

**Title: Building a One Medicine/One Health Library Perspective with Views from Veterinary and Health Sciences Library Users**

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**Purpose/Setting**

The One Health Initiative gained considerable momentum in the United States in 2008 with the release of the American Veterinary Medical Association Task Force Report. According to its mission statement, “One Health seeks to promote, improve, and defend the health and well-being of all species by enhancing cooperation and collaboration between physicians, veterinarians, and other scientific health professionals and by promoting strengths in leadership and management to achieve these goals” (1). Several strategic priorities are identified to accomplish this mission including the following:

- Joint educational efforts between human medical, veterinary medical schools, and schools of public health;
- Joint communication efforts in journals, at conferences, and via allied health networks;
- Joint efforts in clinical care through the assessment, treatment and prevention of cross-species disease transmission;
- Joint cross-species disease surveillance and control efforts in public health;
- Joint efforts in better understanding of cross-species disease transmission through comparative medicine research;
- Joint efforts in the development and evaluation of new diagnostic methods, medicines and vaccines for the prevention and control of diseases across species and;
- Joint efforts to inform and educate political leaders and the public sector through accurate media publications.” (1).

Since the Medical Sciences Library (MSL) at Texas A&M University provides library services and resources to schools serving both human and animal medicine as well as a school of rural public health, it is keenly interested in this initiative, which seeks to improve both human and animal lives through the integration of human and veterinary medicine. Several of these strategic priorities offer opportunities for a library serving both populations to advance the One Health Initiative.

An important first step in crafting an integrated resource and services delivery plan is to understand the background and attributes of these targeted user groups. At Texas A&M, the

College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences was officially established in 1916, but its history extends back to 1878 with the first attempt at teaching veterinary coursework at the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College (the former name of Texas A&M University), which ten years later had progressed to the level of a department of veterinary science under the leadership of Mark Francis. It is one of the oldest veterinary colleges in the United States and the only one in Texas. Its first graduating class of four in 1920 has grown considerably to the current 2009 levels of about 125, with over 60% being women. The Veterinary Library opened in 1949 and was located within the college. A college of medicine did not develop at Texas A&M until the late 1970's; it remains the youngest medical school among the eight located in Texas. It too, has grown from its initial graduating class of 32 students to a current 2009 enrollment of 150 students per class, with 40% being women. When the Texas A&M College of Medicine became a reality in 1977, the wise decision was made to combine the library for that entity with the Veterinary Library, which marks the beginnings of the Medical Sciences Library.

A review of some 2009 United States national data compiled by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges and the Association of American Medical Colleges helps provide another context for delivering services and resources to these differing user groups (2, 3). There were over 6,200 applicants seeking admission to the 28 U.S. colleges of veterinary medicine; 44% were admitted. In contrast, there were over 42,000 applicants seeking admission to the 132 U.S. colleges of medicine; 46% were successful. In veterinary medicine only nine percent of applicants came from historically under-represented groups and six percent Asian, while in medicine the percentage from historically under-represented groups was 16% and 22% Asian. The gender breakdown for 2009 in veterinary medicine was 77% female and 23% male, while in human medicine it was 48% female and 52% male. The veterinary medicine class is much more homogeneous, with 88% Caucasian and 77% female while the human medicine class is more diverse racially and split almost evenly by gender. These national demographics are very close to the specifics at Texas A&M. While the numbers vary in magnitude between veterinary and human medicine, it is clear that both groups compete quite intensely to earn a place in either veterinary or medical school. That competition and pressure to achieve continues after admittance, which impacts their attitudes and expectations about library services and the library environment.

### **Objective**

The objective of the research described in this paper was to identify similarities and differences among user expectations and feedback received from the Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC), specifically the College of Medicine (COM) and the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVM) through the LibQUAL+® survey instrument. The MSL has been included in annual campus-wide LibQUAL+® surveys for nearly 10 years but has not previously coordinated the surveying of these two user populations with a separate MSL LibQUAL+® survey.

The intention was to use this feedback to build as integrated as possible resource and service delivery models and a physical library environment to meet the needs of both human and veterinary medicine users, and to find additional ways to expand and encourage multi-disciplinary collaboration.

## **Methods/Process**

LibQUAL+® is a web-based, user-centered survey that seeks to solicit, track and then understand the needs and expectations of a library's users. The survey has been used at over 1,100 libraries in 26 countries and is available in 17 language translations. It is an important customer service tool for college and university libraries, health science libraries, academic law libraries, public libraries and community college libraries. The survey asks questions in three areas: customer service, information resources and their delivery, and the library as a place of study. In addition, the survey asks users about where and how often they use information resources—on library premises, through a library webpage, or other non-library information gateways such as Yahoo™ or Google™.

The following is a complete listing of the questions and the service area they assess (4):

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE**

#### **Customer Treatment**

- AS-2 Giving users individual attention
- AS-3 Employees who are consistently courteous
- AS-4 Readiness to respond to users' questions
- AS-6 Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion
- AS-8 Willingness to help users

#### **Job Knowledge to Answer User Questions**

- AS-1 Employees who instill confidence in users
- AS-5 Employees who have the knowledge to answer user questions
- AS-7 Employees who understand the needs of their users
- AS-9 Dependability in handling users' service problems

### **INFORMATION RESOURCES AND DELIVERY**

#### **Information Resources**

- IC-3 The printed library materials I need for my work
- IC-4 The electronic information resources I need
- IC-8 Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work

#### **Information Delivery**

- IC-1 Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office
- IC-2 A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own
- 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

### **LIBRARY AS A PLACE OF STUDY**

#### **Environment**

- LP-1 Library space that inspires study and learning
- LP-3 A comfortable and inviting location
- LP-4 A getaway for study, learning or research

#### **Individual Study**

- LP-2 Quiet space for individual activities

#### **Group Study**

- LP-5 Community space for group learning and group study

Beginning in Spring 2009 the MSL enhanced its LibQUAL+® survey participation so that all HSC faculty, students and staff were invited to participate in the survey to gather more comprehensive feedback. Results from this survey, when compared to campus-wide responses, suggested the value of a more-focused comparison between the HSC and CVM. From February 16 through March 31, 2010 the LibQUAL+® survey was administered to both the HSC and CVM populations; all students, faculty and staff were invited to participate. The survey administered was a shortened version of the LibQUAL+® survey, LibQUAL+® Lite, which asks 21 randomly selected questions instead of asking survey participants to answer 44 questions. The survey included both standard and local questions that are used consistently by many United States academic medical libraries, which provides the opportunity to benchmark an institution's results against, national, regional, discipline and consortial library data. The following table summarizes responses received.

Institution	User Group	Year	Number of Respondents	Total Population	Percent Response
Texas A&M	Graduate Students	2009	279	9047	3%
	Faculty	2009	162	1218	13%
Texas A&M	Graduate Students	2010	692	9383	7%
	Faculty	2010	378	1495	25%
COM	Graduate Students	2010	107	999	11%
	Faculty	2010	74	110	67%
CVM	Graduate Students	2010	97	669	15%
	Faculty	2010	63	116	54%

In terms of actual survey responses, the COM and CVM target groups were fairly evenly represented, although the percentage of responses was about 55% COM to 45% CVM. Student responses comprised about 63 % of the total and faculty responses about 37%.

Texas A&M Faculty Total Population figures do not represent the entire Texas A&M faculty but only totals for the colleges that were surveyed each year. Unlike the students and faculty for the COM and CVM and the respective faculty for the Texas A&M 2009 and 2010 surveyed colleges, only a random sampling of Texas A&M University graduate students were invited to participate in the LibQUAL+® survey (that is about 20% of Texas A&M University graduate students were invited to participate in the survey). Using those figures instead of the total graduate student populations response rates for 2009 and 2010 would be, respectively, 15% and 19%. With this adjustment taken into consideration, student response rate was consistent with that seen at the university at large, but faculty response rate from the COM and CVM was dramatically higher than that seen at the university.

## **Outcomes/Conclusions**

### *Outcomes*

One of the main purposes in using this survey tool was to discover similarities and differences between our veterinary and human medicine user needs and preferences concerning information resources, services and the renovation of library physical spaces. Responses were tabulated by discipline and whether a student or faculty was the respondent, yielding four separate groups. In addition to a detailed review of responses to every survey question, the standard analysis of

LibQUAL+® responses identifies the top five rated library services and resources that users consider priorities, areas of concern and library areas of excellence. It was hoped that a clear understanding of these would be a powerful tool in crafting library priorities, strategic initiatives, and action plans.

The single customer service priority that was consistent across students and faculty in both disciplines was *willingness to help users*. Three of four groups shared the following information resources and delivery priorities: *making electronic resources accessible from my home or office*, *making information easily accessible for independent use*, and *the print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work*. Only the College of Medicine identified the library as a place of study as a priority through their emphasis on *quiet space for individual activities* and *getaway for study, learning or research*. Other priorities that were identified only by the College of Medicine users spanned the customer service and information resources and their delivery areas and specifically included: *employees who understand the needs of their users*, *employees who are consistently courteous*, *employees who have the knowledge to answer user's questions*, and *easy to use access tools that allow me to find things on my own*. Priorities unique to the College of Veterinary Medicine users centered on information resources and their delivery: *the electronic information resources I need*, and *a library website enabling me to locate information on my own*. The distribution of the 21 priorities identified by these four user groups was 7 in the customer service category, 12 in the information resources and delivery category, and 2 in the library as a place of study category.

The general approach taken was to interpret the top five areas of concern as areas which needed attention and improvement. The single concern expressed by all four user groups related to information delivery, *a library website enabling me to locate information on my own*. Three of four of these user groups identified two concerns related to information resources and their delivery: *the print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work*, and *making electronic resources accessible from my home or office*. The single concern unique to faculty in both disciplines related to information resource delivery, *easy to use access tools that allow me to find things on my own*. The two concerns unique to the College of Medicine centered on the library as a place of study: *library space that inspires study and learning*, and *quiet space for individual activities*. The two concerns unique to the College of Veterinary Medicine centered on information resources and their delivery: *making information easily accessible for independent use*, and *modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information*. The distribution of the 21 concerns identified by these four user groups was 2 in the customer service category, 15 in the information resources and delivery category, and 4 in the library as a place of study category.

The top five areas of excellence resulted in a heavy emphasis on customer service, revealing considerable consistency across all four user groups. The strongest consensus on service excellence related to these specific service successes: *employees who are consistently courteous*, *readiness to respond to users questions*, *giving users individual attention*, *employees who deal with users in a caring fashion*, *employees who instill confidence in users*, and *employees who have the knowledge to answer users questions*. *Employees who understand the needs of their users* was uniquely identified as a service success by College of Medicine students, while *willingness to help users* was uniquely identified as a service success by College of Veterinary

faculty. The one information resources area of success was *printed materials I need for my work*, which was identified by both groups in the College of Veterinary Medicine and by the College of Medicine faculty. The only group to identify an area of excellence for the library as a place of study category was the College of Veterinary students with *quiet space for individual activities*. The distribution of the 20 areas of excellence identified by these four user groups was 16 in the customer service category, 3 in the information resources and delivery category, and 1 in the library as a place of study category.

### *Conclusions to Action Plans*

While there was clearly variation in responses to individual questions between the medicine and veterinary medicine respondents, there were definitely themes that emerged which provide a solid basis for moving forward with an integrated plan for services and resource delivery and continuing enhancement of the library as a place of study. No specific areas emerged where the library was being pulled in totally different directions by conflicting needs and priorities of these users groups. Several questions did emerge which will require additional follow-up to fully understand the user responses before completing the action plan. Some of these include:

- Do website concerns refer to the MSL website or the University Libraries website?
- Are there particular areas of the website that need improvement, such as subject guides or tutorials?
- Is the concern more with reliable remote access to electronic resources or with the resources available?
- What additional electronic resources are needed?

There were several key messages with direct implications for action plans that emerged from the survey responses. These survey messages and their resulting action plans include:

Information resources and their delivery are both the over-riding priority and area of concern for these user groups.

- Continue work on improving the MSL website, including the use of focus groups for both the MSL and University Libraries website
- Continue efforts to identify better solutions for an integrated search solution for library resources and catalogs to support the desire of users to “find things on my own” and for “easy to use access tools”
- Conduct focus groups to obtain more precise information on access challenges and need for additional resources
- Develop the capability for single authentication to allow all HSC users to directly access library resources and services from their HSC network credentials
- Continue efforts to make resources available wherever and whenever the user needs them

Competent library employees are a priority across these user groups, but especially to the COM users

- Continue emphasis on staff straining
- Explore staffing patterns that minimize the reliance on student workers in direct customer service
- Explore enhanced selection and training programs for student workers
- Provide MSL staffing for new library/learning resource areas in expanding HSC campuses

Direct customer service is consistently viewed as a strength and area of excellence of MSL

- Reinforce customer service successes through training that emphasizes the particular behaviors and treatment that are most important to customers
- Seek new opportunities to leverage customer service. Specifically, expand the direct service model to include assignment of library staff to new HSC campuses as they develop and employ the embedded librarian model in CVM research buildings.
- Emphasize the “high-tech-high-touch” complementary reality for library services and resources

Library as a place of study is both an area of excellence and a concern

- Continue renovation efforts and enhancements underway for library user space
- Continue efforts to convert space dedicated to little used collection materials into user space
- Continue efforts to gather input and feedback from users concerning their spaces
- Work with HSC staff to address COM priorities and concerns for library and study places in the new buildings on expanding HSC campuses

LibQUAL+® data has proved a useful tool in clarifying the vision and validating the belief that the library can successfully serve both user groups with an integrated approach to the delivery of resources and services. Equipped with its action plan and the One Health Initiative strategic priorities, the MSL is prepared to make the “one medicine/one health” service theme a reality.

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