Gateway); and Catherwood monographs, journals, and databases. Responses regarding desired services
and how faculty stays current are also included. Lastly, a transcript of additional, open-ended comments and a summary of generational differences are provided.

The Library and Staff Services

Catherwood Library
Slightly less than 50% of either associate and full faculty indicated that they frequently/always used Catherwood Library when conducting research (42% of assistant faculty so responded).

In sharp contrast to the full and associate faculty figures for “infrequent or no use” of Catherwood Library for research (34.8% and 27.3%, respectively), 57.1% of assistant faculty indicated they infrequently or never used the library for research purposes. On the other hand, 42% of assistant faculty indicated that they frequently/always used the library for research.

Surprisingly, the use of Catherwood Library was not very dissimilar between Ithaca Extension faculty and non-Ithaca Extension faculty. Fifty percent of Extension faculty not located in Ithaca said they infrequently or never used the Catherwood Library when conducting research, as compared to 58.3% of Ithaca Extension faculty. While 22.7% of non-Ithaca Extension faculty reported using the Catherwood Library occasionally, only 8.3% of Ithaca Extension faculty gave the same response. The response for “frequent” use of Catherwood was very similar for each group (27.3% for non-Ithaca versus 33.3% for Ithaca Extension faculty).

Kheel Center
The frequency of use and value of the Kheel Center for research or teaching was quite low across the board. When asked about the relative value of Kheel Center materials and staff to their research needs, 65.9% of resident faculty responded “little or no value.” The response was even higher regarding the frequency with which the Kheel Center was used in teaching. In that case, 87.8% of resident faculty indicated they never or infrequently
used the Kheel Center as a teaching resource as compared to 83.3% of Extension faculty. Regarding resident faculty rank, Associate faculty used the Kheel Center the least (90.9% indicated never use/infrequently use). Full professors had the highest response with respect to occasional use of the Kheel Center (26.1%). Just over seventy-one percent of assistant faculty said they never or infrequently used the Kheel Center, while 14.3% indicated “occasional use” of the facility.

With respect to survey responses by resident faculty department, the highest use of the Kheel Center for research came from the Collective Bargaining Department, with 38.5% indicating occasional use and 15.4% indicating frequent use.

On the Extension side, 73.9% of all Extension faculty indicated little or no use of the Kheel Center for research, compared to 83.3% with the comparable response when asked about the frequency of use for teaching.

**Catherwood Library Staff and Services**

The ILR Faculty survey attempted to gauge the value of Catherwood staff and services for teaching through three specific questions: the value of class instruction by library staff; the value of consulting with librarians; and the value of library-generated information (such as the IWS News Service).

With respect to faculty rank, the results were as follows: instruction by library staff was not seen as being very valuable by Associate faculty, with over 70% indicating this service was of little or no value and only just over 10% reporting that it was very valuable. Assistant faculty were split evenly on the topic, with a 33.3% response for each of the three categories (little value, somewhat valuable, very valuable).

Extension Associates also placed little emphasis on library instruction (66.7% of all Extension faculty indicated this service was of little value). Nearly 70% (69.2%) of non-Ithaca Extension faculty found this service of little value, as compared to 50% of Ithaca Extension faculty.
The value of consulting with librarians was ranked relatively higher by both resident and Extension faculties. Overall, 37.5% of resident faculty found this to be a valuable service. The comparable figure for all Extension faculty was even higher (50%). When examined by faculty rank, 50% of Associate faculty found consulting with librarians very valuable for their teaching needs, and almost 80% of associate faculty found this service somewhat (55.6%) or very (22.2%) valuable. While Ithaca Extension were split equally between finding the service of little value or somewhat valuable, 56.3% of non-Ithaca Extension faculty found this service to be very valuable.

The value of library-generated information to teaching varied, with responses by resident faculty mostly split between little or somewhat valuable. Extension faculty rated this service more highly, with 50% responding very valuable.

The survey also asked about the value of Catherwood staff for faculty research needs. The results in this case were very positive, with the vast majority of resident and Extension faculty responding very favorably. Over 60% of all resident faculty found Catherwood staff very valuable regarding research. Even more Extension faculty found the Catherwood staff to be valuable, with nearly 82% of all Extension faculty responding that Catherwood staff were very valuable to research.

**Electronic Resources**

**Internet Search Engines**

Faculty were queried about their usage of electronic resources (the Internet, The Library Gateway, and the Catherwood Library website) as research and teaching tools. Findings noting the heavy use of Internet search engines came as no surprise. Seventy-five percent of faculty at all ranks responded “frequently/always” when asked how often they use search engines for research.
Approximately 80% of resident faculty in each rank indicated that they frequently/always used search engines as a teaching resource. The comparable figure for Extension faculty (all Extension faculty, as there are no ranks comparable to resident faculty) was 94.1%.

**The Library Gateway**

The Gateway was ranked second for frequency of use in research, with over 60% of resident faculty indicating they frequently/always used this service for research.

The usage pattern of the Library Gateway as a teaching resource was uneven. While all assistant faculty respondents reported that they frequently/always used the Gateway as a teaching resource, the response rate for associate and full faculty was much lower (44.4% for associate faculty and 38.1% for full faculty, respectively).

On the Extension side, 75% of Ithaca Extension faculty always or frequently used the Gateway for research. This number was much lower for Extension faculty based elsewhere (18.2%).

**Catherwood Library website**

When compared to the use of Internet search engines and the Library Gateway, patron usage of Catherwood’s web site finished a distant third, with only 34% of all faculty answering “frequently/always” regarding research and only 25% regarding teaching.

When disaggregated by resident faculty rank, Assistant faculty use the Catherwood website most frequently (70%) for research, compared to 34% of Associate faculty and 24% of full professors.

The Catherwood Library web site was not frequently used by resident faculty as a resource for teaching, either, particularly by full professors (66.7% indicated that they infrequently/never used the library web site as a resource to support their teaching efforts). Assistant faculty made the most use of the Library website for teaching, with just over 40% responding they frequently/always used the site. Thus, Assistant faculty
reported using Catherwood’s website, for research and also for teaching, much more so than any other faculty rank.

Extension faculty are not very heavy users of the Catherwood web site. Just over 47% indicated they never or infrequently used the site for research. Results for the value of use of Catherwood’s web site for teaching were evenly split between the three response categories of little value, somewhat valuable, and very valuable.

**Monographs, Journals, and Databases**

When comparing the resident faculty’s frequency of the use of monographs, journals, and databases for research, journals were used more frequently than monographs. Somewhat surprisingly, databases came in third as a research resource.

Assistant faculty ranked the highest in the frequent use of journals for research, with a full 100% responding that they frequently/always utilized journals. Associate and full faculty also indicated heavy use of journals (82.6% for full professors and 72.7% for associate faculty).

Monographs were frequently/always used by over 60% of both associate and full faculty. Assistant faculty indicated a lower usage, with just over 43% indicating that they frequently/always used monographs for research.

Not surprisingly, the frequency of use for electronic databases by faculty was high, especially for assistant and associate faculty. Databases were used frequently/always by 57% of assistant faculty and by 64% of associate faculty. The comparable figure for full faculty was lower (43%).

Extension faculty also rated the above resources in the same rank order as their resident colleagues. Frequent use of journals was ranked at 82.4%, with monographs following at 76.5%, and databases coming in at 67.6%.
Desired Services
Respondents were given a choice of four desired services to rank by relative value. These services were: the ability to browse the stacks; accessibility to obscure documents; training of faculty research assistants; and customized (in office) training for faculty.

The ability to browse the stacks was of little value for assistant faculty (with 71.4% indicating this was of little value), but was more highly valued by associate faculty (72.7% ranked this service very valuable). Full professor results were less definitive, with 39.1% finding browsing very valuable and an equal 39.1% finding browsing of little value. One department stood out in these results, with 69.2% of the Collective Bargaining department respondents finding the ability to browse the stacks very valuable.

Not surprisingly, given the geographic location of most respondents, Extension faculty did not find browsing the Cathewood stacks as valuable as did their resident counterparts. Only 17.1% of all Extension faculty found the option of browsing the stacks to be very valuable.

The ability to access obscure documents was most highly valued by Associate faculty (63.6% so responded, as compared to 14.3% of assistant faculty and 43.5% of full faculty). When compared to all resident faculty, Extension faculty found the ability to access obscure documents almost equally as valuable (38.1% for Extension versus 42.2% for all resident faculty).

Among resident faculty, the value of training for research assistants was inversely related to faculty rank. While 57.1% of assistant faculty found this service very valuable, only 36.4% and 17.4% of associate and full faculty, respectively, did so. Resident and Extension faculty found training to be most valuable at nearly the same rate (28.9%, resident; 28.6%, Extension).
While customized training was not seen as being very valuable by resident faculty (only 38.1% rated this as very valuable), it was deemed to be very valuable by 69% of Extension faculty. When categorized by Ithaca versus non-Ithaca Extension, the numbers are even more telling, with 88.9% of non-Ithaca Extension faculty indicating that customized training was very valuable to them as opposed to 33.3% of Ithaca Extension faculty.

**Staying Current**
In response to the question “How do you stay current with the latest information in your field?,” respondents were given a variety of options from which to choose. The top four responses for all respondents were journals, the Internet, networking with colleagues, and attending conferences. Somewhat surprisingly, new technologies such as Blogs have not yet caught on as a valuable information resource tool, with 87.4% of all respondents stating that they never or infrequently used blogs to keep up with information in their field.

**Generational Differences**
While this survey did not reveal a large number of generational differences between resident faculty, there were two areas where generational differences arose: the use of library web sites and the value of browsing the library stacks.

Not surprisingly, assistant faculty valued electronic resources over more traditional services such as browsing the library stacks or the physical use of the library. While 71% percent of assistant faculty indicated that they frequently/always used the Catherwood web site for research, only 36% of associate faculty and 21% of full faculty indicated a frequent use of the library web site. Likewise, assistant faculty found the Library Gateway very valuable for research, as 85.7% frequently/always used it. This is nearly double (between one-and-a-half and two times) the response rate for full professors (50%).
With regards to the value of browsing the stacks, just over 71% of Assistant faculty found little or no value in browsing the stacks, while nearly the same percentage (72.7%) of Associate faculty found browsing the stacks very valuable.

**Implications and Recommendations**

As with any survey, one must be cautious when interpreting results. In the case of the ILR survey, there are several factors to take into consideration. For instance, the Kheel Center was not ranked as a valued service by faculty. While this finding may be a cause for further exploration, a large majority of Kheel Center users are students and outside clients; therefore, this finding must be placed within the general context of patron populations.

Likewise, when reviewing responses by faculty department (not emphasized in this narrative, but available in the attached documentation), one must bear in mind that the low favorable response from the Statistics Department is a function of the fact that this department’s needs are more closely met at other libraries such as the Mathematics library.

With these caveats in mind, there are, nonetheless, several significant implications that can be drawn from the survey findings.

**The Library**

*Catherwood Library, librarians, staff, and services*

The perceived value of services provided by Catherwood librarians was high. This has a positive implication for Catherwood, in that it speaks to continuing to recruit and retain a strong, knowledgeable staff who continues to work closely with faculty. Although faculty clearly values the Library and its staff, Catherwood should not take this finding for granted. As libraries and their services continue to change, it is vital that Catherwood continue with outreach efforts to the ILR School, both through a liaison program and by
other means of public relations. Library-sponsored programming, such as the lecture series hosted by Kheel in the past, would be a good starting point.

There was some evidence that several services currently offered by librarians (including classroom instruction) are not heavily used or valued by resident faculty. This is not to say that these services were not valued at all, but rather that they did not rank as highly as some other services. This presents an excellent opportunity to start looking at ways to rethink and reconfigure library services to faculty, perhaps after a faculty dialogue about these survey results.

One area that was particularly noteworthy concerning library services in regard to Extension was customized training. This was seen as being very valuable by Extension faculty off-campus and speaks to the continuing need to maintain a strong outreach function with these faculty members.

Kheel Center
The Kheel Center’s audience is obviously larger than the Cornell community. That being noted, the low use of the Center by faculty does warrant further investigation, perhaps, as suggested above, through a faculty dialogue.

Electronic Resources
Catherwood Library Website
Use of library website needs to be considered further. Currently, it appears that Assistant faculty use of the site most frequently for both research and teaching. This is a positive finding and can be used to discuss how best to design and market the web site in the future. For example, should the library be trying to make the website more useful for associate/full faculty, or should Catherwood concentrate on longer-term future users (assistant faculty)? The use of the library website should definitely be a question that is also asked in the student survey.
Library Gateway
The Gateway currently ranks second in electronic resource use by faculty. This suggests that Catherwood should continue to play an active role in the future design and development of the Gateway, ensuring that key Catherwood databases are included in indexes such as Find Databases, etc.

The Gateway’s use by Extension faculty is currently rather low. This could be explained, in part, because of blocked access for offices outside the Ithaca ILR School. While every effort has been made to negotiate with vendors for broad IP-access to databases, Catherwood must continue to be diligent about this issue. Additionally, more training for Extension faculty on Gateway resources will help raise awareness of this valuable tool.

Monographs/Browsing
Print is obviously still an important component of research and teaching for ILR faculty. While junior faculty does not value browsing as heavily as their senior colleagues, all faculty value the monograph collections in the library. This would speak to maintaining a strong, but unique, print collection. As for the storage of such collections, survey findings suggest that junior faculty approach this component of research differently than their peers.

The issues with browsing on-site versus browsing online are not new. As with the union card catalog versus the online catalog experience of some twenty years ago, many faculty stumble across research materials through the serendipitous browsing of book stacks. Whether this is the case for junior faculty remains to be seen. Initial findings appear to suggest that browsing is not of high value. If this is confirmed (perhaps through a five-minute survey of junior faculty) and as the library continues to compete for space, the housing of materials must be considered. With new services such as office delivery, the actual location of materials may be of less importance to future faculty. Before leaping to
that conclusion (based on one question in this survey), however, it would be advisable to query faculty a bit more on this topic.

**Conclusion**

Two things that should never be relinquished lightly are space and staff lines.

Certainly, given the results of this survey, staff lines should not be reduced. However, with the changing function of libraries, it will be necessary to think of new and innovative ways to align staff and provide relevant services. This same philosophy should be considered when addressing space needs. If, after further investigation, it appears that future users of Catherwood are not concerned with browsing, how can space on the third floor be redeployed, yet retained by Catherwood? While not reported on in this narrative, the survey results indicated that networking with colleagues is seen as very valuable to junior faculty. Perhaps a portion of the third floor space could be used as a library-hosted area for new and junior faculty to come together?

In many ways, the survey results raised more questions than they answered. This ambiguity actually works to Catherwood’s advantage, providing us with an opportunity to focus on specific issues with faculty during liaison meetings or in a full-faculty meeting in the future.

This survey should not be regarded as the final word in determining the needs of our faculty. Rather, the evaluation process in this area should be an ongoing one. It is hoped that the information gleaned from this survey will prove very valuable in assisting Catherwood as we evaluate our existing services and create new services for the new generation of faculty members.