

**Judge Kathryn J. DuFour Law Library**

**Student Survey  
Spring 2006**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
Columbus School of Law**



**Compiled by:**  
*Dominick Lombardo*  
*Stephen Young*  
*Frances M. Brillantine*

## DuFour Law Library Student Survey

From March 13<sup>th</sup> through March 26<sup>th</sup> 2006, the DuFour Law Library conducted a survey to determine how the law students perceive library services and facilities. A total of 279 students took the survey, over 29% of the total law school population. Thirty-four percent of the law school's day students completed the survey. Over 20% of evening students completed the survey.

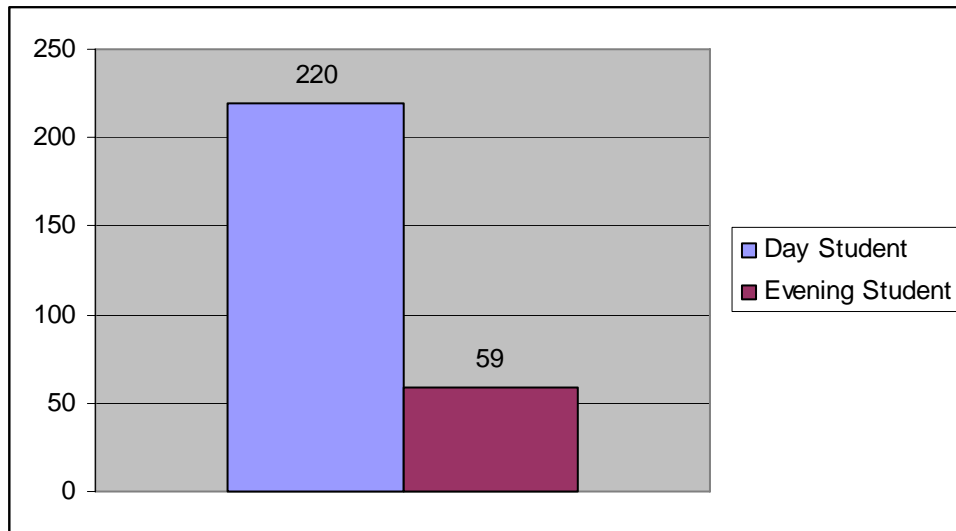
The survey measured three general areas:

1. Library service
2. Library collection and web page
3. Library facilities

Overall the students rated library services either excellent or good, as well as the library collection and webpage. Pertaining to the library collection and webpage, students did request further instruction on what resources were available as well how to use such resources. The majority of students rated the library facilities as comfortable and conducive to studying; however, they were evenly split on the library temperature. In addition, a majority of both day and evening students rated the library security as either excellent or good.

The survey was illuminating in showing how the library is perceived by our student patrons and provides a roadmap for future improvements.

**Q.1: Please indicate whether you are a day or evening student**



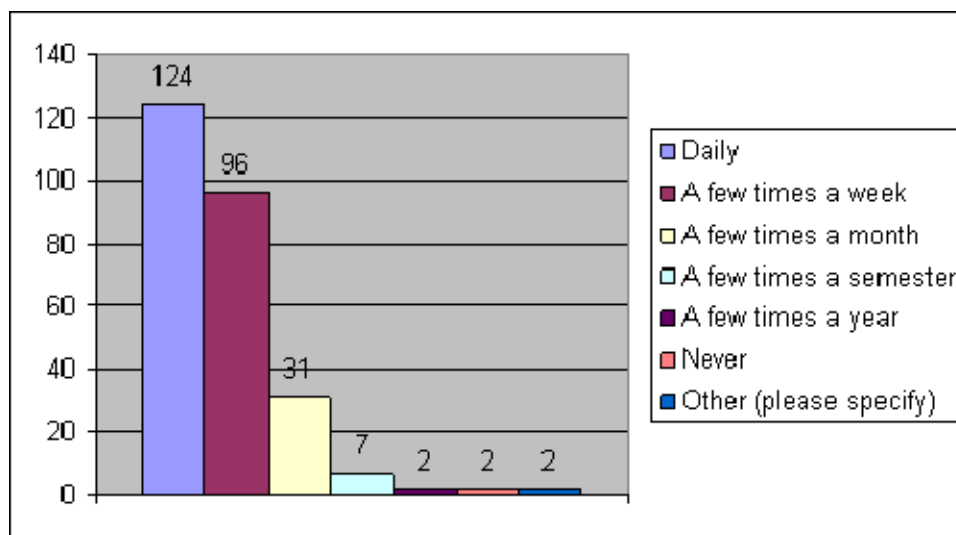
**Analysis:**

This was a simple demographic question which enabled us to determine two things:

1. The percentage of day student respondents and evening student respondents
2. Whether day and evening students have a different perception of library services and facilities.

As stated above, 34% of the law school's day students completed the survey. Over 20% of evening students completed the survey.

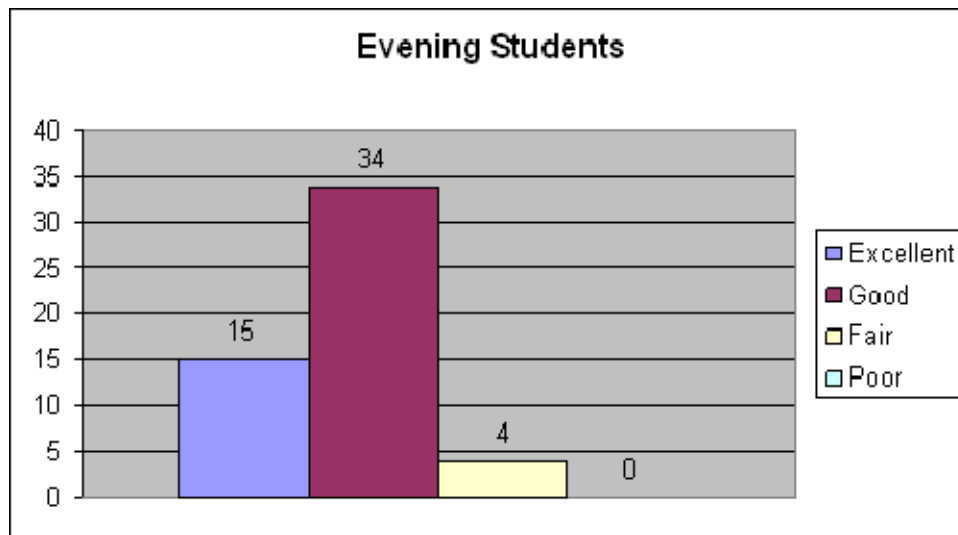
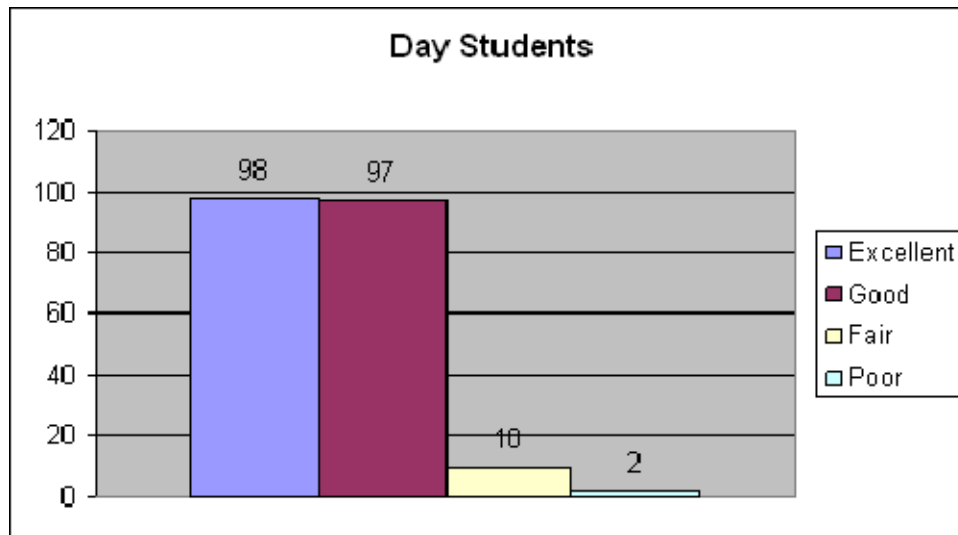
## Q.2: How often do you use the library?



### Analysis:

The overwhelming majority of respondents use the library at least a few times a week. There was some predictable drop-off in usage by evening students, who tended to use the library either a few times a week or a few times a month, while most day students used the library daily. A very small number of students manage to get through Law School without using the library or using it only a few times a year.

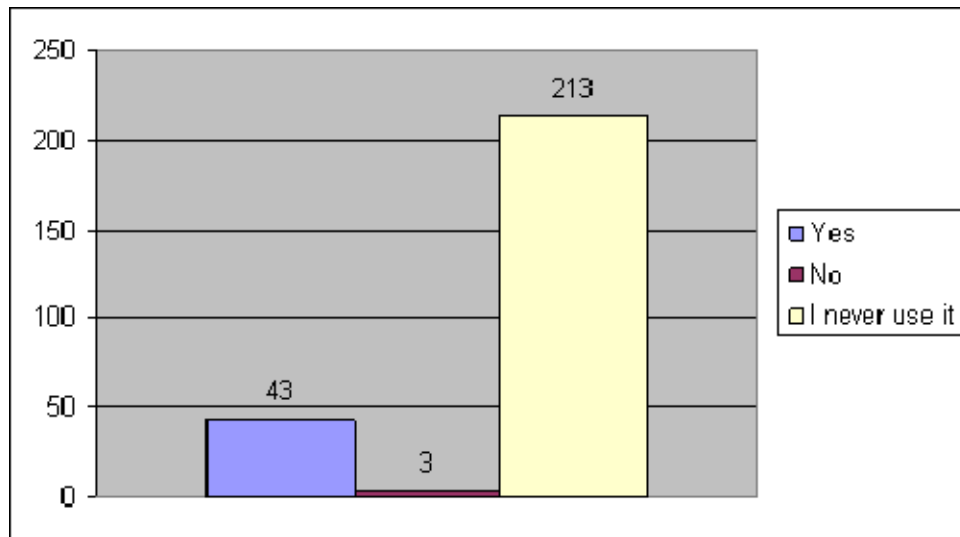
### Q.3: Please rate the level of service provided by the circulation staff



#### Analysis:

The response to this question varied significantly depending on whether the respondent was an evening or day student. Overall the respondents rated the level of service provided by the Circulation Department staff as excellent or good. However, a closer examination of the statistics shows that the day students were far more likely to provide an excellent rating than were the evening students. The comments from both groups of students highlighted two things; first, there is an understandable drop-off in the level of service between the part-time desk attendants and the full-time Circulation staff; second, the respondents sometimes view the desk attendants as being responsible for answering reference questions.

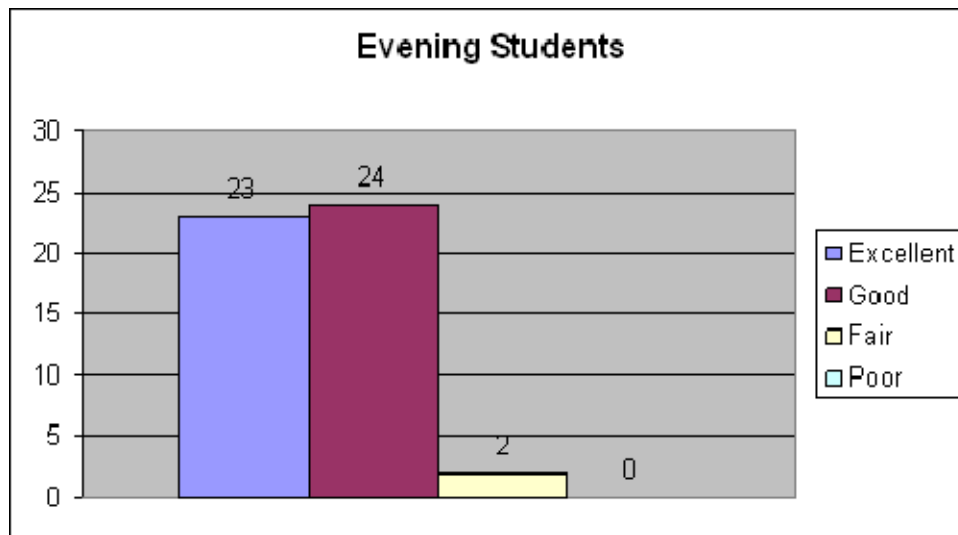
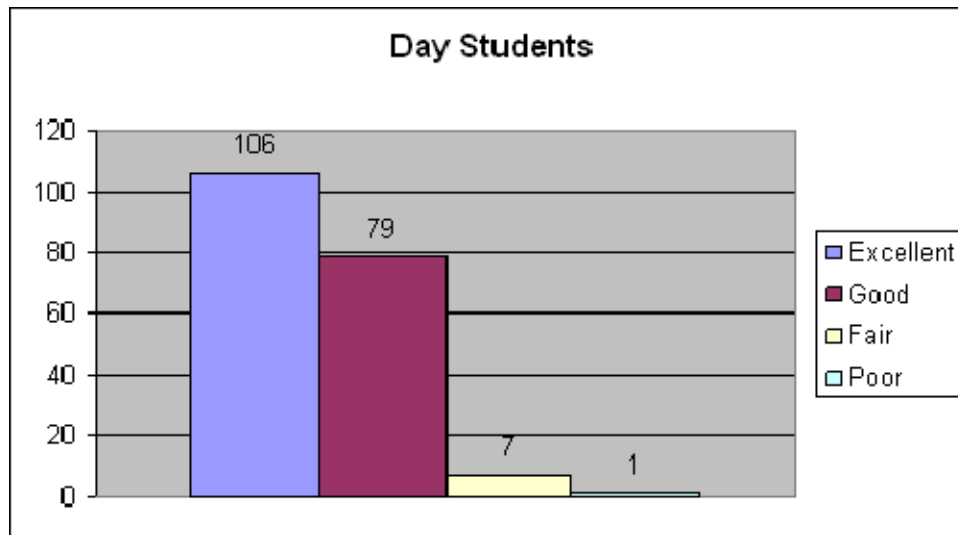
#### Q.4: Is the level of Inter-Library Loan service adequate?



#### Analysis:

Most respondents had not used the service. Of those that had, the vast majority found that it adequately met their needs. Only 7 respondents commented, some indicating that they would like the service to be a little quicker. There also seemed to be some respondents who confused our ILL service with the “Request” feature available on other library catalogs (e.g. Georgetown’s GULL).

**Q. 5: Please rate the level of service provided by the reference staff**

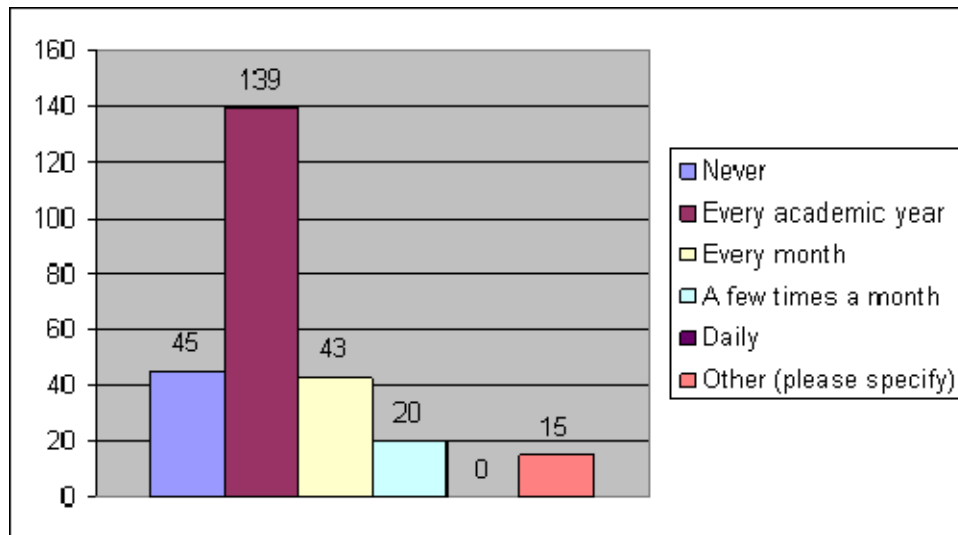


**Analysis:**

A clear distinction is apparent in the responses from the day and evening students. While the overwhelming majority of responses were either excellent or good, the day students were more likely to provide an “excellent” response, while the evening students were slightly more likely to provide a “good” response.

The comments were almost equally divided between those students who said that they never used the Reference Department staff (which is the focus of Q.6), and those who said their experience with using the Reference Department staff was very positive. There was no discernable difference between the comments from the day students and the comments from the evening students.

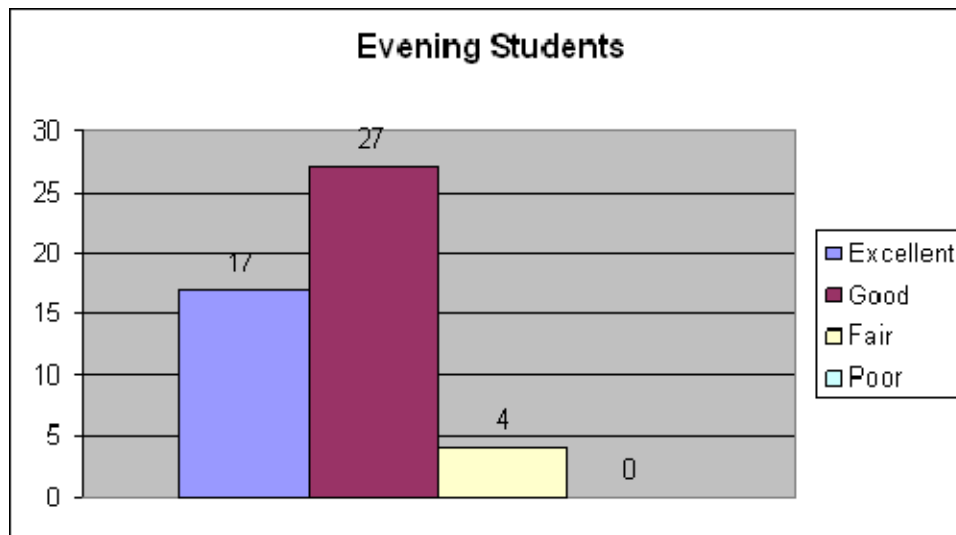
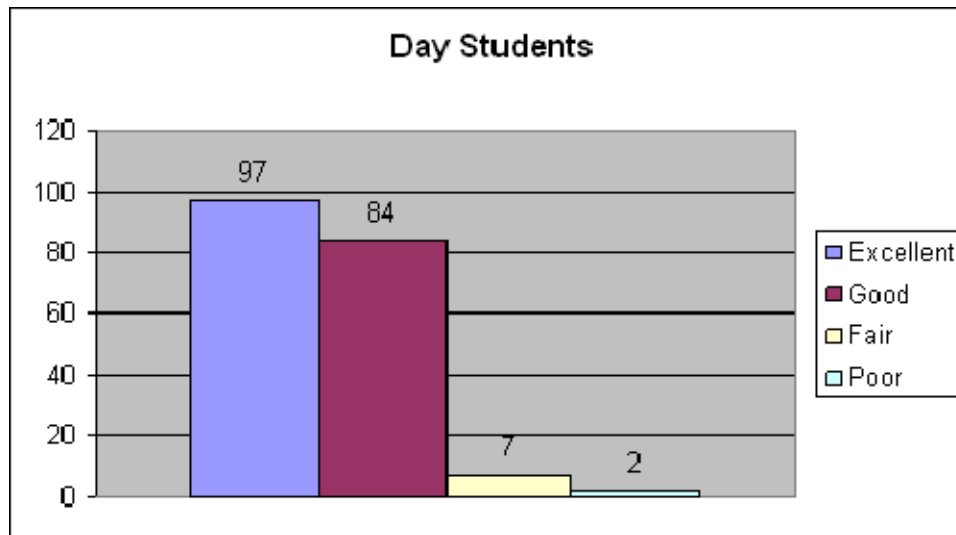
**Q. 6: How often do you seek assistance from the reference staff?**



**Analysis:**

Respondents indicated, both in their selection of response and in their comments, that although they occasionally use the services of the Reference Department they do not frequently avail themselves of these services. Once again there was little to discern between the responses from the day students and the responses from the evening students.

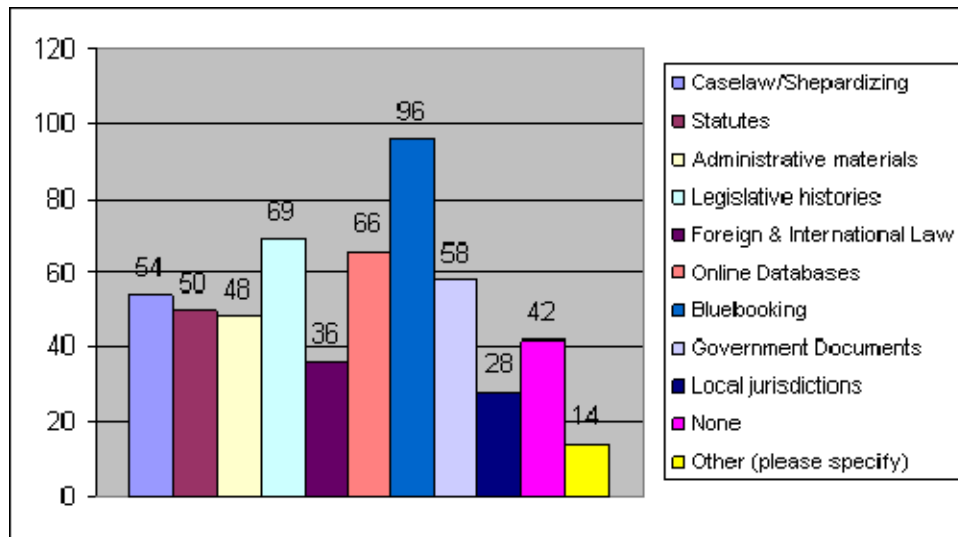
### Q.7: Please rate the availability of the reference staff



#### Analysis:

Respondents overwhelmingly thought that the availability of reference staff was either excellent or good. It is perhaps not surprising that the more positive response came from day students when 3 full-time reference librarians are usually available, as opposed to the evening and weekends when one full-time or one part-time reference librarian is on duty. What was surprising was that most of the comments regarding the lack of availability of reference staff came from the day students. There were also a handful of comments regarding the quality of reference librarians available in the evening and on the weekends, and again it was the day students who supplied most of these comments.

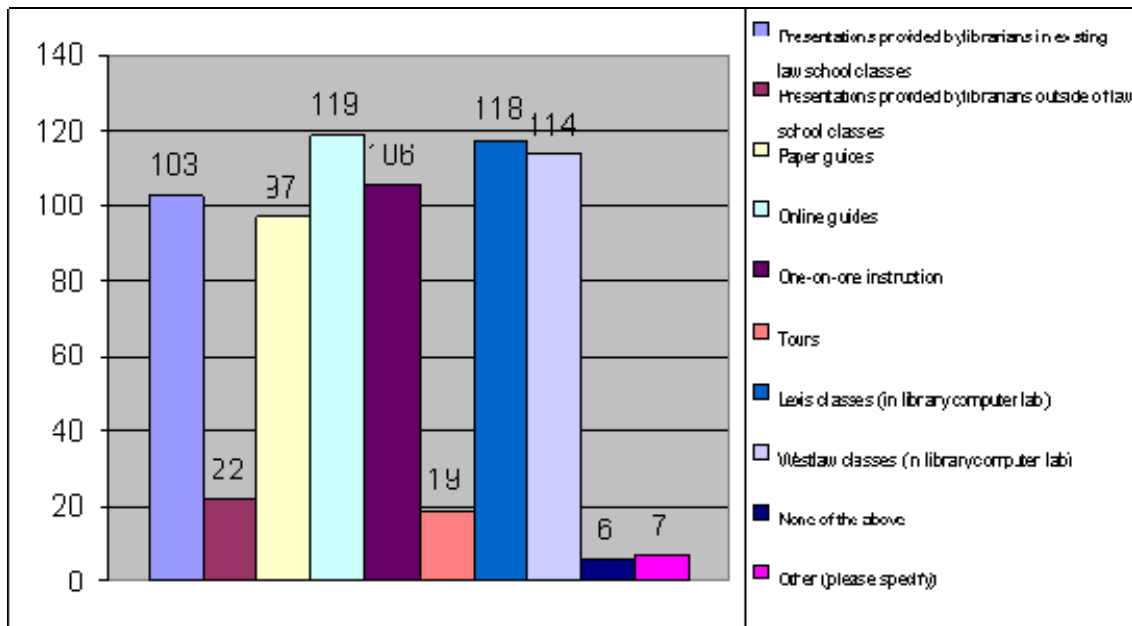
**Q.8: Please indicate the areas of legal research with which you would like more assistance**



**Analysis:**

This question elicited some of the most interesting and varied responses in the survey. Bluebooking was the most popular selection for areas where respondents felt they needed more help, however, there were a number of categories that were relatively similar in terms of respondents' need for more assistance (e.g. leg. histories, online databases, gov docs, etc.). The comments essentially reiterated the selections the respondents made by indicating a need for more help with bluebooking, legislative histories and government documents. A couple of comments focused on how our international and foreign law collections were not of the same caliber as Georgetown Law Library. The only real distinction between day and evening students was an increased need for assistance with caselaw/shepardizing by evening students and less emphasis on government documents and legislative histories (maybe due to evening students' experiences working on Capitol Hill, etc.).

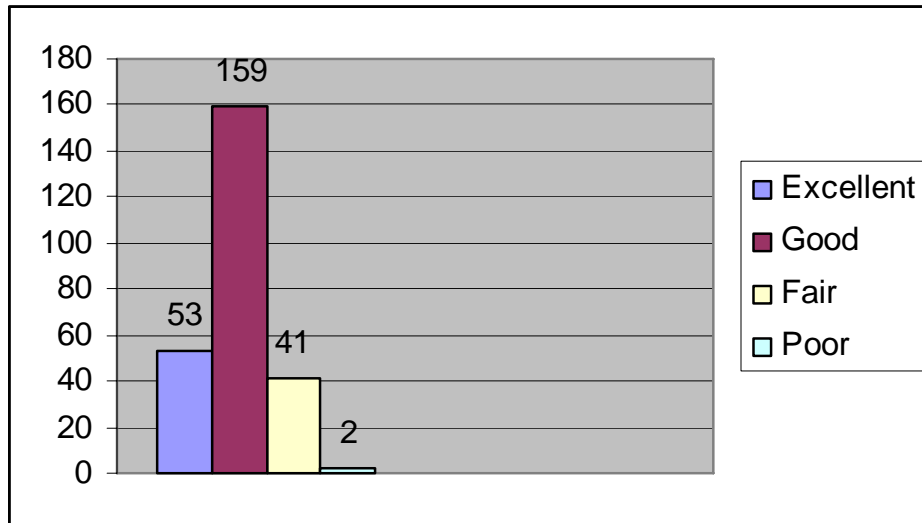
**Q.9: Please indicate which type of research instruction you find most helpful**



**Analysis:**

The respondents indicated that they would find online guides, one-on-one instruction, or presentations by librarians in the classroom the most helpful types of research instruction. Additionally, it was helpful to learn that the LexisNexis and Westlaw classes were both well received. There was no real difference between the responses of the day and evening students. Tours and presentations by librarians outside of classroom time (e.g. brown bag lunch sessions) were not well received. There were few comments that added anything to the respondents' selections, although a handful did note that they learned best "by doing."

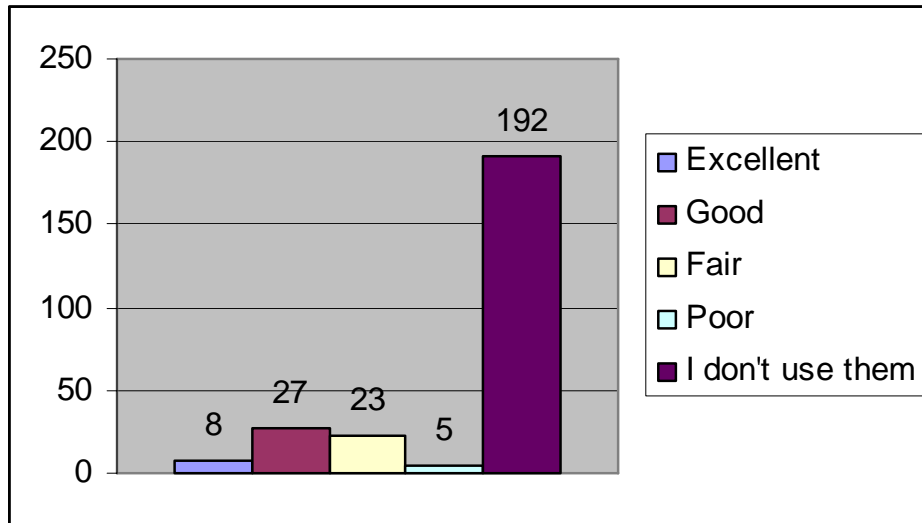
**Q. 10 Please indicate the ease with which you are able to locate materials in the library:**



**Analysis:**

The majority of students rate the ability to locate library materials as excellent to good. This majority held true for both day and evening students. A minority of students rated the library's usability as fair to poor with some students requesting more detailed maps of the library's layout.

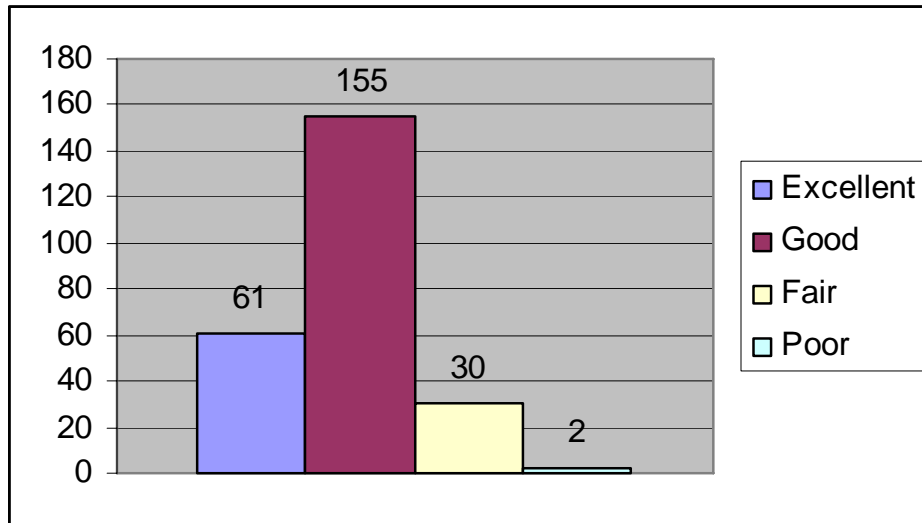
**Q. 11 Please indicate the ease with which you are able to locate microform materials in the library:**



**Analysis:**

The vast majority of respondents do not use the library's microform collection. The majority of students that do use the microform collection rated the usability of the room as good to fair with some respondents stating that they needed the assistance of a reference librarian to locate the appropriate materials. In addition some students have requested better instruction in the room's general organization and use.

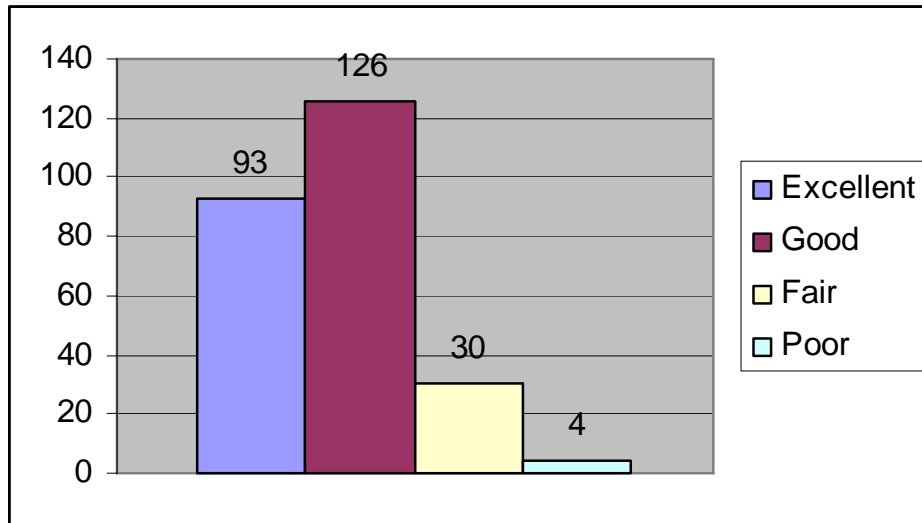
**Q. 12 Please indicate how successful the library's print resources are in meeting your research needs (this includes books, journals, newspapers, etc.):**



**Analysis:**

The majority of students rate the library's print resources as excellent to good. This majority holds true for both day and evening students. A minority of respondents do find the collection lacking the materials they need for research purposes; some respondents have commented that they need to go to off campus libraries to access certain journals, newspapers or scholarly works.

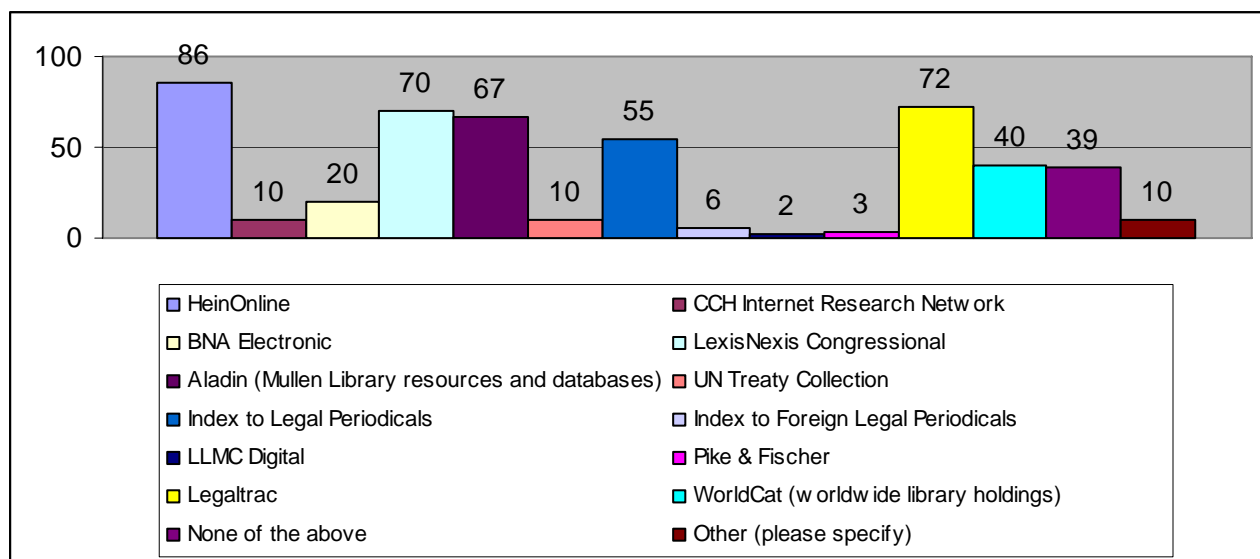
**Q. 13 Please indicate how successful the library's online resources are in meeting your research needs:**



**Analysis:**

The overwhelming majority of students find the library's online resources excellent or good for their research needs. This solid majority holds true for both day and evening students. Some respondents commented that they would like instruction of what is available via our online resources and how to best use them.

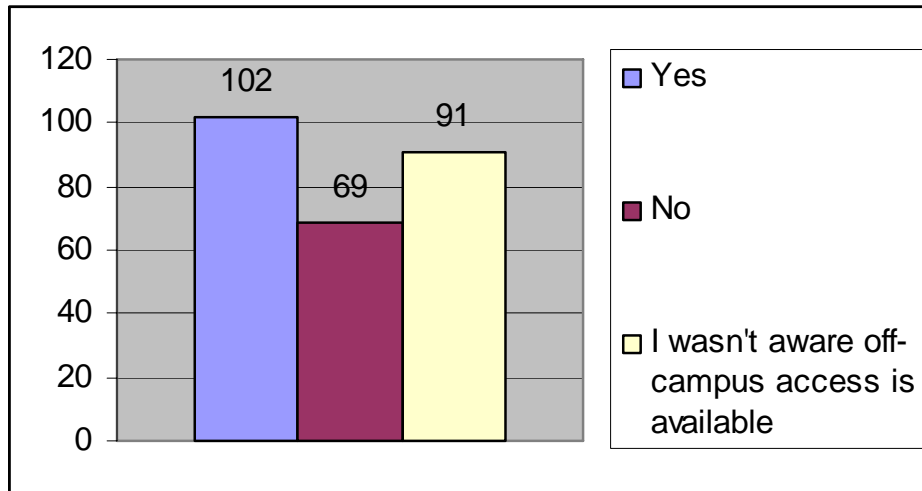
**Q. 14 Please indicate which of the following online databases you find most useful (multiple selections are okay):**



**Analysis:**

Although no database received an outright majority, HeinOnline was rated most useful followed by Legaltrac, LexisNexis Congressional, Aladin and the Index to Legal Periodicals respectively. Hein Online was rated most useful by the day students and Legaltrac was rated most useful by the evening students.

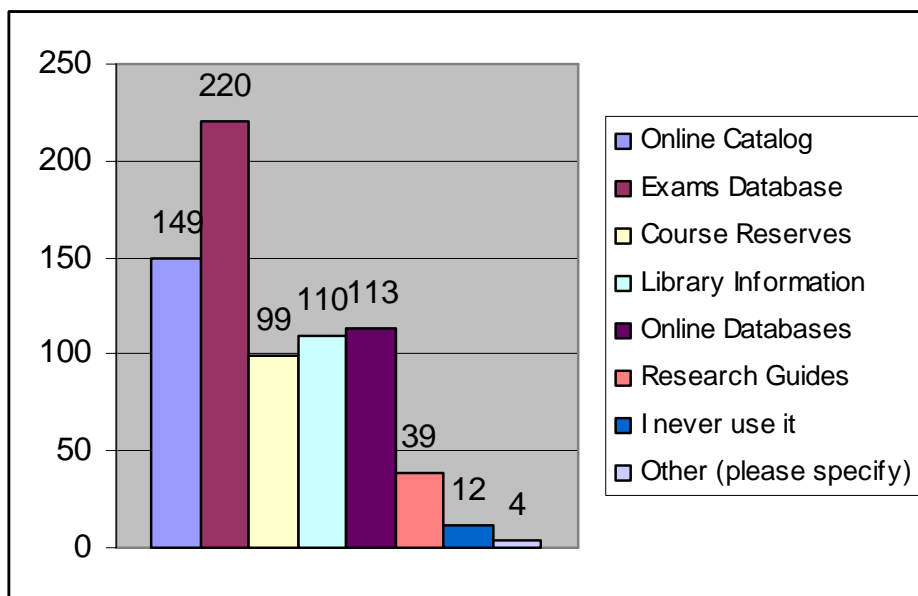
**Q. 15 Do you use the library's subscription databases (other than Westlaw and Lexis) off-campus?**



**Analysis:**

A majority of students do take advantage of the library's off-campus access to our online databases. However a high number of respondents are not aware that the library offers off-campus access to patrons.

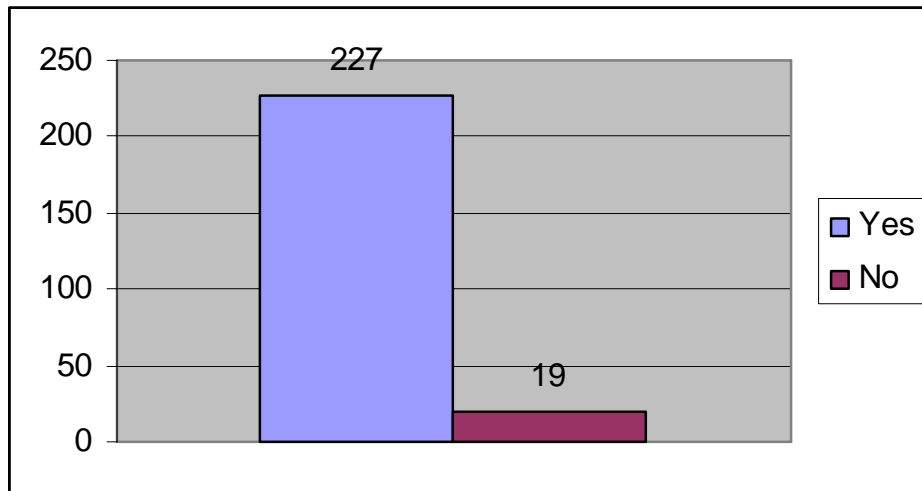
**Q.16 Please indicate why you use the library web page:**



**Analysis:**

Most respondents cited the exams database as the primary reason they use the library web page. The second most cited reason for using the library webpage was to access the online catalog. Access to online databases and library information ranked third and fourth respectively.

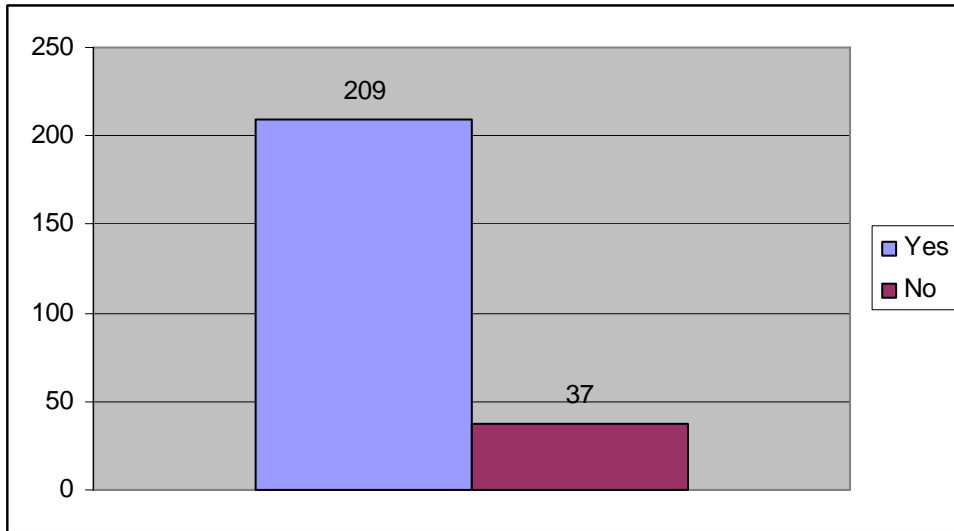
### Q.17 Do you find the web page easy to use?



#### Analysis:

The overwhelming majority of respondents find the library web page easy to use. This strong majority holds true for both day and evening students. Comments from this question and Questions 13 & 14 indicate that many students are not aware of the library's subscription databases. Several students suggested better organization of the online databases page, including a subject guide.

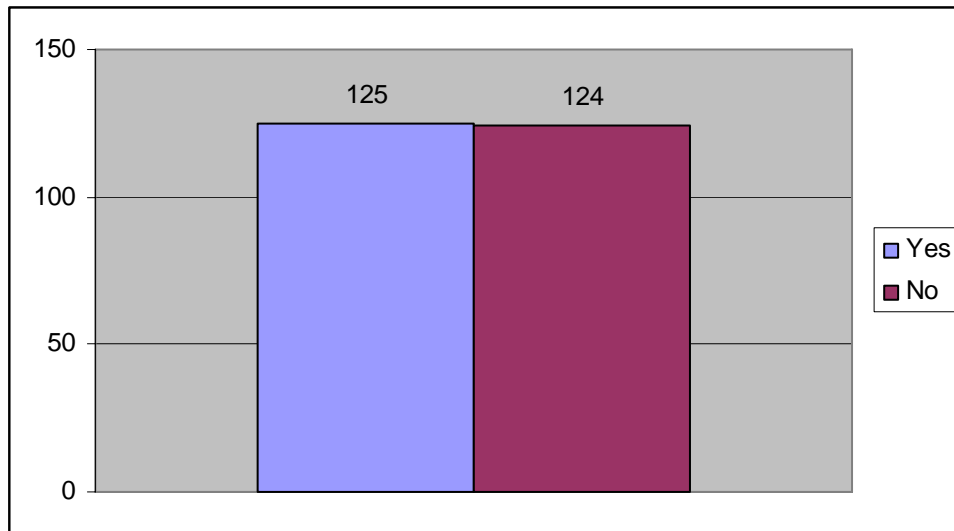
**Q.18 Do you find the library atmosphere conducive to studying?**



**Analysis:**

The overwhelming majority of respondents find the library a comfortable place to work and study. There was no discernable difference between the day and evening student responses. Complaints include temperature (too cold) and noise (talking and cell phones). Several requests were made for more comfortable seating, such as arm chairs and couches. A few students requested that the no food and no talking policies be more firmly enforced by staff. Seventeen students requested that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor laptop ban be removed; six students praised the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor laptop ban. Several students requested that power outlets be installed on both sides of tables.

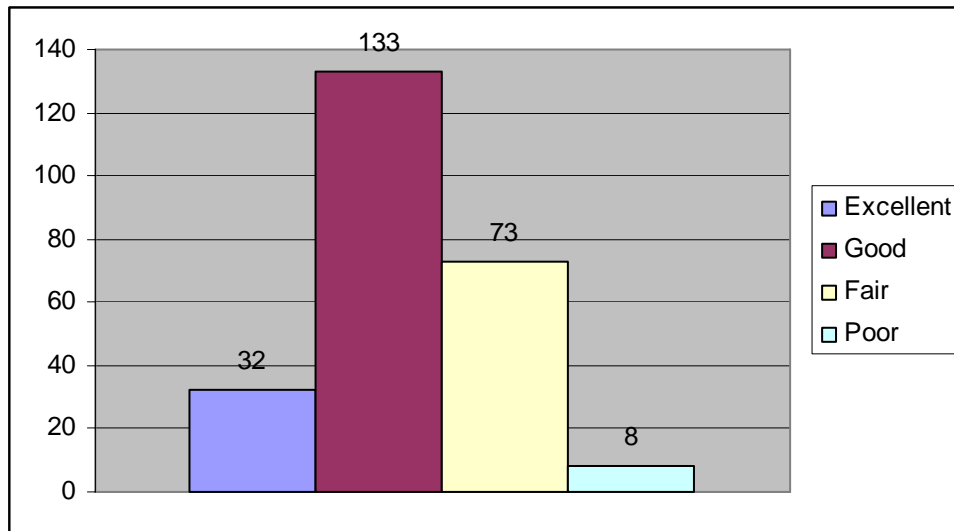
### Q.19 Is the temperature in the library comfortable?



#### Analysis:

The response to this question was evenly split. Interestingly, there is a difference in the day and evening response. Nearly 43% of day respondents feel that the library temperature is comfortable, while 75% of evening respondents feel that the library temperature is comfortable. Clearly temperature continues to be an important issue for students, since this question received the most number of comments (113). The most common complaint is that the library is too cold, especially near the windows. A few students mentioned that the study rooms and computer labs are too hot.

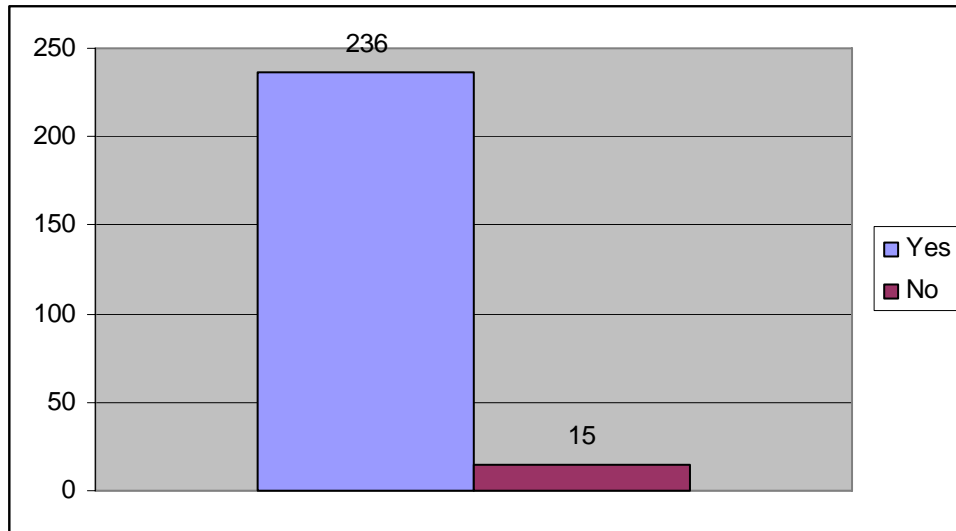
## Q.20 Please rate the availability of study rooms



### Analysis:

The majority of respondents rated study room availability as good or excellent. There was no discernable difference between the day and evening student responses. Most of the comments note that the availability is limited towards the end of the semester, especially during exams. Suggestions include opening up other rooms for group study during exams, providing single use study rooms, and changing the way the scheduling is done (currently, new sheets are posted on Sunday mornings).

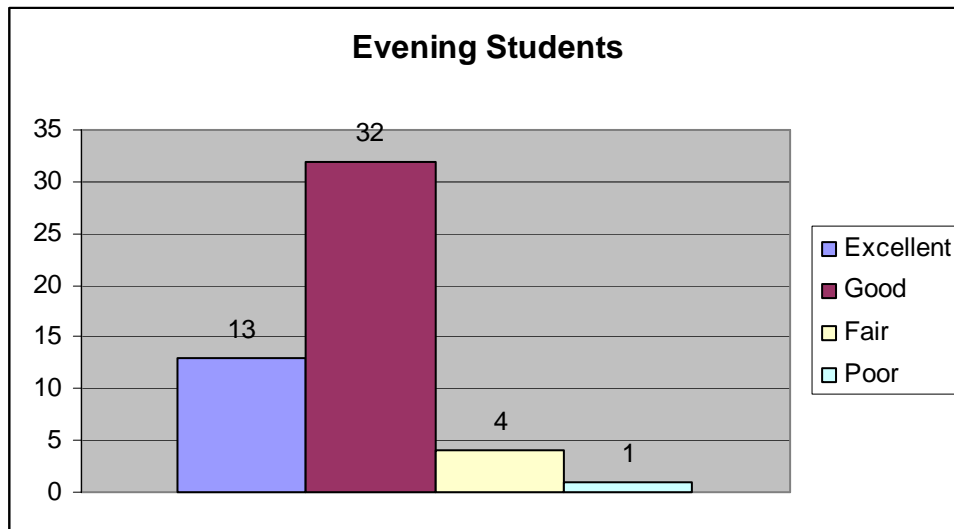
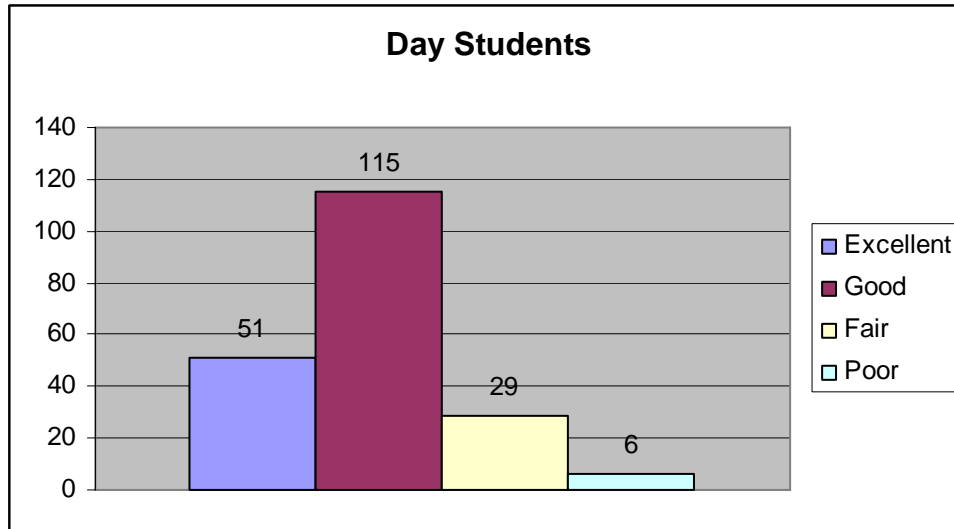
**Q.21 Would you use an online reservation system to reserve a study room?**



**Analysis:**

The overwhelming majority of respondents would use an online reservation system. Most of the comments essentially reiterated the “Yes” response. A few students expressed concern that the system would be abused if it did not require a login or have certain restrictions in place (such as number of hours per group per day).

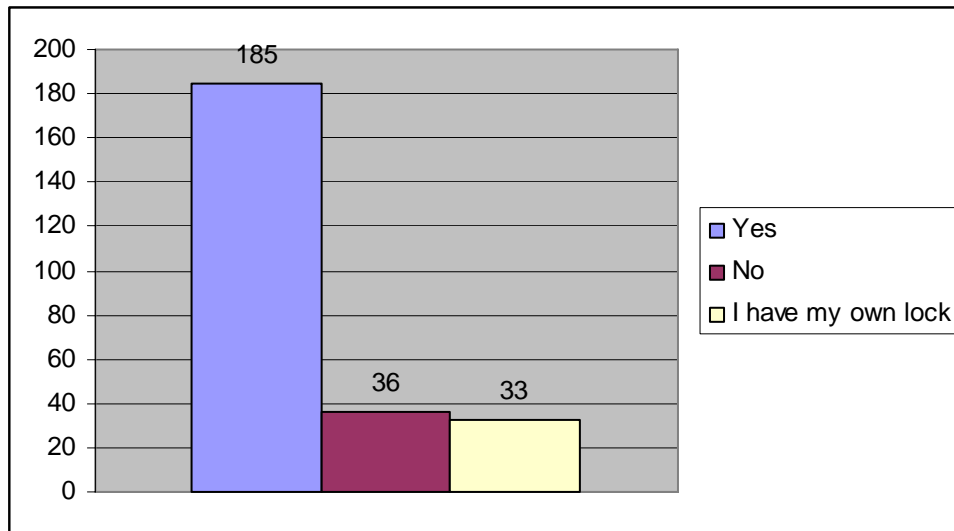
## Q.22 How would you rate the level of safety and security in the library?



### Analysis:

The majority of respondents rated safety and security as good or excellent. There was no discernable difference between the day and evening student responses. The comments indicate that students perceive the level of theft in the library as much higher than it is in actuality. Students also feel that the door guard is not effective for a number of reasons: the door guard is not on duty all hours the library is open, the door guard is not always consistent in checking IDs, and the door guard is sometimes absent from his post. A small number of students complained that the ID checking is too cumbersome. A few students suggested that a security officer should regularly patrol the library.

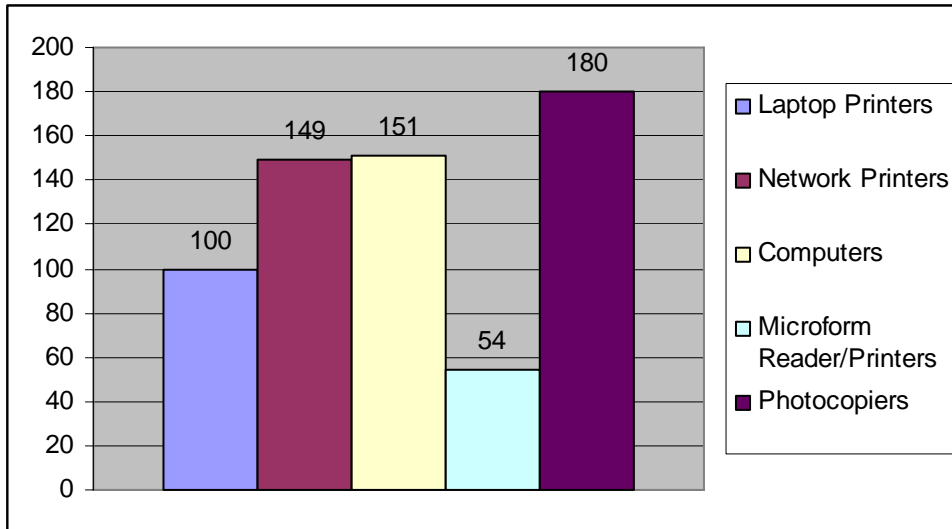
### Q.23 Would you use laptop locks if they were available for loan?



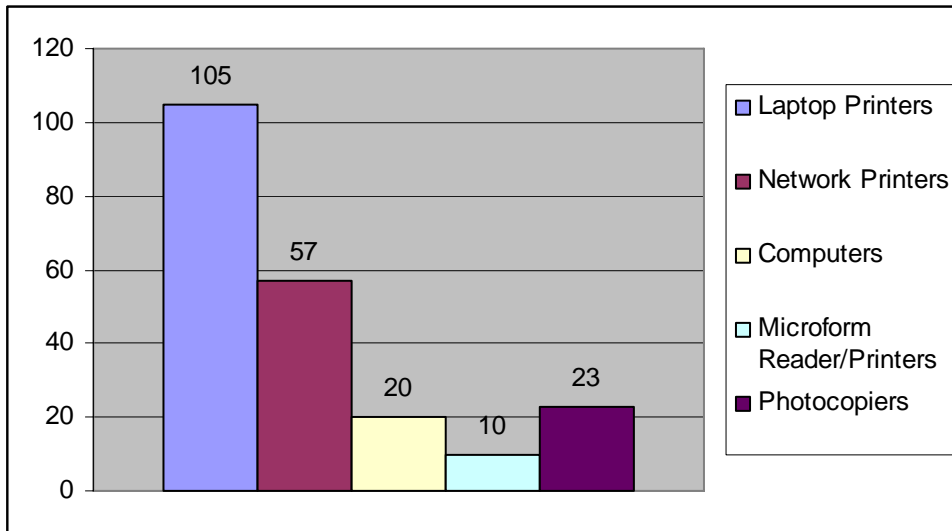
#### Analysis:

The overwhelming majority of respondents would use laptop locks if they were available for loan. This question had no comments box. However, comments on other questions indicate that students don't want to carry their laptop with them while they are in the library. Some students do use locks, but are unsure how to secure their laptops on carrels that don't have security anchors.

**Q.24 The following equipment is adequate for my research needs**



**Q.25 The following equipment is not adequate for my research needs**



**Analysis:**

The responses to these two questions appear to contradict one another in certain categories. In terms of percentages, however, they almost mirror one another. Over 41% of respondents rated laptop printers as adequate, while 69.1% rated laptop printers as inadequate. It should also be noted that Question 24 received 241 responses whereas Question 25 received only 152 responses. The majority of comments discuss the need for additional laptop printers. Suggestions were also made for faster printers, both network and laptop. A few students praised the free printing; a slightly larger number noted that the current system is wasteful. A few students complained that the wireless network is slow and that they have login problems. Other suggestions include the installation of laptop printers on Floor 3, and more, better office supplies such as staplers and three-hole punches.