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# Reshaping Research Services: Introducing Learners to the 21st century Information Skills

Deeken, Lynn

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# Reshaping Research Services:

*Introducing Learners to  
21st Century Information Skills*

**May 8th - Canadian Learning Commons Conference**

**Judy Solberg** - [solbergj@seattleu.edu](mailto:solbergj@seattleu.edu)

*Director of Public Services and Coordinator of the Learning Commons  
Partnership*

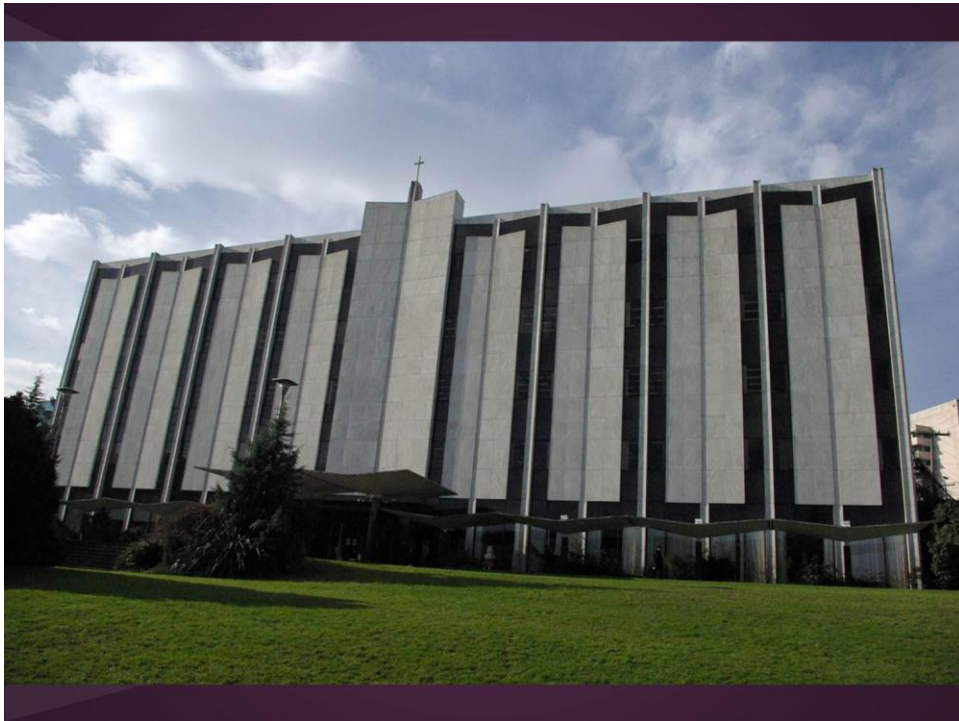
**Lynn Deeken** - [deekenl@seattleu.edu](mailto:deekenl@seattleu.edu)  
*Instruction and Assessment Coordinator*

**Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons - Seattle University**

- I'm Judy Solberg, Director of Public Services and the Coordinator of the Learning Commons
- My colleague, Lynn Deeken the Instruction and Assessment Coordinator
- Happy to be here

# Reshaping Research Services

- Reimagining research services
- Redesigning public services
- Creating an information service
- Developing an on call model of research service
- Moving toward assessment and collaboration



- 40 year old library building before the renovation
- housed collections and very traditional library services
- Planning for a renovation and expansion began in 2002
- I came in 2005, shortly after the initial program planning phase was completed - part of final 5 years of planning and construction
- The construction project included moving into an interim facility for 15 months
- Lynn joined us in 2008 and played an active role in redesigning research services
- Serve on our Learning Commons Partnership steering committee
- Lynn's role in developing a culture of assessment



Opened in September 2010

50% bigger than the old building - all new space designed for users and services

Open and flexible and includes new learning commons services

# Challenges in creating LC

- Selecting Partners
  - Designating and designing spaces
  - Understanding services and cultures
  - Developing collegial and collaborative relationships
  - Staffing the new building and services
- 
- As many of you know there are many challenges in creating a learning commons
  - Provost in the fall of 2005
  - Initial partners: library reference service, the writing center, the learning assistance program and the speaking center
  - Began meeting in the spring of 2006
  - Worked simultaneously with the architects on designing spaces and with each other to develop a shared understanding of our services and practices
  - One of the things the librarians learned was that our partners made much more use of students in staffing
  - Long discussions on how we would staff the new building

## Learning Assistance Programs - Math Lab - Writing Center - Research Services



- In the spring of 2010, the university decided not to fund the speaking center
- Replaced by the math lab - last minute scrambling to redesign spaces and welcome a new partner
- The current the learning commons partners are the learning assistance programs, the math lab, the writing center and research services



- Discussions of what it meant to be a learning commons we decided to focus on the commons as an idea rather than a place
- Even though we don't think of it as a specific place most of the direct services are housed on the 2nd floor
- This floor also houses open study space, group study rooms, a computer lab, a small reference collection and a cafe



The fall before we moved both the library and the LCP submitted budget requests for staffing

Budget funding announced spring 2010, and we found out we received a fraction of what we requested with no money for any joint staffing

All of the new staffing went into the library budget and most of it was for student staff

Over the summer of 2010 the library scrambled to reorganize services and job assignments - including rethinking how to staff the information desk and research services

Lynn will talk about the creation of our information service

# Creating Information Services and the iDesks



- Although we didn't get money to greatly increase our staffing levels, we did get quite a bit of additional money for student workers.
- That led to internal reorganization and a new Information Services unit that would manage "iDesks" in the building, primarily staffed by undergraduate students.
- These changes meant that students would become a much more prominent part of our frontlines in greeting and helping people in our building.
- Although our learning commons partners all used students in a consultant model, using students to this degree was new for the Library.

# "Building an airplane mid-flight"

Guidelines for Behavioral Standards of Research and Information Service Providers at Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons

## 1. Approachability

*Staff should endeavor to make themselves approachable to patrons through eye contact, verbal acknowledgement, and welcoming body language.*

1a. Staff will treat every patron with equal respect and every request with equal importance. All interactions with patrons should be conducted with appropriate courtesy. Staff will strive to be flexible in meeting customer needs.

1b. Staff should establish initial eye contact with patrons walking by. Staff should acknowledge patrons who approach the desk by smiling and using attentive and welcoming body language. Follow with a friendly greeting to initiate conversation and, if appropriate, stand up, move forward, or move closer to the patron.

1c. Staff working at service points should remain as visible as possible to patrons, and should be aware of activities around them. Staff should not let computer monitors or raised reading material block the staff person's visibility of patrons or the patron's visual contact with the staff person.

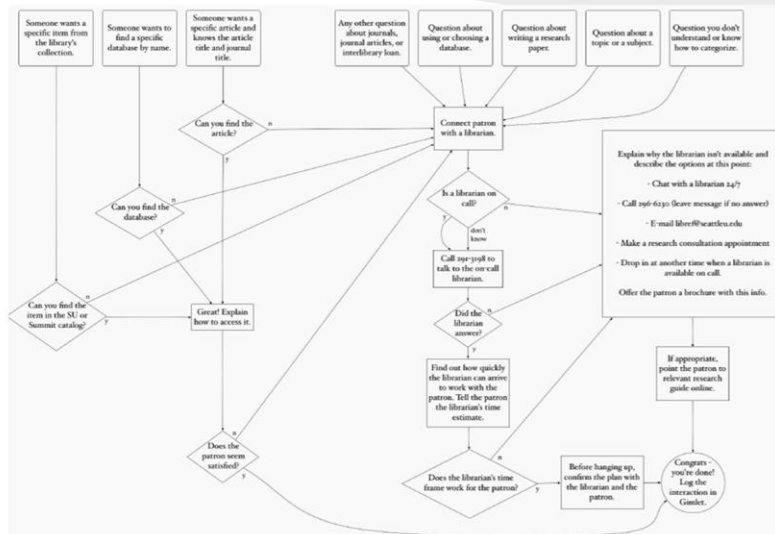
1d. When staffing a service point, some projects may be pursued while waiting for patrons to approach. However, all papers, books, and other items must be kept to the side, so that the desk space between the staff and patrons is completely clear.

1e. Staff should stop all activities when patrons approach and focus attention on the patrons' needs.

1f. Use of headphones, personal phone calls, visits with friends, and other activities which could be distracting and possibly make patrons wary of approaching are to be avoided.

- Our new Information Services unit was created and staffed by a librarian from Research Services who became the new Information Services Coordinator, a new staff position for an Evening/Weekend Supervisor and two students from our Student Development graduate program.
- As opening day got closer and closer, Kristen - the librarian leading the creation of this new service compared it to "building an airplane while it's in flight".
- Research Services was very involved in the early stages of this process. Our starting point was the RUSA Behavioral Standards which we modified it for our library. It helped us articulate the vision of what customer service should look like throughout our building - at the iDesks and Circulation Desk .

# Where do the iDesks and Research Services meet?



- While we were in the process of creating this new unit, we were also re-envisioning Research Services. Judy's going to talk about that in more detail but it was obvious that our shift to more students on the frontlines was going to mean that they too would be asked reference questions.
- So we thought a lot about how and when students should refer questions to a librarian.
- We laugh about the complexity of this flowchart (which I know you can't see in detail) but it's how we worked through the ideal relationship between frontline students and librarians. What kind of questions did we want these students to answer and what was clearly our arena?
- In a nutshell we decided that the students could be trained to do known item searching but if they ran into any problems or the question went beyond that, they would connect the user to a librarian.

# The iDeskers



- Here is our crew of iDesk students.
- When Kristen advertised the positions for working at the iDesks, she received over 200 applications for 12 spots because everyone wanted to work at the new library.

# iDesk priorities and training

iDesk Proficiencies for Information Service Providers at  
Lemieux Library and McGoldrick Learning Commons  
Last updated by Kristen Shuyler, 11/8/2010

The four MOST important aspects of working at the desk, in priority order, are:

- Ensuring safety and security -- Always call 911 in emergencies!
- Providing excellent customer service -- Review [How we act at the iDesk](#)
- Referring patrons to an expert -- See below and [the FAQ](#)
- Giving accurate and helpful information -- See below and [the FAQ](#)

The complete list of what we do at the desk is below:

- Customer Service: Staff should display a service orientation & have the interpersonal skills for a public service position.
  - Know and apply the Behavioral Guidelines when staffing the iDesk.
- General Campus Information: Staff should be familiar with campus and campus services.
  - Know how to find basic campus information, including the campus calendar.
  - Know other places on campus that provide academic assistance.
  - Know other places to study on campus.
  - Know when and how to refer patrons to other offices on campus.
- General Library and Learning Commons Information: Staff should have a basic knowledge of the building and services.

## Training:

- Angel website for communication and a FAQ for updating important info
- Quarterly training workshops
- 1:1 meetings in spring between student and supervisor
- Student employee evaluations are based on behavioral standards

So how did we go about training students for Information Services? Strong customer service was a driving principle for their role in the library and we used our modified Behavioral Guidelines as a training tool.. The iDesk students didn't need to know how to answer every question themselves but they had to be welcoming and actively engaged in getting the patron further along in their journey. The iDesk priorities are to 1) ensure safety and security 2) provide excellent customer service, 3) refer patrons to an expert and 4) give out accurate and helpful information.

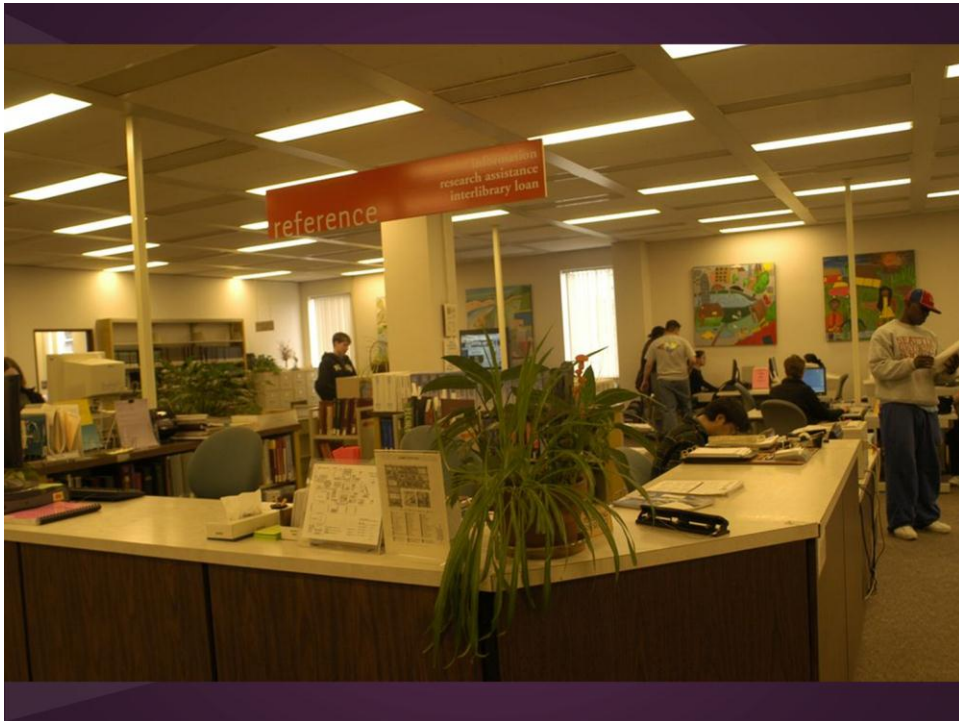
Information Services use the following ongoing training and communication tools: at the beginning of every shift, student login to an Angel course site that gives them any current updates about what might be going on in the building or other announcements

- students also open and use a FAQ document created and maintained by our two grad students
- students participate in quarterly training workshops
- in spring quarter they have 1:1 meetings with their supervisor where they receive feedback based on the behavioral standards.

We view these positions as important to our delivery of services in the library and learning commons. But it is also important that these jobs are part of

students' development, furthering their workplace skills for the future..

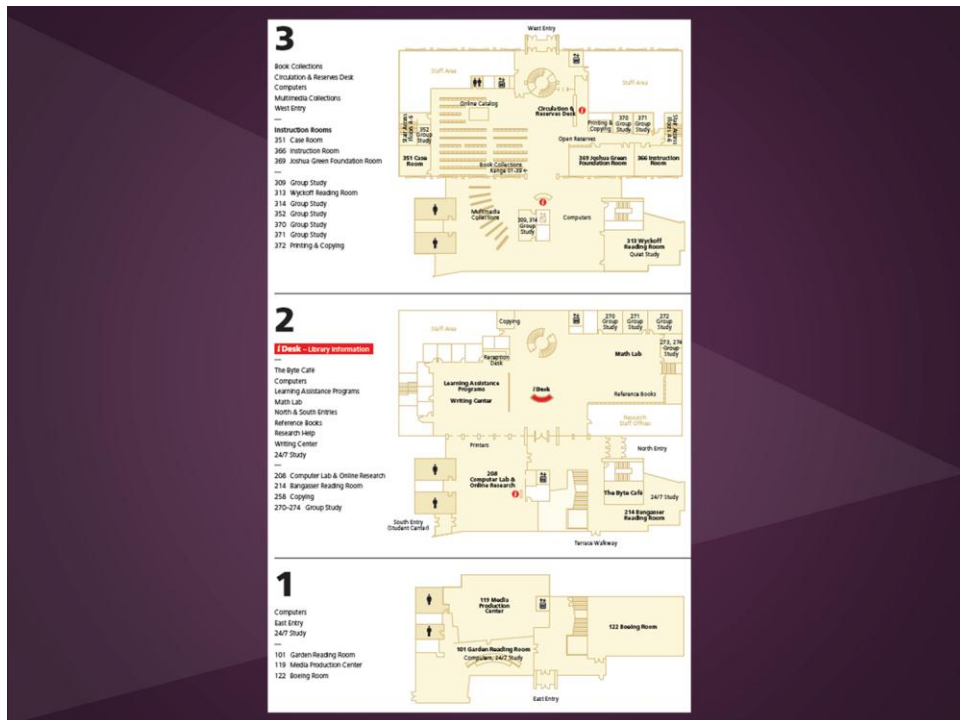
Now Judy's going to discuss the changes that was happening in Research Services.



- Excellent customer service - helping users been a primary value
- Changes to reference service evolutionary process over the past few years
- I arrived in 2005 the desk was very traditional
- In 2007, the university gave us a budget of \$200,000 to begin experimenting with furniture and services - moved the writing center to the library
- Reference desk replaced by small desk near the reference office - data/power



- We continued experimenting with new furniture and new reference desk configurations in the interim library
- Wireless
- Smaller space - smaller physical reference - decided to move toward electronic reference collection
- Changes in local environment corresponded with changes happening in reference in other academic libraries related to changing technology



- With design of new building it became clear there was no obvious place to put a reference desk to meet the needs of users on the three floors of the addition
- All 3 floors were designed with active learning and study spaces with computers
- I began discussing with the librarians the possibility of creating a more mobile reference service



- In the interim library we began experimenting with a variety of mobile technologies
- List to choose from - Ipad became the favored choice
- Began experimenting using an iPhone to respond to reference questions on demand in the summer before we moved
- Continued into the new library and learning commons with the understanding that if we found this service did not meet user needs, we could repurpose one of the iDesks as a reference desk
- As we developed the new information services the former reference service became research services
- We currently staff our service with an iPhone
- Scheduled on call and the staff at the iDesks or Circulation desk call us when a user needs research help
- Answer external phone calls and monitor the email reference mailbox
- We tried to also do chat - made it too difficult
- Chat is offered as a separate service.

## Want to meet with a research librarian?

Judy is the librarian on call.



  
Lemieux Library and  
McGoldrick Learning Commons  
LIBRARY RE-IMAGINED, LEARNING TRANSFORMED

- Begin our on call shift go to desks and to let them know we are available
- We post a sign on the desks with our pictures
- way to be more personal and present to library users.
- The librarian responds to calls by coming out to assist the user
- The intent was to have the librarian go wherever the patron was in the library, but in practice, some ask the user to come to one of the research consultation cubicles on the 2nd floor
- One cubicle is reserved for research service during the on call hours

## The research librarians aren't on call at the moment

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### But you can still get research help!

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- Call (206) 296-6210
- Request a Research Consultation  
[www.seattleu.edu/library/services/research](http://www.seattleu.edu/library/services/research)
- Email [libref@seattleu.edu](mailto:libref@seattleu.edu)
- Visit the iDesk again Monday thru Thursday 10am–6pm and Friday 12pm–4pm

- Not on call, during the evenings and weekend, change sign in the stand that offers modes of alternative research assistance
- Same information is available on business cards that the students at the desks can give to users needing research help
- We are still discussing the best way to offer and improve our research services
- Lynn will talk more about our assessment activities



# Moving towards assessment and collaboration.....

Lastly we want to discuss how we're working to make progress with assessment and our collaborative work in Research Services and for the broader Learning Commons Partnership.

# Assessment: The Data

## Research/Info Services

**Research Services** Research Services [Sign out](#)

[Add question](#) [Search](#) [Reports](#)  [Search](#)

Duration	Question type	Asked by	Format	Location
0-4 minutes	Circulation	Student	In person	Consultation cubicle
5+ minutes	Directional	Staff	Phone	Librarian Office
	Information	Faculty	Email (libref)	2nd floor computers
	Tech support	Alumni	Email (other)	3rd floor computers
	Other	Other or not sure	Chat	Circulation Desk

**Question**

**Answer**

**Tags**  alumni article articles books business catalog citation databases education faculty full-text history interlibrary law nursing psychology religion research summit videos

Space separated - Showing top 20 tags.

**Time of question** 12:49 pm [Save](#)

Ex: 3:15 pm, 4/15/09 8:03 am

Showing 1-20 of 1781 [Go to date](#) [Previous](#) [Next](#)

#31146 [Edit](#) [Delete](#) 12:27 PM

Patron was trying to find e-copy of a journal article that we should have access to through Business Source Complete, but the issue appeared different online.

We found no clear answer. It appears that EBSCO's links are incorrect. Patron has print copy of the journal which is correct. We contacted EBSCO about this issue.

- The iDesks and Research Services use a tool called Gimlet to track all questions we get.
- Information Services uses the info for training purposes so that they can make sure students are giving out accurate info and be able to do any follow-up. It also helps them analyze the volume of questions and what's most frequently asked. The answer of course is printing.
- Research Services is using the info to track the types of questions we're getting, the modality (chat, in-person, phone), and when we're getting questions outside of our services hours (the iDesks help us track that). We want to see if we're staffing the right hours and this data helps us to make informed decisions about our service. We've already made changes based on this information.

# Assessment: Our judgment

## *Research/Info Services*

### **Positives:**

- Our users are asking questions
- Questions are much more in depth
- Greetings feel different
- We have more freedom when we're on call

### **Negatives:**

- We're not visible in the same way
- Taking the phone to meetings
- Haven't standardized our practices
- Reserving our cubicle....

We also have data related to our judgment of how this new service model is working. Here are some of the positives and negatives.

### **Positives:**

- It's really hard to compare numerically what happened in the old building and what we're seeing now but it FEELS like we're answering about the same number of questions. So our community is still asking questions and getting help.
- But the questions we're answering now during our on-call hours tend to more be in-depth, almost research consultations. And we don't have to answer questions about the printers, yeah!
- The positive change that I find really interesting is that it feels different to go greet someone with a question instead of them having had to physically approach you at a desk. It's something about establishing or reinforcing that you're interested in their need instead of them feeling like they've just interrupted you.
- We have more flexibility about what we do during that on-call time. We can be at our own work desks or we can be in the library cafe or up in the faculty reading lounge. We just have to have the phone and be ready to go.
- One last positive of the new iDesks -- library staff from other departments often work a regular shift at the iDesk which is different than if we'd had a

Reference Desk. And they enjoy a different and public interaction.

Negatives or unknowns:

- We can tell our visibility is different. For instance, we don't have the same kind of casual interactions with faculty walking by that we used to.
- If librarians are all at the same meeting, it means that someone is "on-duty" with the phone. So it can be disruptive to our other work.
- We don't all handle calls the same way. Some go to meet the person where they are (up at the Circ desk) and some ask the referring service desk to send them down to our "area". This may or may not be an issue.
- We reserve a cubicle during our on-call hours so we have a quick and available place to go work with students when we need it. But despite our best signage efforts, students will camp out in this space anyway.

## Assessment and Collaboration - *Learning Commons Partners*

### ***Vision:***

The Learning Commons is the destination of first choice for students seeking a supportive environment, collaborative community and specialized resources to develop skills that will assist them in reaching their full academic potential.

- We worked hard before and after the building's opening to create and maintain a collaborative relationship between all the learning commons partners. We meet regularly, set and assess yearly goals and have a shared vision of what we're trying to accomplish.
- We also work together to meet requests for giving presentations to various students groups-- Fall is busy with so many activities that we could never all go to all events so we're sharing that workload and representing each other.
- But part of the challenge in working together is the complexity of institutional structures. We all report to different parts of the university and have our own needs and cultures. It does help that we share in common an administrative assistant.

# Assessment and Collaboration - Learning Commons Partners

## Library and Learning Commons User Survey

1. Quick info about you (please circle all that apply):  
Freshman | Sophomore | Junior | Senior | Graduate student | Transfer student

2. Which services in the Learning Commons have you used this academic year?

		Frequently	Occasionally	Once	Never
Research Services	On-call librarian help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Research Consultation appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Math Lab	Math Lab Drop-in Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing Center	Writing Center Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Assistance	Tutoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Learning Strategy Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Facilitated Study Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Language Conversation Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Consultations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Have these services had a positive impact on your learning or success? (circle answer)  
Strongly agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Not Applicable

4. If you do not use the above services, why?

- I don't know enough about the other services to know if they would be helpful to me.
- I'm familiar with the other services but I haven't needed them.
- I'm familiar with the other services but they do not meet my needs. Why not? \_\_\_\_\_
- Other? Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Is it helpful to have these four services located together in the Library and Learning Commons? Why or why not?

6. Do you have any suggestions for us to improve our services? (use back of this sheet if you need more space for #5 & #6)

Please turn in to the Suggestion Box at the second floor/Desk. Thank you!

- Assessment-wise we want to better understand the impact our impact student learning -- both as individual programs and as something more integrated
- Are we or can we be more than co-located?
- It's a little daunting because in the same way that we report to different places in the university, we also collect different information about the users in our programs. In Research Services we don't collect the same level of detailed information or do the routine follow-up that some of the other partners do.
- But in Winter Quarter we did a survey together to find out if students are using multiple services in the Library and Learning Commons.
- We asked them which services they used and how often. Have the services had a positive impact on their learning or success. For services they don't use, why not? What suggestions do they have for improvement?



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