A Study to Discover Abilene Christian University
Professors' Wants and Needs for the Future Library
Learning Commons Center

Compiled for:

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A Study to Discover Abilene Christian University Professors’ Wants and Needs for the Future Library Learning Commons Center

Executive Summary

Objectives

The number of students using the Abilene Christian University library has declined in recent years due to new technology and student’s desire to study in a more relaxed atmosphere. Mark Tucker, The Dean of Information & Library Resources, desires to make the library the heart of the university once again. The purpose of this research was to discover was professors desired in the new library learning commons center. The library already has blue prints that include: a coffee shop, a copy center, Team 55 (technical assistance), and the English Department writing center. Since the library already knows that these things will be included the team researched what products or services could be added to benefit professors and their students.

Results

The results were obtained through secondary sources and primary research that included a focus group and survey of ACU professors. The results showed that professors at ACU had many ideas to contribute to the project and had strong opinions about what to include in the new commons area. Professors were most concerned about students having access to the proper technology as well as creating a positive learning atmosphere.

Conclusions

It was discovered that the new Library Commons was regarded as an excellent addition to the ACU library and will improve the academic environment of the students. The most helpful information was obtained through the discussion in the focus group. The suggestions that were found to have the most relevance related to: the technology, atmosphere and art.

Recommendations

The research team’s recommendations for the Library Learning Commons are:

- Increasing the number of computers available for all ACU students as well as having adequate Internet accessibility.

- Creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and group study through soft background music and a water fountain.

- Reserving a place in the commons area for student art work to be displayed.

- Have copy center and Team 55 staff out from behind the counter to be more accessible to students.
Introduction

Mark Tucker, the Dean of Library Resources at Abilene Christian University's Margaret Herman Brown Library, requested marketing research on the topic of the new library learning commons center. Mr. Tucker is knowledgeable and has extensive experience with updating libraries. He worked on the implementation of a learning commons at Purdue University. From his previous experience he knows that updating the ACU library is essential to attracting students to the library and keeping them there. A group of Marketing Research students undertook the challenge of conducting research on a sample taken from the total population of ACU professors.

The number of students using the ACU library has declined in recent years for academic and social reasons; this can mainly be attributed to the availability of online databases, the Internet, and personal computers in dorms or houses. The faculty and staff of the library desire to make the library the heart of the university once again. They wish to redefine the library from a physical building to a place where students can receive academic support to help them succeed. The library in its current condition is not very conducive to group study and therefore is not a desirable meeting place. Mark Tucker hopes to create a learning commons area that is inviting to both students and faculty. The learning commons design is still in its creative stages, and Mr. Tucker asked for help in making sure that the services offered are what the professors of the university desire.

A personal interview was conducted February 16, 2005 with Mark Tucker. This was the first step in the search for what the client needed to know. He brought up specific areas to research that were previously unnoticed, for example: what type of food will be served in the commons area, and how the professors envision the new learning commons center. This interview generated important questions, and brought up topics that were later discussed in the focus group and in the survey.

A proposal was written and then presented to Mark Tucker on April 6, 2005. He signed the proposal (Appendix A) at this time and updated the team on the progress of the library learning commons project. He informed the team that the library was definitely going to include a Team 55 (technical assistance), the English Department Writing Center, a copy center, and a coffee shop.

Statement of Problems

Before a large financial commitment was made to the learning commons for this undertaking, Mark Tucker felt that it was important to know the desires of students and faculty that will be using the library commons. The entire student and faculty body will be affected by this change, so the research team chose a sample of professors from ACU to represent the population of faculty, while another research team addressed the desires of the students. Mark Tucker's decision problem was:

What features and services to include in the new learning commons?
In order to allow the client to address this problem, he needs to know how professors view the library and the components they feel are critical to the library learning common’s success. This need leads to the research problem, which was:

*What features do faculty believe would be most beneficial to students in the new learning commons?*

The results of this investigation will be provided later in the text.

**Purpose & Objectives**

The purpose of conducting the research was to determine what ACU professors’ desire in the learning commons and what they feel would be most beneficial to the students. This information is being provided to the library to help them decide what would be most useful in the learning commons center. After Mark Tucker informed the research group that Team 55 (technical assistance), the English department Writing Center, a copy center, and a coffee shop were all going to be part of the new learning commons center the decision problem shifted slightly from “what services to include” to “what features could enhance the services already proposed by the library committee.”

The research team’s objective was to gather background information through secondary research, obtain specific ideas from the focus group, and later incorporate those ideas into a survey that would be distributed to 90 ACU professors.

**Methodology**

**Secondary Data**

There were two ways that the team compiled secondary data. Mark Tucker provided a lot of background information and research that the library commons board had previously collected. He showed the team two different blue prints for the learning commons. This information helped the team to better understand what the board already knew. This information altered the research focus to insure that pseudo research was not being conducted. Since the team knew that four elements were certainly going to be included, the emphasis shifted to how to add value to these features. The secondary research that the team did independently was from research on the Internet. There are many other universities who have implemented learning commons to their library in the last few years, so several examples were available.
Primary Data

Focus Group

The team extended invitations for the focus group to professors because they have more experience and education than students, and could offer more insight to the library commons project. Since the research team was dealing with professors, they had to take into consideration the professors’ time and planned things in advance. The team asked several professors what time of day was generally best for them. After chapel and during lunch was the ideal time for most professors, so the focus group was held at 11:45 a.m. April 12, 2005 in Room 363 of the ACU library. The focus group was conducted in the library because it is a central location, and to get the professors in the library mindset. A Subway lunch was served.

It was also important that the sample chosen for the focus group have a variety of professors from different departments. The goal of the team was to have 6-10 professors from various departments participate in the focus group. The team asked students from assorted majors if they had any professors that they would recommend for a focus group on this topic. The team then looked up the suggested professors’ information online at my.acu.edu and recorded their e-mail address, department, and phone number into an Excel spreadsheet. An e-mail was constructed (Appendix B) and sent to 26 the professors that were chosen. The team felt that it was important to individualize each e-mail so the recipient would not think that it was just junk e-mail.

Due to the busy time of the semester a lot of professors sent their regrets stating that they had prior commitments during that time. The team then had to compile more names of ACU professors and add more to the Excel spreadsheet for a total of 46 ACU professors (Appendix C). Once the team reached nine positive responses, the search was curtailed. Another e-mail was sent out the night before the focus group reminding the professors of the time and place of the meeting (Appendix D). The research team wanted the professors to understand the importance of their participation and let them know that only 9 people would be present and that the team was depending on their participation. The professors were notified that the session would be taped and viewed later by the research team.

The session started with a welcome and moderator introduction. The moderator then explained the purpose of the focus group and the plans for the 2005 ACU Library Commons Project. She encouraged open conversation about the proposed ideas, and candid responses to the questions.

Survey

The team used an online survey host at questionpro.com. There was an option for a free trial of the service, which was available to anyone. The team took advantage of this option but there were some restrictions. The survey could only be sent out to 100 people and the first 10 names were only a trial so these recipients could not actually review and
fill out the survey. A list of 100 professors representing every department at ACU was compiled and entered into the address section of the survey (Appendix E). There were 13 total questions and the survey was created using a Likert Scale, a Rank Order, and Open Ended Response questions. The survey was sent out to 100 professors with only 90 actually being able to respond, due to the first 10 being a trial. There were 13 surveys blocked because of spam blockers so only 77 professors actually received the survey and there were 32 responses (41% response rate).

**Limitations**

The team felt that professors would be able to provide useful information to the client since they have been in the education field for a great amount of time than students, and many of them will continue teaching at ACU for years to come. The information professors provided was useful, but it also presented some unique challenges. The population of professors is much smaller than the population of students. This made it challenging to find enough professors to participate and obtain sufficient information to calculate relevant statistical analyses.

There were several ways that the research team's methodology was flawed. If the team were to redo the research, there would be several changes. The team would have changed some of the survey questions, data collection methods, and analyses. The survey itself did not include any demographic questions, which made it difficult to discover relationships between characteristics of the respondents and their answers. The survey system that the team used only allowed 100 surveys to be sent to professors. Due to bounce-backs and spam-blocking systems the number of e-mails actually delivered was limited.

**Results**

*Secondary Data*

The Library used to be the heart of Abilene Christian University. It was a place where students came together to study and learn. Students used the library to find research information for classes, study, and to write reports. Gate counts are currently down at both public and private university libraries due to 24 hour online research, online databases, and an increase in personal computers. Libraries now have to compete with local coffee shops to attract students. These coffee shops offer a warm and relaxed atmosphere that many students find beneficial for studying. The students are often choosing this relaxed atmosphere over that of the rigid library setting. Libraries are beginning to take a different approach to regain lost gate count.

Many university libraries have tried to increase traffic by installing a coffee shop and terminating the rule of no food or drink in the library. The American Library Association
has reported that nearly $500 million has been spent on library additions, renovations, and new buildings at 50 different college campuses in the past two years (2).

The Texas Christian University Library in Fort Worth has recently undergone some remodeling. This change helped develop a new kind of library culture. In the fall of 2004, TCU added a coffee shop in the bookstore and created an area that was more conducive to group study. These spaces are equipped with cozy couches and relaxing new age style music. Robert A. Seal, the director of the Library, reported that the overall traffic has doubled since the renovations. The increase was from about 8500 visits during a typical week in the year 2000 to more than 17,000 visits per week in the year 2004 (1). Richard Flores, the general manager of food services, says the coffee shop has been extremely profitable with a daily average of $1,200 in sales of various food and drink.

Another example is the Bruce T. Halle Library at Eastern Michigan University. This facility was built in 1988 but was recently renovated. The newly renovated $41 million building differs greatly from its antiquated predecessor. There are now many large study rooms with picture windows and an abundance of computers that invite the idea of group study. Since the renovations to Halle Library, there is a reported 10% increase in circulation and 50% growth in gate count (2).

The D.H. Hill Library at North Carolina State University adapted to a faster pace in 1998 by being the first and only 24-hour university library. The following year NCSU foot traffic started to increase. Carolyn Argentati, associate director for the public services at the library, credits this to the 24-hour service and other incentives. The library also began instructional workshops to draw students in and show them how to use the new software and databases (1). The technology was needed but students were a little apprehensive because they did not know how to operate all programs, the workshops brought more students in and gave them practical knowledge of the systems.

Through researching secondary data the team was able to suggest that adding the new services to the library would boost gate count and help the library become the heart of the Abilene Christian University once again.

Primary Data

Focus Group

The focus group was held on Tuesday, April 12, 2005 in the library. There were 9 professors present, all of which were from all different departments at ACU. This mixture provided diversity amongst the group and was more representative of the ACU professor population.

The following questions are what the moderator asked the professors, and the pertinent responses from professors are in the paragraphs below. (The entire focus group session transcript and the moderator's guide are located in Appendix G).
“What services do you think the library should add in the new commons area?”

There were two recommendations brought up by the faculty that will be elaborated on in the following paragraphs: Internet accessibility, and student artwork displays. Since many students use the Internet for their study as well as for personal use, there was some concern expressed about the capabilities of the wireless Internet access offered in the new commons. If the full capacity of students were using the Internet at the same time would there be adequate services available? Would the wireless Internet modules be capable of providing service to everyone? This was especially important to the Journalism and Mass Communication Department since their students frequently use the library to do research and write their papers.

There was some interest about the configuration of the computers. Would they be in pods or the traditional rows? Many of the professors expressed a strong opinion that they be in pods. Pods are proven to be more conducive to group learning and projects. They also suggested that the computers in the third floor classroom be switched to pods. These pods should have 4-5 computers at each station, with a minimum of 4. The professors also expressed concern on the availability of computer labs during later hours, which is when students need computer access the most. Many students do not start their schoolwork until late at night so it was suggested that within the new commons there be a separate 24-hour computer lab available. As discussion centered on this topic there were many thoughts on security and accessibility. It was suggested that this computer lab be enclosed in glass and monitored by security cameras. These cameras could be monitored off site and there could be a separate entrance from the rest of the library that would be closed off after hours.

It appears that art students do not currently have enough space to house and display artwork. The representative from the art department strongly recommended that there be a place in the library designated for the display of student artwork that would be rotated throughout the semester. As well as being cost effective for the library it will provide an opportunity to expose students to a variety of other departments that they might not have otherwise encountered.

“What services do you think would be most helpful to students?”

The main topics discussed were multi-media stations, library help sessions, and staff placement. The professor representing the Bible department was concerned about the lack of multi-media computers available to students. Students from every department are assigned multi-media projects. In order to compile these presentations, the students need a larger computer memory capacity for images, as well as adequate processing speed for extensive video editing. Currently there are a limited number of computers on campus with these capabilities. Many of the professors concurred that there was a growing need for this technology on the ACU Campus. These computers could be housed in the new commons and be available in a restricted area and under the supervision of a lab assistant.
With all of the new facilities being added to the library, students may not know what is available and how to properly use the new facilities. Some of the professors suggested that it would be helpful to offer seminars for students so they can get acquainted with the technology and services available in the library. It was proposed that these seminars be mandatory for freshmen and also be offered in the evening for upperclassmen. These sessions will resemble the workshops that are already offered in the College of Business Administration (COBA), the English Department, Exercise Science, and many other ACU departments. This will help provide a sense of unity amongst the student body, and will allow them to interact with people outside their majors.

The model of Kinko’s service members was brought up as a positive example of how the new Team 55 and copy center staff should conduct themselves. Instead of sitting behind a counter waiting for students to approach them, they should go out in the commons area and make themselves easily accessible. It was suggested that the employees wear designated shirts or nametags to distinguish themselves. It is often intimidating for students to approach a counter and discuss a problem or to ask a question to the “expert”, but this problem would be eliminated by making the help staff more accessible.

“Are there any services that we haven’t discussed or any suggestions that you may have?”

Library hours, the placement of computers and chairs, and the possibility of the new commons area becoming a social gathering place rather than a learning environment were all issues that professors were concerned with. Most of the faculty felt that the current library hours were inadequate for students. The JMC and English department representatives both strongly suggested that the hours be extended. They have heard complaints from many students within their department about needing to use the library services and not being able to access them. Many students have other responsibilities, or jobs, and they start their homework late at night. This makes it difficult for them to use the library during its current operating hours. The professors suggested that the library extend its hours to at least 2 a.m. every night, as well as being open longer on Saturdays.

The placement of the computers and the type of chairs in the commons area has a great impact on the ease of learning in this area. It was suggested that the computers be set in pods of about 4-5 computers. There need to be adequate places to plug in a personal computer for internet access and power throughout the room. This is vital to group learning. The type of chairs used in the computer area and commons area will make a difference in comfort and student learning. If chairs in the computer pod area are bulky and heavy, it will make it challenging for students to move them around to work in groups. They should be light and easy to move, preferably with wheels. The chairs in the commons coffee area should be comfortable for students to study in as well as having the capability to move short distances. All of these elements combined together will make group learning more effective.

The possibility of the new commons area becoming a social gathering place was also another major concern. Could this new area possibly displace the campus center as a
social place? If the new entrance does indeed face the campus center would students be more inclined to go to the coffee shop to meet with friends rather than the campus center? The faculty asked these questions because they are concerned about the new commons area becoming a social center rather than a place for learning. They felt that it was important to set the tone for this new space as being a place conducive to learning and group study rather than an area for playing games and loud conversation. Ideas on how to apply this concept are discussed more in depth after the next question.

"Are there any other features that you have seen at other universities that you would like to see here?"

There was an overwhelming concern about the overall atmosphere in the commons area. As mentioned previously, it was the concern of the faculty that the learning area be used for studying, and not for social experiences or playing games. This area needs to be dedicated to studying and learning, not just socializing. Communicating this principle to students may be challenging. The professors suggested that the overall atmosphere include: softer lighting, background noise, and decorations. These changes will help set the tone for students. It was suggested that the lighting be adequate for reading but not so bright that it hurts the eyes. It should not be as bright as a classroom; but more like the lighting in Starbucks, possibly with lamps stationed around the study areas to provide extra light.

A way to control the noise level needs to be implemented. If it is completely silent in the background, then the students may think that they must whisper. Having soft background noise, either some type of music or possibly a water feature, can help control the sound level. The concept of a water feature (a trickling water fountain) was popular. Most of the professors agreed that a water feature should be included in the commons area. It could easily communicate not only the appropriate sound level but also set the tone for studying. One professor made the statement that what you see controls how you act. Therefore if there is something visible that students can see, like sophisticated artwork or water features, this can help control their behavior.

Some professors’ offices are cramped, small spaces filled with books and furniture. Many professors welcomed the idea of using the commons area as a place to meet with students outside of the office or classroom. The professors liked the idea of being able to bring their personal computers and accomplish various tasks while also being able to interact with students. This would make them more accessible for conversation and mentoring with students from all departments.
Question 1
'The Library Commons would benefit from a "Barnes and Noble" type atmosphere.' This question was asked in a Likert form order to gain an insight into the style of ambiance desired in the new library commons. The research team found through secondary research that this was the typical description of the atmosphere in other universities library commons. The data in the chart below conveys that 56% of professors agreed and 0% disagreed that the commons would benefit from this type of atmosphere.

Question 5
'Displaying student art work would create a positive atmosphere in the Library Commons.' There was concern in the focus group about adequate space designated for art students to display their artwork. A few professors pointed out that this is a cost effective way for the new commons to stay up to date aesthetically, as well as providing a diverse cross-discipline arena. This question was intended to determine if professors thought that the display of student art would create a positive atmosphere in the commons. According to the chart below the majority, (89%) of people surveyed agreed. This informed the team that a space was indeed desired for students to display their artwork.
Question 6
'Computers in the Library Commons should be in pods to facilitate group study.'
This question refers to computer placement; clusters of computers together forming pods versus traditional rows. Computers grouped in clusters often help in facilitating group work. This question was created to discover if professors thought that computers in pods would increase group study and learning. According to the chart below the professor’s agreed (37.04%) and strongly agree (29.63%) with the idea of pods. From the teams secondary research they found that individual study is decreasing and group study in increasing.

![Pie chart showing responses to Question 6]

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Question 11
'Night seminars in the Library Commons would help students to learn how to use the new facility.'
This question was a result of the focus group discoveries. The team was trying to determine if faculty thought night seminars about the services offered in the library would help the students become more aware of the new facilities in the Brown Library. According to the frequency analysis below, the majority (67%) of people surveyed choose agree. This question and frequency analysis show that night seminars would help students learn about the new services that the commons has to offer.

![Pie chart showing responses to Question 11]

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

![Graphical representation of Question 11 responses]
The research team used Spearman rank correlation to see if a relationship existed between whether professors thought it would be beneficial to students to have longer library hours and 24-hour access to computers in the Library Commons. The team found that the two variables had a moderately strong correlation of .7261 (Appendix F). This suggests that professors believe that having both 24-hour access and longer library hours would be beneficial to students (Survey questions 9 and 10).

The team used Spearman rank correlation test to determine if a correlation existed between whether the Commons would benefit from a “Barnes and Noble” type atmosphere and the playing of soft background music. From this test, there is not enough evidence to believe that the “Barnes and Noble” type atmosphere and soft background music are related (Appendix F). This conclusion suggests that professors don’t believe that the two variables together would be beneficial to the Library Commons (Survey questions 1 and 2).

The research team used the Spearman rank correlation test to determine if a correlation is present between computers in the commons being situated in pods to facilitate group study and if having 24-hour access a computer lab in the commons is beneficial to students. The finding suggested that there is a moderate correlation between the two variables (Appendix F). The findings imply that the professors feel that students would benefit from both of these services in the Library Commons (Survey questions 6 and 10).

The research team used Contingency Tables to discover if there was a relationship between what department professors were from and if they would meet with students in the library commons. The null hypothesis was: “There is no statistically significant difference between professors' department and their willingness to meet with students in the library commons.” From our data, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

![Professors Willingness to Meet with Dependent on Department](image-url)
Conclusions and Recommendation:

The research team has concluded that in addition to the four core items being added to the library learning commons, there are three additional items that are also important. These items are Internet accessibility, atmosphere control, and student artwork displays. The opinions of professors (in the focus group and in the survey) suggested that these things were vital to the success of the new library learning commons center.

The research team recommends that Mark Tucker focus on the preceding mentioned conclusions. These programs can be implemented through the following procedures.

- Computer availability for all students should be a priority. Every student that needs access to a computer should be able to obtain it. It is recommended that these computers be set up in pods of 4-5 computers per group. There also needs to be adequate wireless capabilities when the commons area is at full capacity. With the high number of students using the commons area wireless Internet service, the wireless technology that is in place must be able to provide this service all students. Students need to be able to count on the commons area to provide reliable Internet service. A 24 hour lab available in the library would be helpful to students living off-campus who may not have another way to access the Internet.

- The atmosphere needs to set the tone of casual class. One professor used the phrase “what you see influences how you act” and the research team feels that this advice would be an excellent guide when deciding on the atmospheric qualities. The proper atmosphere can be facilitated by many things but the research team suggests soft background music and a water feature similar to a trickling fountain.

- A special display area for senior art students would not only be cost effective for the library but would also provide a solution to the overflowing art displays around campus. This display area could be rotated throughout the semester to keep the atmosphere fresh and inviting.

- The copy center and Team 55 staff should be accessible to students. Having the staff members stationed out from behind the counter will make them appear more available to assist students. The staff could be differentiated by wearing nametags or special shirts.
Works Cited


Appendix A
A Proposal to Discover the Desired Features for the Library Learning Commons at Abilene Christian University

Aaron Forehand

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Proposal to Discover the Desired Features for the Library Learning Commons at Abilene Christian University

Background

The number of students using the Margaret Herman Brown Library for academic and social reasons has declined in recent years; this can mainly be attributed to the availability of online databases, the Internet, and personal computers in dorms or houses. The faculty and staff of the library, and the Board of Trustees desire to make the library the heart of the university once again. They wish to redefine the library from a physical building to a place for academic support to help students succeed. The library in its current condition is not very conducive to group study and therefore is not a desirable meeting place. The board hopes to create a learning commons that is inviting to both students and faculty. The learning commons design is still in its creative stages so the board has asked for help in making sure that the items that are installed will actually be what is desired and used.

A personal interview was conducted February 16, 2005 with Mark Tucker, Dean of Library and Information Resources. This was the first step in the search for what the client desires to know. He brought up specific areas to research that were previously unnoticed, for example what type of food will be served in the commons area. This interview generated important questions, and brought up topics to be answered in the focus group and through surveys. Mr. Tucker is knowledgeable and has extensive experience with updating libraries. He worked on the implementation of a learning commons at Purdue University, so he has first hand knowledge of the issues at hand. The session lasted about an hour and was very informative.

Statement of Problem

Before making a large financial commitment for this undertaking, Mark Tucker feels that it is important to know the desires of students and faculty that will be using the library commons. The entire student and faculty body will be affected by this change, so a sample of the faculty at ACU will be used to represent the population of faculty, while a separate effort will address the students. This will help the client better understand what people desire in the learning commons. Mark Tucker's decision problem is:

What features/services to include in the new learning commons?

In order to allow the client to address this problem, he needs to know how professors see the library and the components they feel are critical to the library's success. This need leads to the research problem, which is:
What features would be most beneficial to students in the new learning commons?

**Purpose and Limits**

The research is being conducted to determine what the ACU faculty desires in the learning commons and what they feel would be most beneficial to the students. This information is very important and could help the library decide what would be most useful in the learning commons center.

The limits of the study will be that only the faculty will be studied, therefore the student population will not have any input in this study. This proposal is for marketing research only. It will not include a process for implementing the suggested ideas or design a marketing plan.

**Data Sources and Methodology**

Secondary and primary data will be used in the effort to determine the demand and desired features for a library learning commons. The primary data collected will be analyzed and presented in a written report and turned into Mark Tucker.

In order to address these concerns, the methodology will consist of these steps. First, compile a list of prospective faculty participants for the focus group, then contact these personnel and invite them to participate in the focus group. Once the problems and/or desires of the faculty has been discovered, we will then compile and send out a survey to the remaining faculty members to help clarify any unanswered questions.

**Secondary Data:**

The research team, in their search for secondary data, will be seeking information about other library learning commons and what features helped their library to attract more students and better serve the university. This data, describing similar learning commons projects, will primarily be obtained from books, magazine articles, and the Internet. This will give the group some historical data on how other universities updated their libraries for the 21st century. Mark Tucker has already supplied a great deal of background information to the team. The Internet research will mostly focus on gaining information about the type of amenities that other libraries have installed to improve their services increase student traffic. This secondary data will help the research team determine which services/products were the most successful in similar situations and will inform the primary data collection effort.
Primary Data:

Primary data for this project will consist of a focus group composed of ACU faculty from various departments, and then a survey will be conducted of remaining faculty members.

The focus group will be a forty-five minute to one-hour session with a moderator. The participants will be selected professors from ACU; an effort will be made to have relatively equal representation from each college relative to the students enrolled in that college, with a total of 10-12 participants. This meeting will be video taped for later review and analysis. The focus group will be conducted around lunch time and a light lunch will be served.

A survey instrument will be created concurrently with the focus group. After the focus group any necessary alterations will be made to the survey. The survey will be composed of about 10 questions and will be administered to ACU faculty via e-mail or paper format. The survey will go to professors in every college and will help the group understand the overall feel of the university towards the features in the library commons.

Data Analysis, Processing, and Report Preparation:

Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, tests of significance and contingency tests, will be used to evaluate the data the research team collects. A written report and an oral briefing will be prepared and presented to Dr. Tucker and Dr. Timmerman by May 1, 2005.

Estimate of Time, Personnel, and Cost Requirements:

The research will consist of the following cost, time and personnel:

~ Focus Group:

Personnel: 3 members to prepare the question and refreshments, 1 group member to moderate and 1 group member to record the responses of the participants. The focus group will be composed of 10-12 ACU faculty members.

Cost:

- Food = $ 51.98
- VHS Tape = $5.00
- Total = $ 56.98

Time to prepare for task = 6 hours
Time to set up and complete task = 2 hours
~Survey:
All 3 group member will work on the survey questions, layout and design. This will be worked on concurrently with the focus group, but necessary revision will be made after the focus group if substantial differences are found. The survey will be sent to ACU faculty by e-mail or on paper copies. The group will be work on this through e-mail, phone, and several meetings.

Time to prepare task= 3 hours
Time to collect and analyze data= 5 hours
Time to prepare data into usable information= 4 hours

~Time:
Mark Tucker’s time will be required for several of the steps along the way. He may be needed for meetings, phone calls, or e-mails. Contact will be made to get acceptance of the proposal and to periodically give updates as to our progress and findings.

~Miscellaneous:
It must also be understood that if privacy is an issue that it may be jeopardized to some degree. It is impossible to get opinions on a sample without information being passed along to other people.

I have read and approve of the above proposal.

Mark Tucker
Appendix B
Dear (Professor’s name),

We are a marketing research group under the supervision of Dr. Timmerman in COBA, conducting a project on behalf of the Library in its contemplation of a Learning Commons, due to open in the fall. As part of this effort we are conducting a focus group to gain insight into faculty opinions concerning the composition of a Learning Commons. The Learning Commons addition is a place that will be more conducive to group study, as well as adding some new features like a coffee shop, and on-site access to Team 55, The Writing Center, and an updated reference desk.

We got your name from students within your department who thought that you might have insight to share with us. We would like to invite you to a small group discussion about the products and services that could be added to the library to better serve you and students. This focus group session will take place this Tuesday at 11:45am in the Library Room 363 and will last approximately one-hour. We realize that this is during your lunch hour, so Subway sandwiches will be provided while we are talking.

We are only inviting 6-10 professors, so your participation is critical. If you cannot attend but would like to recommend one of your colleagues we would greatly appreciate it. Please respond to this e-mail by Friday at 5pm.

Thank you for your time and prompt response,

Aaron Forehand 864-9239
Tiffany West 665-4229
Allison Wright 829-0556
Appendix C
Appendix D
Dear Professors,

This is a reminder about the Library Commons Focus Group meeting today (Tuesday) at 11:45am in the Library, room 363. Lunch from Subway will be provided.

Thank you and see you at 11:45am!

Aaron Forehand

Tiffany West

Allison Wright
Appendix E
halstead@bible.acu.edu
millholland@bible.acu.edu
reese@bible.acu.edu
foster@bible.acu.edu
ashlock@bible.acu.edu
johnson@bible.acu.edu
reesej@bible.acu.edu
willisw@bible.acu.edu
Appendix F
Question 1

"The Library Commons would benefit from a "Barnes and Noble" type atmosphere."

This question was asked in order to gain an insight into the style of ambiance desired in the new library commons. The research team found through secondary research that this was the typical description of the atmosphere in other universities library commons. The data in the chart below conveys that 56% of professors agreed and 0% disagreed that the commons would benefit from this type of atmosphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2

"Soft background music would enhance the environment in the Library Commons."

According to the information collected from the focus group, the correct style of background music is an important part of creating the right academic atmosphere in the new commons. A few of the professors had comments about playing soft background music. The data below shows that over 60% agreed with the professors opinions but 19% felt that background music was an unnecessary concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Y Axis</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X Axis: 01 02 03 04 05
Question 3
‘What type of lighting would be most conducive to learning in the Library Commons?’
This inquiry was regarding what type of lighting that would be most conducive to learning. The answer choices given for this particular question ranged from very dim non-fluorescent to fluorescent lighting. The professor’s choices concluded that moderate non-fluorescent or bright non-fluorescent lighting would be the best for the new library commons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Value</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dim non fluores ...</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate non fluores ...</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright non fluoresce ...</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluorescent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23.08%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4
‘A fountain would offer a relaxing background atmosphere that is conducive to learning.’
It was necessary to ask this question because it shows if professors approve of having a water feature in the study area of the commons. Out of the 28 survey respondents, 13 people marked that they agree, making it the top choice capturing 48.15% of all votes. The next two choices were neutral and disagree coming in at 33.33% and 14.81%. This chart shows that the majority of professors would approve of a water feature.
Question 5
'Displaying student art work would create a positive atmosphere in the Library Commons.'

There was concern in the focus group about adequate space designated for art students to display their artwork. A few professors pointed out that this is a cost effective way for the new commons to stay up to date aesthetically, as well as providing a diverse cross-discipline arena. This question was intended to determine if professors thought that the display of student art would create a positive atmosphere in the commons. According to the chart below the majority, which was 54% of people surveyed, agreed. The lowest percentile to this question was 9% answering neutral. This informed the team that a space was indeed desired for students to display their artwork.

![Chart](chart1.png)

Question 6
'Computers in the Library Commons should be in pods to facilitate group study.'

This question refers to computer placement; clusters of computers together forming pods versus traditional rows. Computers grouped in clusters often help in facilitating group work. This question was created to discover if professors thought that computers in pods would increase group study and learning. According to the chart below the professor’s agreed (37.04%) and strongly agree (29.63%) with the idea of pods. From the team's secondary research they found that individual study is decreasing and group study in increasing.

![Chart](chart2.png)
Question 7

'How many computers should be capable of editing visual or multi-media projects?'

Many of the professors in the focus group were concerned with students being assigned multi-media projects and having nowhere to create or edit these presentations. With the limited number of these computers around campus currently, the addition of this technology to certain stations in the commons area is vital. The results of the frequency analysis shows that 66.66% of the professors thought that there should be 6-15 computers capable of editing multi-media projects added to the new library commons.

![Bar chart for Question 7]

Question 8

'I could envision using the Library Commons to meet with students.'

This question, which proposed the idea of professors meeting with students in the commons, was developed through the focus group discussion. The question determined if professors will use the commons area for meeting with students, as they had suggested they would. There was a strong response in the agree category with 53% and strongly agree with 20%.

![Pie chart for Question 8]
Question 9
'It would be beneficial to my students to have longer library hours.'
Longer library hours are a concern for both student and professors. Professors notice that their students have busy schedules and at times cannot even begin to study until later in the evening. This question was asked to determine the professor's preference of library hours, as well as what would contribute best to their students. The analysis below concluded the following. 44.44% of respondents were neutral, 37.04% agreed and 11.11% strongly agreed that the hours of the library need to be extended when the new library commons is installed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 10
'24-hour access to computers in the Library Commons would be beneficial to my students.'
This question resulted from secondary research. Having access to computers and the Internet 24-hours a day would be beneficiary to students living off campus. The outcome of the frequency analysis is disagree with 22.22% to strongly agree with 18.52%. The highest ranked category showed that 33.33% of respondents agreed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Question 11

‘Night seminars in the Library Commons would help students to learn how to use the new facility.’
This question was a result of the focus group discoveries. The team was trying to determine if night seminars about the services offered in the library would help the students become more aware of the new facilities in the Brown Library. According to the frequency analysis below, the majority (58%) of people surveyed choose agree. This question and frequency analysis show that night seminars would help students learn about the new services that the commons has to offer.
Question 12

*What service would be the most helpful to learning in the Library Commons?*

This question asks about the different services offered in the Commons. The answers were offered on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being most helpful and 5 being the least helpful). The answers given will clarify what professors think will help facilitate learning the best. According to the chart below, the most helpful service is the writing center with 9 respondents rating it number 1. The least helpful would be the coffee shop with the lowest average score of 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated Reference De...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13

This question was an open-ended question inquiring about other services that professors feel needed to be included into the commons. It is the only open-ended question included in our survey. This question will inform Mr. Tucker of any overlooked services that could increase learning and productivity of students. The research team thought including this question might discover if any professors would suggest any other services that were at other universities.

There were 3 responses from this survey question.

1. Wireless internet access
2. An area for displaying professional art shows
3. An area for live music to be performed
Overall Survey Statistics

Completed Responses: 32
Started Responses: 36

Average time taken to complete: 4 minute(s)

Survey Statistics

Completed Responses: 32
Started: 36
Drop Outs (After Starting): 4
Survey Views: 46

1) The Library Commons would benefit from a "Barnes and Noble" type atmosphere.

Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.67%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean: 1.700
Standard Error: 0.109
Mean Percentile: 86.00%
Standard Deviation: 0.596

2) Soft background music would enhance the environment in the Library Commons.

Frequency Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total 30 100%

Mean : 2.433  Standard Error : 0.196
Mean Percentile : 71.33%
Standard Deviation : 1.073

3) What type of lighting would be most conducive to learning in the Library Commons?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order Analysis</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Dim non fluores ...</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate non fluores ...</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright non fluoresce ...</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51.72%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluorescent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4) A fountain would offer a relaxing background atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Analysis</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Neutral</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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<tr>
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Mean : 2.484  Standard Error : 0.153
Mean Percentile : 70.32%
Standard Deviation : 0.851

5) Displaying student art work would create a positive atmosphere in the Library Commons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Analysis</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1 Strongly Agree 11 35.48%
2 Agree 17 54.84%
3 Neutral 3 9.68%
4 Disagree 0 0.00%
5 Strongly Disagree 0 0.00%
Total 31 100%

Mean : 1.742  Standard Error : 0.113
Mean Percentile : 85.16%
Standard Deviation : 0.631

6) Computers in the Library Commons should be in pods to facilitate group study.

Frequency Analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th># Answer</th>
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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
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<td>5 Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>3.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Mean : 2.097  Standard Error : 0.182
Mean Percentile : 78.06%
Standard Deviation : 1.012

7) How many computers should be capable of editing visual or multi-media projects?

Frequency Analysis

<table>
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<th># Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2 6-10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 11-15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 16 or more</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 none, I dont think this is necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean : 2.484
Mean Percentile : 70.32%
Standard Deviation : 0.996

Standard Error : 0.179

8) I could envision using the Library Commons to meet with students.

Frequency Analysis
# Answer                   Frequency Percentage
1 Strongly Agree          6          20.00%
2 Agree                   16         53.33%
3 Neutral                 7          23.33%
4 Disagree                0          0.00%
5 Strongly Disagree       1          3.33%
Total                     30         100%

Mean : 2.133
Mean Percentile : 77.33%
Standard Deviation : 0.860

Standard Error : 0.157

9) It would be beneficial to my students to have longer library hours.

Frequency Analysis
# Answer                   Frequency Percentage
1 Strongly Agree          4          12.90%
2 Agree                   13         41.94%
3 Neutral                 12         38.71%
4 Disagree                2          6.45%
5 Strongly Disagree       0          0.00%
Total                     31         100%

Mean : 2.387
Mean Percentile : 72.26%
Standard Deviation : 0.803

Standard Error : 0.144

10) 24-hour access to computers in the Library Commons would be beneficial to my students.
Frequency Analysis

# Answer          Frequency  Percentage
1 Strongly Agree  6          19.35%
2 Agree           9          29.03%
3 Neutral         9          29.03%
4 Disagree        7          22.58%
5 Strongly Disagree 0         0.00%
Total             31         100%

Mean : 2.548
Mean Percentile : 69.03%
Standard Deviation : 1.060

11) Night seminars in the Library Commons would help students to learn how to use the new facility.

Frequency Analysis

# Answer          Frequency  Percentage
1 Strongly Agree  3          9.68%
2 Agree           18         58.06%
3 Neutral         5          16.13%
4 Disagree        5          16.13%
5 Strongly Disagree 0         0.00%
Total             31         100%

Mean : 2.387
Mean Percentile : 72.26%
Standard Deviation : 0.882

12) What service would be the most helpful to learning in the Library Commons?

Rank Order Analysis

Rank Value          1          2          3          4          5
Team 55             4          13.79%      2          6.90%      6          21.43%      6          21.43%      10         35.71%
Writing Center      10         34.48%     5          17.24%     8          28.57%     5          17.86%     0          0.00%
Coffee Shop         1          3.45%      6          20.69%     5          17.86%     6          21.43%     10         35.71%
Copy Center         8          27.59%     4          13.79%     8          28.57%     6          21.43%     3          10.71%
13) What other services would benefit Library Commons?

There were 3 responses from this survey question.
1. Wireless internet access
2. An area for displaying professional art shows
3. An area for live music to be performed
Spearman Rank Correlation

**Question 6 and Question 10**

Spearman Rank Correlation: 0.5122  
z Stat: 2.6614  
P(Z<=z) one tail: 0.0039  
z Critical one tail: 1.6449  
P(Z<=z) two tail: 0.0078  
z Critical two tail: 1.96

Spearman Rank Correlation

**Question 9 and Question 10**

Spearman Rank Correlation: 0.7261  
z Stat: 3.773  
P(Z<=z) one tail: 0.0001  
z Critical one tail: 1.6449  
P(Z<=z) two tail: 0.0002  
z Critical two tail: 1.96

Spearman Rank Correlation

**Question 1 and Question 2**

Spearman Rank Correlation: 0.2751  
z Stat: 1.4294  
P(Z<=z) one tail: 0.0765  
z Critical one tail: 1.6449  
P(Z<=z) two tail: 0.153  
z Critical two tail: 1.96

Contingency Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Art and Sci</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-squared Stat: 1.9444  
df: 1  
p-value: 0.1632  
chi-squared Critical: 3.8415
Survey Questions

1. The Library Commons would benefit from a “Barnes and Noble” type atmosphere.

2. Soft background music would enhance the environment in the Library Commons.

3. What type of lighting would be most conducive to learning in the Library Commons?

4. A fountain would offer a relaxing background atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

5. Displaying student art work would create a positive atmosphere in the Library Commons.

6. Computers in the Library Commons should be in pods to facilitate group study.

7. How many computers should be capable of editing visual or multi-media projects?

8. I could envision using the Library Commons to meet with students.

9. It would be beneficial to my students to have longer library hours.

10. 24 hour access to computers in the Library Commons would be beneficial to students.

11. Night seminars in the Library Commons would help students to learn how to use the new facility.

12. What service would be the most helpful to learning in the Library Commons?

13. What other services would benefit Library Commons?
Appendix G
Focus Group:

The focus group consisted of nine faculty members from nine (all) different departments on campus. The participants were:

1) David Perkins, Accounting
2) Mark Love, Bible
3) Brian Cavitt, Chemistry
4) Deb Williams, English
5) Liz Rotenberry, Exercise Science
6) Ed Coates, Education
7) Susan Teel, Music
8) Geoff Broderick, Art
9) Susan Lewis, Journalism and Mass Communication

When the participants introduced themselves they were asked to state how many years they had been teaching at ACU, what they primarily used the library for and how often on average they used these services. Their answers were as follows:

1) 6 yrs, interlibrary loans, twice per semester
2) 4 yrs, personal research and reading journals, once per month
3) 3 yrs, viewing electronic journals, twice per semester
4) 7 yrs, primarily accompanies students, six times per month
5) 20 yrs, accompanies freshmen class and also makes interlibrary loans, once a semester
6) 33 yrs, two to three times a month
7) 9 yrs, listens to recordings
8) 6 yrs
9) 6 yrs, accesses internet databases only available on site

Obtaining all of this information allowed us to understand the background of our panel and better grasp where they base their opinions and attitudes towards the library.

The first question asked was “What services do you think they should add?”

Responses were:

- Coffee shop was a good idea because that would attract students who would not normally visit. Dr. Love gave the example of his son, a freshman at ACU. He would probably visit the library more often if it had this inviting feature.
- The idea of a common area that would be a place for all students to come together to study and fellowship was well received. The faculty thought that this would especially be helpful because there was not currently an area in the library where this was possible.
- The copy center was the next topic of conversation and it was unanimous that this was badly needed, as there were no other areas on campus where these services were offered. Students often have large projects or presentations that need to be copied.
Several faculty members were concerned with the wireless Internet access that will be offered in the common area. They made a suggestion that it should be capable of serving the full capacity of students that may be in that area.

Another idea relating to the Internet was that a 24 hour computer lab should be offered to all students. It is common that many students do homework on computers past midnight, which is the current closing time of the library. This poses a problem for many off campus students who don’t have access to a computer or the Internet other than on campus at the library. If there were a computer lab opened 24 hours this would eliminate the problem. The issue of security was brought up. It was suggested that the lab be enclosed in glass equipped with cameras, and be monitored off site. There could also be a separate entrance for this lab.

The idea of displaying student artwork was warmly received. It is becoming an increasing problem that senior art students do not have a place to display their artwork and it seems that the new wall space in the library commons may present a solution to that problem. This display could change on a monthly/weekly basis so that students outside of the art department could be exposed to many types of art, as well as the library receiving free decorations. This would also give students cross-discipline and help them not loose sight of the larger learning community.

What services do you think would help your students?

- The library should maintain a website that would help students in evaluating their sources for research projects. Many students do not know how to judge websites credibility and it was suggested that the library not only maintain a website but offer evening seminars instructing students in this area. (like a resume writing workshop)

- In the library there is a wealth of information and services, but many students are not aware of these things or do not want to ask. It was suggested that a tutor be offered in areas where there is limited knowledge. Students need to know what’s available to them as well as how to use the services. If they don’t ask then they won’t use

- There was also the concern that the signs in the library. Many professors felt that they were inadequate in their current state so they were concerned about the future signage in the library commons.

- The example of Kinko’s Copy Center’s staff’s accessibility was used. There was a suggestion that the Team 55 and Copy Center staff NOT be behind the counter but out among the students, being accessible to help them with their problems. These staff could be identified by nametags.

- Another issue with the current computer services is that they are not adequate for preparing multi-media presentation, film editing, as well as having a powerful memory capability. This area could also have a high quality printer. It was suggested that this area be supervised, and restricted with a sign up.

- Also, the access to recorded music on CD’s and tapes in currently very limited. Students are only allowed to listen to the music while they are in the library. It
was suggested that students be allowed to take this music home with them or they be allowed to make a recording.

Are there any other services that we haven’t discussed or suggestions that you have?

- There was considerable concern that this library commons would displace the campus center as a social gathering place. The question arose of whether they would be working together or against each other.
- Another great concern was the overall atmosphere of the commons area. It should not be a party atmosphere or just a hang out place. The new features of the commons area will bring students to the building, and then the features will draw the students into the actual library.
- The general placement of chairs and the concern of there being unused space were discussed. The chairs should be placed in such a way to as to facilitate group learning.
- The example of the Barnes and Noble Bookstore atmosphere was well received. A place where people could come to educate themselves as well as eat and drink and fellowship with other students. There was concern about the atmosphere becoming too loud and raucous. If students bring in games then the focus may turn from academics to entertainment and inhibit the learning of others.
- The extra classroom that is being added in the basement could be used for poetry readings or video presentations. This may present the opportunity for students who may be passing by to join and thus create cross-discipline.
- The current library hours are thought to be very inadequate for the student body. Many students study into all hours of the night and they need access to resources available at the library. The concern of what would be asked of the library staff if the hours were extended was brought up.

Are there any other features that you have seen at other universities that you would like to see here at ACU?

- The lighting and atmosphere was a very popular topic and an area of concern for everyone. Soft lighting, soft background noise, and water feature were just some of the creative ideas.
- Setting a tone if very important. Casual class that is functional with learning and openness. The whole area needs to flow.
- Controlling interaction by what you are looking at. Artwork, ambience.
- This commons area may also make professors more accessible. Some professors may feel like they are cooped up in their offices so they have the opportunity to take their work to the library, which would encourage interaction with students.
Abilene Christian University Library Commons Focus Group

Moderator Introduction

Background Information

Let me start by thanking you all for being here and helping us gather research. I know your days are busy and this is during lunch, but we have provided a light lunch for you to eat as we talk.

As you may there is a learning commons project underway in the current ACU library. This summer the library will be remodeling the 1st floor into a library commons where students and professors will be able to come enjoy a coffee shop, Team 55, a copy center, and the English department writing center. The purpose of this focus group is to better understand what professors would like to see incorporated into this learning commons. This is very important for the future of ACU and will help the Dean of Library Resources make some important decisions. We invited a variety of professors to gain insight from different departments. So feel free to talk about wants or needs that are unique to your department.

Procedural Instructions

Now we will go around and get to know everyone. Please state your name, what department you teach in and how long you have been a professor at ACU, and on average how often you use the library each semester. Feel free to discuss the topics in an informal manner; the questions do not have to be answered by going around in a circle or in any particular order. It is ok to disagree with each other, but please keep in mind that we are video taping and it will help us if only one person speaks at a time. Let me start. My name is Allison Wright, I am a Marketing and Management student, I have been at ACU for 3 years and I use the library twice a semester on average.

Topics

- Now that you know what a learning commons center is, what products or services do you feel would draw more students and professors to ACU’s Learning Commons?
- What features do you wish the library had?
- What are your thoughts on the current plans of coffee shop, Team 55, a copy center, and the English department writing center?
- Have you seen anything on other campus libraries that you feel is needed at ACU?