

INTERPRETATION GUIDE
FOR
FACULTY LIBRARIAN STUDENT FEEDBACK

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MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

January, 2003

STUDENT FEEDBACK FOR FACULTY LIBRARIANS

OVERVIEW

Purpose

This guide provides information and suggestions on how to interpret the Faculty Librarian Student Feedback Report.

Background

The College and the faculty have agreed upon a formal program to collect feedback from students about faculty librarians. Student evaluation of faculty is an integral part of the Faculty Performance Review and Advancement process at the College. The Student Feedback Instrument was approved by both the College and the faculty. The modified Faculty Librarian Student Feedback Survey is used for students receiving instruction or reference desk services from faculty librarians.

Process for Collecting Data

Students are asked to provide feedback to faculty librarians through a well-defined process. Student feedback is collected every Fall Term for faculty librarians on continuing contract. Faculty on approved leave during the Fall Term and faculty who choose the Spring Term option collect feedback in the subsequent Spring Term. Faculty librarians on annual contract collect feedback from students every semester. Student Feedback for Library Instructional Services is collected during the first six weeks of Fall and Spring Terms, and the first four weeks of Summer Term. Student Feedback of Reference Desk Services is collected in October for the Fall Term, February for the Spring Term, and June for the Summer Term.

Feedback materials are prepared prior to administration and include an instruction sheet, answer sheets on which faculty FIN numbers have been pre-marked, and the Faculty Librarian Student Feedback Survey. The survey instrument consists of 5 core items that are the same for all instructors, and 5 optional items that may be included by each campus library.

Surveys are administered in accordance with procedures established by the library, which ensure the integrity of the process and elicit the best student response rate possible. Responses are anonymous and no identifying information is requested from the students. The survey materials are returned to the respective Campus Testing Department by a designated individual to further ensure confidentiality. The Campus Testing Departments process survey materials and distribute feedback reports to faculty after the semester has ended. A copy of each report is sent to the faculty librarian's chairperson, and copies are to be made available to students.

INTERPRETING THE STUDENT FEEDBACK REPORT

1. *Whose feedback is included in the report?*

Students are able to provide feedback to faculty librarians according to the specifications in the current contract. All students who received services in the library are given an opportunity to participate in the process as established by the library. To ensure anonymity, students are asked not to identify themselves. The results are presented by faculty librarian.

2. *How are results presented?*

A. **General information**

The Faculty Librarian Student Feedback Report has several pages. The first page identifies the faculty librarian, his/her nine digit FIN number, the year/term, the campus, and the number of student responses to the survey. This cover page also states who receives a copy of the report and includes contact information for questions. Subsequent pages report feedback results.

B. **Data**

The results section of the report begins with the identifying information from the cover page. This is followed by a summary of the responses received for each item on the survey. The survey items are presented on the left side of the sheet for the 5 core items, with the number and percent of respondents selecting each answer choice on the right side. The five choices for these items are: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and Unable to Comment. The final column displays the number of students responding to the item. See Example A.

Example A:

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		UNABLE TO COMMENT		COUNT N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
THE FACULTY MEMBER TREATS ME WITH RESPECT.	48	87.3	6	10.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.8	55

For this example, 48 students (or 87.3%) “Strongly Agree” that this faculty librarian is prepared for class while 6 students “Agree,” and no students selected “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree.” One student chose the option “Unable to Comment.” A total of 55 students responded to this item.

For the five optional library items, the text of the item is not displayed since items may vary by department. The item number and response information is displayed for each optional item included on the survey instrument. Answer choices are labeled “Response A” through “Response E.” If available, a copy of the survey is included, which has the text and answer choices for the optional items. See Example B.

Example B:

	RESPONSE A		RESPONSE B		RESPONSE C		RESPONSE D		RESPONSE E	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6.	50	90.9	5	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

In this example, 55 students responded to departmental item #6. Fifty (90.9%) selected Response A and 5 (9.1%) selected Response B.

3. *How are feedback results used in the performance review of instructors?*

The Student Feedback Report is a required source of information about a faculty librarian’s performance and is an integral part of the Performance Review. How faculty librarians are perceived by students is important and informative. **However, the views of students represent only one perspective of total performance and there are elements relating to effective library instruction and reference desk services beyond those included on the feedback survey. Therefore, feedback results are not used as the sole basis for the evaluation of a faculty librarian.**

Further, these results represent a snapshot of perceptions at a particular point in time. It is important to gather evidence about the performance of faculty librarians over the entire period covered by the Performance Review. Other sources of information are required for a thorough performance review.

4. *How do I interpret the results?*

Student feedback results include the number and percent of the responses for each of the possible responses. The responses “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” are considered positive responses. The standard practice is to add these responses to reflect the extent to which a faculty librarian received “positive” responses to a given item. There are several things to be aware of in this process. The first is **to not over-interpret small differences, especially when the number of responses is relatively small.** The number of responses is generally considered small if less than 30. See the following examples.

In Example C, a total of 15 students responded to the item and 53.3% of the responses are positive. Because the number of responses is small, the combined positive rating is subject to fluctuation if as few as one student responded differently. Example D illustrates this point. One less student selected “Agree”, which then changed the positive response percent to 46.6%.

Example C:

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		UNABLE TO COMMENT	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
THE FACULTY MEMBER IS AVAILABLE.	5	33.3	3	20.0	1	6.7	5	33.3	1	6.7

Example D:

	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		UNABLE TO COMMENT	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	-----		-----		-----		-----		-----	
THE FACULTY MEMBER IS AVAILABLE.	5	33.3	2	13.3	1	6.7	5	33.3	2	13.3

It is usually helpful to look for patterns in the responses. In Example C (and D), there is a wide range of disagreement among the responses. This can be seen in the equally large number of responses for “Strongly Agree” and “Strongly Disagree.” The students who responded for this faculty librarian have widely divergent views of the faculty member’s availability. **Information from other sources would be needed before evaluating a faculty librarian on this item.**

Item and overall interpretations: A survey consists of a series of questions. Since survey items are never identical and may be asking about different concepts, **the results for one item may not be combined with the results of any other item in an attempt to find a single value to represent the faculty member's effectiveness.** In addition to items covering different concepts, we do not know if the same students responded to the same items. We have a count of the number of students who responded to the items, but we do not know how they responded. In a sample of twenty students, all 20 may respond to one item, while only 15 respond to a different item. In this case, the responses obtained for the two items were based on different groups of students. **Again, do not combine results for one item with results for another item. Consider the items individually.**

SUMMARY:

Keep these important points in mind when reviewing and interpreting Student Feedback Reports:

- **Use student feedback in conjunction with other sources of information as required by the Faculty Performance Review Process.**
- **Do not over-interpret small differences, especially when the number of responses is relatively small (less than about 30).**
- **Look for patterns in responses, across items, and over time before drawing conclusions.**
- **Do not combine results for one item with results for another item.**
- **Assume the feedback is valid and valuable. Past research on the Student Feedback process indicates that students consider their responses to individual items and differentiate between items when rating faculty. In addition, focus groups with students reveal that they appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and believe that their ratings should be taken seriously.**