
This study's purpose is to gain a better understanding of the role of the academic library in the overall collegiate experience of undergraduate students. Ten undergraduate students at Duke University were interviewed regarding their use of Lilly Library, a branch library with a primarily undergraduate clientele. Their responses were coded and analyzed to determine trends in their use of and attitudes toward the library. By examining why and how students use the library as an academic and community space in ways that are not necessarily observable by librarians, the profession can better meet the needs of this important user group.

Headings:

College and university libraries -- North Carolina
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THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN THE UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY’S LILLY LIBRARY

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Introduction

As librarians, we are highly analytical of our interactions with patrons. We have difficulty, however, monitoring the patrons who do not directly interact with librarians. In academic libraries, many undergraduate students never interact with a librarian. Faculty members and graduate students tend to be more focused in their library work, and tend to use the library as a research facility. For undergraduates, the library serves a number of purposes. On the surface, the library is a place to do research and to spend intensive study time. In a traditional undergraduate environment, where students enter college at eighteen and are likely to reside on campus, the library is one of many spaces on campus in which students interact with their peers. For many students, the library is as much of a part of daily life as the dining hall, the residence hall, or the student union.

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role of the library in the overall collegiate experience of undergraduate students. By examining why and how students use the library as an academic and community space in ways that are not directly observable in public service contexts, the field of librarianship can better meet student needs when designing new library programs and spaces.

This study addresses three broad questions in the context of Duke University's Lilly Library. First, it will look at how students actually spend their time at the library. Next, it will examine how the library fits into the students' broader collegiate experience.
Finally, it will address ways in which library use patterns specifically contribute to the experience of community at the university.
**Literature Review**

This study addresses student attitudes toward and use of library facilities and services. This topic is of interest to a number of different areas of librarianship. Public service librarians are interested in how students use library services and how they learn to use the library effectively. Librarians involved in marketing and public relations want to know how to get students in the door. Library administrators and architects involved in the creation of new library spaces and the renovation of old ones require input from students.

Scott Bennett, librarian emeritus at Yale University, asserted that the area of library planning should undergo a paradigm shift, in which academic library design focuses on how students learn rather than on how library services are provided. In his words, "[a]cademic librarians need to make a paradigm shift from a service to a learning culture" (11). Bennett's prescription for library planning is an appropriate framework for evaluating the literature written about student use of libraries. One group of literature focuses on student consumption of library spaces and services, while another group examines how students learn, behave, and interact. The former category mostly consists of usage studies. The latter category, however, is broader in scope. While the literature describing a culture of service plays close attention to the business that is conducted in libraries, the "culture of learning" literature examines the interactions that take place in a library, and in turn its social and community functions.
Although Bennett treats these two cultures as binary opposites, I would argue that a third paradigm should be addressed. Borrowing from an article by Jacqueline Kracker and Howard R. Pollio, I will call this paradigm the "human experience of libraries" (1104). The study that was the basis for their article resembles my study more closely than anything else in the literature, because it addresses some of the intangible aspects of library use, such as feelings of comfort and community. While these feelings are hinted at in the literature that falls into the culture of learning category, they are not explicitly addressed. These intangibles can be examined by actually talking with students and learning hearing their individual stories about library use, as was done in the Kracker and Pollio study.

A Culture of Service

Bennett states that "the success of the academic library is best measured not by the frequency and ease of library use but by the learning that results from that use. Our purpose is not to circulate books, but to ensure that the circulation of knowledge produces learning" (11). While library use studies might not reflect this higher goal, they certainly give librarians some insight into what library services students use and enjoy, and which services they dislike or overlook. While the meaning of the results of library use studies might change depending on whether they are being analyzed from a service or a learning perspective, the data that these studies provide is both useful and plentiful.

Library use studies vary a great deal in scope. Some studies focus on a group of students over several years, paying strict attention to relative use during different stages of students' academic careers. Others are snapshots of a sample of students at particular
A typical example of an academic library user study is "The University of Iowa's Undergraduate User Needs Assessment," conducted in 1998. The study sought to examine how undergraduate students at the University of Iowa were using library resources, whether or not they were satisfied with them, and which of their needs were not being met by current library services (Clougherty). The study, which consisted of a mailed survey, was sent to a random sample of the undergraduate population. The number of students who responded to the survey was 656 out of an undergraduate population of nearly 18,000 (ibid). The Clougherty study determined that the top three reasons that students used the library were to study, to make photocopies, and to borrow books and serials (ibid).

Another study, entitled "A Longitudinal Study of Undergraduates' Academic Library Experiences," asserts that its unique contribution to the literature is the fact that the study was conducted over a three year period, following students throughout their undergraduate careers. Another notable characteristic of the study is the fact that it was conducted at multiple institutions. The study's central purpose was to determine how students' library use changes over time (Whitmire 379).
Whitmire used data collected from larger surveys of undergraduate students. Her study had over one thousand subjects from eighteen different colleges and universities in the United States (380). Whitmire's survey thus differed from Clougherty's in size, as well as in scope. She used responses to a series of questions regarding library use and research activities. Whitmire used quantitative analysis to assess whether students' experiences in each year differed in a statistically significant way (380-381). Her findings indicate that students engaged in the following activities, listed in descending order: "using the card catalog or computer, developing a bibliography, using the library to read or study, reading in the reserve or reference sections, using indexes to journal articles, asking the librarians for help..." (Whitmire 382). Her analysis indicates that use in each area either increased or remained constant throughout the three years covered by the study (Whitmire 382). Her paper therefore supports the idea that students are active and consistent consumers of library services.

Another common characteristic of these studies is that they place a high level of importance on students' use of technology. In particular, they examine the commonly-held belief that contemporary undergraduate students prefer electronic resources over print. While students may indeed prefer using electronic materials over print, these studies indicate that students still feel the need come into the library, regardless of their ability to use library materials remotely.

This set of issues was addressed outside of the field of librarianship in a 2001 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education. The article, entitled "The Deserted Library: As Students Work Online, Reading Rooms Empty Out—Leading Some Campuses to Add Starbucks," suggests that students prefer the comforts offered by
bookstores and coffee shops to a traditional library setting. The author, Scott Carlson, also posits that library door counts are down because students prefer to access resources over the Internet. The recent widespread of wireless connectivity exacerbates this concern.

Carlson addresses a number of frequently cited concerns about the future of libraries, such as increased reliance on internet resources. He also notes that students seem to prefer alternate locations for study, such as coffee shops. While the title and opening paragraphs of the article seem to suggest the impending death of the academic library, Carlson goes on to illustrate how libraries are working to meet the changing needs of the current generation of students. One of the librarians interviewed for this article, Samuel Demas of Carleton College, makes some salient points regarding why academic libraries are by no means dead.

Demas emphasizes that the library is much more than a repository for collections and research materials; it is also a place where students interact with each other. Carlson quotes Demas as saying that "[t]here is a huge amount of socializing and flirting and being seen that's not in the least in conflict with the main use of the library, which is research." Demas clearly views students' changing preferences to be both a challenge and an opportunity to expand services, rather than as a cause for panic:

Many library directors are seeing the importance of the library as a social sphere and creating unconventional programs and attractions to draw students back: book swaps, art exhibitions, lecture programs, poetry readings, comfortable furniture, and espresso bars, to name a few" (Demas in Carlson).

While this article's content was not nearly as incendiary as its title, it still produced a reaction among librarians. Lynn Scott Cochrane wrote a reaction to the
Carlson article in College and Undergraduate Libraries. Cochrane noted that "the article did a better job of reflecting today's reality in academic libraries than its misleading headline did." She expressed concern that college and university administrators wouldn't read beyond the headline, and would thus believe that libraries no longer need a great deal of financial support from their parent institutions (2).

Cochrane goes on to cite numerous examples of why academic libraries are still worthy of funding. She uses her institution, Denison University, as the context for most of her remarks. She also mentions the Oberlin Group and OhioLINK, consortia of which Denison is a part (Cochrane 3). She mentions students' consistent requests for longer library hours, "because students prefer libraries over any other location for serious study, research, and consultation with librarians" (Cochrane 2). She goes on to say that students are particularly drawn to libraries that are "beautiful, inspiring places that invite students and faculty to stay a while and read or meet with colleagues" (Cochrane 3). While Cochrane freely admits that the use of certain services may have declined, and that many students and faculty members do indeed access library services remotely, she does not view this virtual use as a threat to the academic library. In particular, she notes that colleges and universities continue to create new buildings, which "facilitate the library's role as a place for inquiry and intellectual discourse, as well as for social interaction" (Cochrane 4).

A Culture of Learning

Cochrane's defense of the current state of the academic library provides a nice transition into the ideas expressed in the previously mentioned article written by Bennett.
While Cochrane's mention of intellectual and social interaction hints at this culture of learning, Bennett takes the importance of this concept to a higher level. Bennett argues that library spaces should actively foster learning by encouraging academic discourse.

One way in which libraries can encourage learning is to create spaces in which students want to spend extended amounts of time. These spaces, Bennett emphasizes, are "not just study halls; they should be purposefully designed to promote study and learning" (14). He cites an unpublished study conducted by Richard O'Connor, an anthropology professor at Sewanee, and five of his students. The aim of this study was to learn about campus study culture, and was carried out by interviewing students at Sewanee (Bennett 14). Their primary interest was learning "the connections students make, or do not make, between their academic and social lives" *(ibid* 15).

O'Connor and his students discovered that while students engage in both socializing and studying in the library, they tend to view studying as a solitary pursuit. The study discusses distraction and the problematic nature of socialization in the library (Bennett 14-16). Their work indicates that students value a few different elements in their preferred study spaces: having options of different spaces in which to study, having areas that are designated for specifically individual or group study, and being able to govern one's own study area. They also stated that they wanted the library to have a sense of community, and to feel part of that community while interacting with other community members *(ibid* 17).

Another finding of that study that Bennett particularly endorses is the notion that extracurricular learning and intellectual discourse tend to occur in domestic spaces, such as dormitories and dining halls (18). He suggests that "work spaces," such as libraries
and academic buildings, reinforce inequality between students and faculty. He writes that the recent trend of bringing food services into the library may help eliminate this distinction (Bennett 20). He thinks, given the fact that "[l]ibraries are one of the most widely shared public spaces at colleges and universities," they should be designed with domesticity in mind, since this type of setting more effectively fosters learning (ibid 21).

Bennett's article was included in a publication by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) entitled Library as Place: Rethinking Roles, Rethinking Space. The concept of "library as place" has received a lot of attention in the literature recently. This concept, which describes the library as something larger and more abstract than a conglomeration of different services, as probably at least in part due to the panic over the future of the library in an increasingly digital environment. The notion of "library as place" is important to the people who work in libraries, the people who use them, and the people who build them.

Geoffrey T. Freeman is a principal of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, which is one of the leading designers of library buildings and spaces. His biography in Library as Place: Rethinking Roles, Rethinking Space, states that his primary interest is "contributing to the advancement of education, to understanding how people learn, and to heightened appreciation of how architecture affects the teaching and learning processes" (Council on Library and Information Resources v).

Freeman wrote an essay for this publication called "The Library as Place: Changes in Learning Patterns, Collections, Technology, and Use." Freeman invokes the traditional notion, dating from the Enlightenment, of the academic library as the physical and intellectual center of the campus (1). He writes that the library should be "an
extension of the classroom...embody[ing] new pedagogies, including collaborative and interactive learning modalities" (2).

These concepts are echoed in another work entitled When Change is Set in Stone: An Analysis of Seven Academic Libraries designed by Perry Dean Rogers & Partners, Architects. The book was written by Michael J. Crosbie, an architectural critic, and Damon D. Hickey, an academic librarian. This book discusses current considerations that must be made when conceiving new library buildings, using seven libraries that were designed by the architectural firm Perry Dean Rogers & Partners. The authors agree with Freeman that the library should be the center of the university, "the place where students and scholars come together, not only to exchange information, but also to socialize, to share the culture of the institution" (Crosbie and Hickey 5).

According to Freeman, the library accomplishes the goal of supplementing and enhancing classroom learning by uniting new technology with traditional methods of scholarship in one "user-focused, service-rich environment that supports today's social and educational patterns of learning, teaching, and research" (3). Crosbie and Hickey echo this sentiment, emphasizing the move in higher education towards collaborative learning (10). Effectively designed library buildings and spaces are necessary in order to complete these goals.

Freeman goes on to discuss how changes in teaching and learning impacted the way in which students use the library, and therefore how libraries are currently being designed. Now that large parts of libraries' collections are available remotely, expectations have changed. Freeman writes that "[f]aculty expect their students to use their time in the library thinking analytically, rather than simply searching for
information" (5). Freeman's conceptualization of library as place reflects Bennett's emphasis on a culture of learning. Freeman notes that libraries "must include flexible spaces that 'learn' as well as traditional reading rooms that inspire scholarship" (9).

Learning, however, isn't the only function of the new academic library. Freeman stresses that the library is a place where people come together on levels and in ways that they might not in the residence hall, classroom, or off-campus location. Upon entering the library, the student becomes part of a larger community—a community that endows one with a greater sense of self and higher purpose. Students inform us that they want their library to feel "bigger than they are" (6).

This community is firmly anchored to the campus. As mentioned earlier, the library is often the centerpiece of the campus that "make[s] a statement to the community about the significance of the institution" (Crosbie and Hickey 11).

The Human Experience

The literature addressed in the first two sections of this chapter provides us with a general framework for how libraries are used, the physical elements that promote or discourage that use, and how libraries fit into the larger university community. The Kracker and Pollio article takes these ideas and puts them through a filter of students' memories. The authors, who are both professors of psychology at the University of Tennessee, asked undergraduate students to describe specific memories of time spent in libraries, allowing them to write about experiences from any and all stages in their education (Kracker and Pollio 1104). The narratives were analyzed and coded into general categories, and sorted by the age levels in which their experiences occurred (ibid 1108).
The responses were coded into several different categories: atmosphere (surroundings, quiet, etc.), size and abundance, organization/rules and their effects on the user, what the user does in the library, and memories (Kracker and Pollio 1109). The responses quoted in the article provide tremendous insight into undergraduate students' use of and feelings about academic libraries. The authors use these responses to describe "the typical library experience" for college students:

When in the library, the student is very aware of what she does; this may include working, playing, changing, learning, and/or interfacing in meaningful ways with family and friends....The student is often aware of the atmosphere in the library; it may be quiet or noisy, inviting and relaxing, or stressful, but somehow it is unique and distinctive (ibid 1113).

Some of the responses to this study indicate that some students identify the library as a community space; the authors note that "[t]he library was described as a place that fosters relationships—weekly visits with a parent, being with friends, meeting one's girlfriend, feeling connected to other students on campus" (Kracker and Pollio 1112).

This article is a nice capstone for all of the other literature cited in this paper; it deals with many of the issues that are touched upon in the literature. The article uses these responses from students to illustrate use patterns and the concept of library as place. The authors emphasize that students' feelings toward libraries are built and shaped over their entire life up to that point (ibid 1113). It is therefore important to remember that students' library use is not just based upon the library that they use as college students; they are all individually molded by prior experiences with libraries.
Methodology

Setting

Duke University is an example of an institution that has a traditional undergraduate population. In fall 2005, Duke reported having 6,244 undergraduate students (Office of News & Communications). Admission is highly competitive; 18,090 high school seniors applied to be members of Duke's class of 2009 (ibid). All students are required to live on campus for the first three years (Residential Life and Housing Services). Duke has consistently been ranked in the top ten national universities by *U.S. News and World Report*, among academic powerhouses like Harvard, Princeton, and MIT.

Duke's library system reflects the academic rigor of the larger university. The main library, William R. Perkins Library, and seven branches house over five million volumes and thousands of serials (Duke University Libraries). Lilly Library is one of these branch libraries. Officially, Lilly houses the university's research collections in the arts (fine, decorative, and performing), film and video, and philosophy (Terry). Unofficially, Lilly functions as a library for first-years. Since 1995, all first year students have been housed on East Campus, where Lilly is located (Office of News & Communications). The main library, Perkins, is a fifteen minute bus ride away. Lilly, on the other hand, is a short walk from all of the first year residence halls.
While Lilly's collections are discipline-specific, its services reflect the needs of an undergraduate clientele. Lilly is open until four AM on Sundays through Thursdays, and until midnight on the weekends. On Sundays through Thursdays, a reference librarian is available until two AM. During exam periods, the library is open twenty-four hours a day. The lobby serves as an information commons, with eighteen computers, nine printers, and two scanners. Students and faculty can check out laptops for use inside or outside of the library. Wireless internet is available throughout the library (no small feat in an eighty year-old building). The library also offers a variety of quiet and group study spaces.

Lilly's main floor features two large, two-story halls. While these areas are officially designated as the current periodicals room and the reference room, they are also heavily used study spaces. They feature long, wooden tables with reading lamps, evoking the classic image of a library. The second floor houses the beautiful Thomas Room, an officially quiet reading room decorated with Chinese art. Outside of the Thomas Room, desks are set up overlooking the aforementioned halls and the lobby.

The basement is also a popular area for study. There are several different rooms that are designated as either quiet or group study areas. Some of the quiet rooms have carrels to allow for solitary work. Smaller study areas are located in the stacks and in hallways, throughout the entire building's four floors. On a weeknight or Sunday evening, all of these areas are bustling.

Lilly's staff works hard to attract and retain its student clientele. The library sponsors study breaks during exam periods, hosts film viewings, and encourages input from the student body. The fact that Lilly is so accommodating of students' needs makes
it a popular destination for undergraduates. Lilly's popularity and versatility make it an ideal location for examining students' use of the library.

Participants

The study sought the participation of ten to fifteen subjects, each a current undergraduate student at Duke. For ethical purposes, students who were also employed by the library were not included in the study. Students were also screened to ensure that they were over the age of eighteen.

Procedure

Participants were recruited with fliers posted throughout the library building. Some of the participants were approached in person while using the library. Interview times were scheduled, and participants were advised to anticipate spending fifteen minutes contributing to the study.

After verifying that each participant was a Duke undergraduate student, over the age of eighteen, and was employed by neither Duke University Libraries nor UNC, written consent was obtained. Each student was given a token honorarium of $5 for their participation. At this point, the tape recorder was turned on, and questioning began.

Each student was asked a series of questions regarding his or her use of Lilly Library, and about his or her study habits in general. The students were asked how much time they spent in the library, and whether they had a regular schedule of when they came to the library. The students were also asked whether they preferred studying alone or in a group. They were asked to describe a particular area where they studied, and why they
preferred that space to other areas. They were also asked why they preferred Lilly to other locations for studying.

In contrast, the students were also asked if there was anything that they did not like about Lilly Library, and how its spaces could be improved. Finally, the students were asked if they felt any sense of membership or "belonging" while they were at Lilly. For a complete list of interview questions, please refer to Appendix A.

**Data Analysis**

The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data generated from the interviews. This method calls for the use of inductive, rather than deductive, reasoning. Each comparison is an iteration in a process that reveals categories and relationships between initial categories within the data set. This method calls for the coding of interview transcripts to identify categories. As each interview is coded, new categories are compared to previously identified ones, and the relationships between these categories are examined. This process is repeated until "the properties of all categories are clear and the relationships between categories are clear to the researcher" (Parry 180).

After the first couple of interviews were conducted, the tapes were transcribed. The responses were coded into different categories and initial hypotheses were made. With several categories defined, the next set of interviews was transcribed. These interviews were compared to the first set, and coded accordingly. If new categories emerged, they were noted and applied to the first application. This iterative process was repeated for the final batch of interviews.

**Limitations**
The results of this study should in no way be interpreted as representative of all university students, all undergraduate students, or even all undergraduate students enrolled at Duke University. The scope of this study was to use qualitative data garnered from responses in order to examine some general questions, not to make generalizations about library use. A small sample size was thus chosen to allow for a meaningful conversation with each participant.

Another limitation was the fact that participants were difficult to recruit. More subjects may have been found if the study was conducted at a different time during the semester. The interviews were conducted in the weeks before and after Spring Break, which is generally when midterm exams and projects occur.

Finally, some of the students had trouble interpreting some of the questions that were asked. In particular, many of the students did not interpret the final question, about community and "belonging," the way in which it was intended. The implications of this misunderstanding will be further explored in the discussion section of this paper.
Findings

Ten interviews were conducted. Out of the pool of respondents, five were first year students, two were juniors, and three were seniors. When asked how much time each of these students spent at Lilly Library, responses ranged from one hour to ten hours per week. The students who spent the greatest amount of time at Lilly were first year students. This trend is not surprising, since Lilly is located closer to first year residence halls than any other library. Two of the seniors stated that Lilly was convenient to their off-campus residences.

Five students stated that they come to Lilly at specific times during the week. All five of these students come to the library most frequently in the late evening, especially on Sundays. One of the participants noted that he was pleased that Lilly recently extended its hours so that it is open until four A.M. Some of the students stated that when they came to the library and how much time they spent there depended on their workload at any given time.

The participants' responses fell into four major categories: preference regarding location; myself and others; atmosphere; and library collections, services, staff, and facilities. The first three categories relate to students' personal preferences and experiences, while the fourth describes the way in which students interact with the functionality of the library.
Preference Regarding Location

Each student was asked why they prefer studying at Lilly over other places. A couple of students actually prefer other locations, such as Perkins/Bostock (the main library), their dorm rooms, or outdoors. However, most of the students cited Lilly as their regular study location. Several students mentioned that they had tried studying in their dormitories, but found roommates or other students to be too distracting.

Each subject indicated a strong preference regarding where they spend time while they are at Lilly. Reasons for choosing preferring certain locations over others depended on several different factors. Some students choose their location based on the task that they intend to complete while at the library. For instance, one student stated that she meets her lab partner in the basement of the library to do group work, but moves upstairs to study by herself.

Two students indicated that they prefer to work in the Thomas Room (a quiet reading room described in the Methodology section) when they study or read on their own, but go elsewhere for group work or writing papers. Another student changes location based on the level of concentration that she needs to get her work done; she works in an open area when she doesn't need to concentrate very hard, but moves to the relative seclusion of the stacks when she doesn't want to be disturbed.

Other students consistently work in the same areas. One student prefers to work in an area of the stacks that has carrels:

*I work in the basement, in the art stacks... it's one of the only places that's actually designated as a quiet zone, so I can get my work done...and they have the partitions, which is good because it keeps you away from distraction.*
Another student not only favors the Thomas Room exclusively, but prefers certain areas of the room:

*I prefer the table by the window...there's like one small desk that's by one of the big windows, and that's my favorite...table...I like it because I can plug in my computer there, but I still have natural light, and... if that's not around...and I don't like the middle tables for plugging in as much...for some reason that's just an easier plug for me...I like having the one little space for myself...and if that's not available I go into the armchairs by the windows...*

These responses indicate that location is very important to students, and that they understand the conditions that they need to get things done. The responses also demonstrate that students feel territorial about their favorite spaces. These findings echo the responses to the O'Connor study that was mentioned in Bennett's article. Like the students at Sewanee, these Duke students value having different areas for different activities, as well as having some element of control over their study space (Bennett 17).

Myself and Others

Many of the students' responses were framed in relation to interactions with other people while in the library. In particular, they talked about seeking out or avoiding other people. While students who wholly prefer silence described interacting with other people in the library in a negative way, other students viewed their interactions with fellow students as a form of community within the library.

Most of the students prefer to study alone. Many of them stated that they choose Lilly over Perkins/Bostock because the latter library tends to be more crowded. A number of students indicated that the presence other people diminished the quality of their library experience.
...the one complaint I'd say I have is that the quiet zones are...they're not officially defined...it's just kind of an accepted thing...so kids will go in "quiet zone" areas...and chat up a storm and kind of bother everyone and...It's kind of...a nuisance, trying to tell everyone to quiet down sometimes.

These comments reinforce the territorial attitudes mentioned in the location category, and an unspoken civic assumption about the purpose of the territory. In particular, the students who come to the library because their dorm rooms or commons rooms were too loud complained about noise levels in the library. Another student complained that she finds it distracting when other students eat in the library.

Two of the upperclassmen interviewed mentioned that they come to Lilly, which they associate with freshmen, in order to avoid running into people they know. While they did not seem to consider the presence of others to be a categorically negative influence, they were concerned about socialization undermining their productivity:

*I like Lilly because it's a little bit less crowded [than Perkins/Bostock], I'm less likely to run into people I know, because it's mainly like otherwise freshman over here, or Lit grad students, who I like...um...yeah, like seeing a lot of familiar faces all the time in one big room kind of throws me off...*

Other students, however, view the presence of other people in a positive light.

When asked about feelings of community at Lilly, one student told the following story:

*a few weeks a go or a month or something, I was here and I just needed to print something, so I was in the main lobby, but I just stayed, here, and I ran into like ten people that I knew, and had really good conversations with two of them. So like people who I really hadn't spoken with in any serious way for awhile. So it became this very sociable place...*

This student did not view running into friends unexpectedly as a problem or a distraction. Instead, she indicated that these social interactions enhanced her library experience.

Another student said that the presence of other patrons actually helps her concentrate: "I like to have a little bit of cocktail-party kind of noise."
Atmosphere

Most of the participants cited aesthetic or intangible reasons for coming to Lilly. Many students stated that they like Lilly because they think that the building is pretty. A number of students mentioned that they liked working in the Thomas Room because of art and furnishings there. Another reasons cited for preferring the Thomas Room was the presence of light, since the room has a number of large windows: "I like the space, I think it's the prettiest library, I like having high ceilings and the natural light..."

Another student compared the bright, open quality of the Thomas Room to the Gothic Reading Room, a popular quiet study room at Perkins Library:

*I like the big, open, bright spaces that...usually have less people than the other libraries. Like the Gothic...when I...even when I lived on West, like, I would a lot of the time come here, because the Gothic Reading Room would just make me fall asleep because it was so dark and a bit of a downer, so it's very environmental, spatial for me.*

One of the participants complained that Lilly is too dark, but she was the only subject to say anything negative about the atmosphere of the library.

While the participants mentioned above were able to articulate specific reasons why they found Lilly's atmosphere to be so inviting, others had vague answers. These answers suggest intangible qualities that influence students' choices regarding where to study. The first participant stated

*I feel that I'm more productive at the library than like in my room. I mean, I have a single, so like sometimes I study in there, and it's really quiet, but, I don't know, I just like being in the library...I feel like I'm in the mood to study.*

Although her dorm room is quiet, Lilly has a quality that makes her feel like studying.

Another student expressed a similar sentiment: "for whatever reason I'm able to focus the
best at Lilly." While these students used specific language to describe other aspects of their library use, such as choice of location or preference regarding noise, these statements are vague. They use language like "I don't know" and "for whatever reason" to demonstrate that they don't quite understand why they like working at Lilly so much.

Collections, Services, Staff, and Facilities

On a more practical level, the participants had a great deal to say about Lilly's collections, services, staff, and facilities. Most of the participants mentioned Lilly's video collection. Lilly houses the research collection in film and video for the university, which includes over 12,000 videocassettes and around 5500 DVDs (Williams). Most of the students interviewed mentioned using the video collection either for class or for pleasure. Other collections that students mentioned were the current literature collection and the current periodicals.

A couple of students mentioned doing research at Lilly. Two students talked about using resources that were available electronically. They seemed to have some confusion regarding whether or not these resources were available outside of the library:

For the research...I'm not sure if there's some stuff that the computers have that I wouldn't be able to access from my dorm room, but uh...in case there is anything I would come here.

Another student mentioned that "the people who work here are nice and give good research help." She was the only participant who mentioned asking the staff for help.

Another service that was frequently mentioned was printing. Four of the participants mentioned coming to Lilly to print papers or articles for classes. One of the
students complained that some of the printers consistently do not work. Similar complaints were made about the copiers located in the building.

When asked about suggestions for improving library facilities, most of the subjects were pretty content with the spaces that already exist. A couple of students suggested that the library create more (and better-functioning) outlets for laptop use. One student, who frequently uses Lilly's video collection, stated that she would like to see group viewing rooms, in addition to the viewing carrels that already exist.
Discussion

The findings of this study shed some interesting light on the research questions stated at the beginning of this paper: how do students spend their time in the library? How does the library fit into the larger collegiate experience? How do library use patterns specifically contribute to the experience of community at the university? The participants' responses shed light on how undergraduate students perceive their library experiences, and which features of the library they value and appreciate.

Finding out how students spend time in the library was the least difficult question to investigate. The responses in this study correspond in some ways with the library use studies mentioned in the literature review portion of this paper. However, while the students in those studies listed checking out books and periodicals as a frequent activity (Clougherty, Whitmire 382), checking out books was barely mentioned by the participants in this study.

There are a number of reasons that explain this phenomenon. Since the Clougherty and Whitmire studies were completed in 1998 and 2001 respectively, it may be that students are simply not using books as frequently as they did a few years ago. This idea is supported in Scott Carlson's 2002 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, which mentions that circulation statistics had decreased. Duke students may also check the majority of their books out of other Duke libraries, which may be why they do not associate this activity with Lilly. Also, it should be restated that a number of students mentioned checking out videos, rather than books.
Aside from the fact that they did not talk about checking out books, the participants' responses were not surprising. Students do indeed spend a lot of time studying, reading, and writing papers, none of which are necessarily observed by librarians. The students did not mention any behaviors that would be out of the norm for activities that take place in a library, which might be explained by the fact that they knew that they were being interviewed by a person who works at Lilly.

Although this study did not uncover any novel ways in which undergraduates at Duke use Lilly Library, it may be useful for the staff to learn about how students spend their time there and what facilities and services they particularly enjoy. The observation that the subjects tended to engage in specific activities in specific areas, which was mentioned in the findings section of this paper, may also be useful information for future planning of library spaces.

The second question, regarding how libraries fit into the overall collegiate experience, is somewhat more elusive. The data collected in this study shows that ten different users have unique ways of thinking about and interacting with libraries, despite the fact that they are all students from the same institution who use the same library. If every undergraduate student at Duke had been interviewed, each student would have had a different story to tell.

The students interviewed spend, at most, ten hours a week at Lilly. This is a fairly significant amount of time to spend in one location; it is slightly less than the amount of time spent attending classes (students at Duke typically take four courses a semester, the equivalent of a twelve hour load). One senior stated that, during certain points in her college career, she felt like she spent more time in Lilly than in her dorm
room. The students' descriptions of their preferred areas, as well as their somewhat territorial attitudes toward their favorite spaces, indicate that their time in the library is significant to their academic success and therefore contributes to their overall undergraduate experience.

The upperclassmen who participated in the study clearly associate Lilly with their first year of college. They talked about how most of the people there were freshmen, and all used Lilly more during their first year. One student mentioned that being in Lilly gave her feelings of nostalgia for her first year, which she cited as a reason for coming to Lilly. Another student compared Lilly to the Marketplace (the dining hall located in the East Campus Union, where all first year students have their meals): "I guess it's kind of the Marketplace and Lilly is the other place, because, you know, it's only freshmen." The first-year students who participated in the study will probably view Lilly in similar ways when they are no longer freshmen. They may see it as a place that reminds them of an exciting, transitional time in their lives, rather than the physical space in which they study.

Determining how library use contributes to the experience of community at the university proved to be the most problematic part of this study. One problem in talking with students about their feelings of community is that they don't seem to have a solidified understanding of what community means. When asked about "community" or "belonging" or "acceptance," some of the students seemed flummoxed. Several students referred to services in response to this question, as if the ability to check out materials denoted community.
Several students associated these feelings with the presence of familiar faces, or with general feelings of comfort. One student said that Lilly was more inviting, especially when compared to the main library, which she described as being "the antithesis of community and closeness." Yet another student related Lilly to the greater Duke community, but did not elaborate on why he felt this way.

The fact that there does not seem to be a general consensus among these students regarding the definition of community indicates that these particular students may not spend a great deal of time thinking about the greater institution of which they are part. This problem isn't only limited to students; the literature in higher education doesn't tend to specifically talk about community in and of itself. While articles about town-gown relations and community service are available, articles about how university communities are constructed and experienced are not.

This gap in the literature, as well as these students' varied responses to the meaning of community, indicate that further research needs to be done in this area. I would hypothesize, given this vagueness surrounding community on university campuses, that some scholarship and interest in this area would promote some dialogue about this topic, and perhaps encourage all of the members of the greater university community to examine how they are interrelated.

Given that libraries are integral parts—maybe even the hearts—of university campuses, librarians are in a unique position to help foster this sort of discourse. While this study is small in scope, it is an example of how a librarian can learn a great deal about the university, and its sense of community, just by having some conversations with
students. As librarians, we have access to a cross-section of the university's population, and we should contribute to our parent institutions by turning an analytical eye outward.
Works Cited


Appendix A: Interview Script
After (1) confirming that the potential informant is over the age of eighteen, a full-time student and not an employee of Duke University Libraries or UNC, (2) administering the consent form and answering any questions raised, and (3) giving the informant a token honorarium of $5 for time devoted to the study, the investigator will ask the following questions.

**Interview Questions**

Introduction: As part of my Master’s degree work at UNC, I am going to ask you some questions about what brings you to Lilly Library and how you use the library when you are here. As the consent form made clear, you may stop participating at any time, and everything you say will be treated with respect. I am going to start the tape recorder now. I will turn the recorder off at any time if requested. If you do not care to answer a particular question for any reason, that is fine. [Start recording.] First I want to ask some questions about you, then I will ask some questions about library use. You should feel free to add any relevant information in your responses.

How many hours a week do you spend at the library?
Do you come here at a regular time on specific days? Do you always work in the same place in the library? Why? Are there any patterns to your use?

In general, how do you use your time at the library?

If you can, please give me two or three reasons for choosing Lilly over other places to study?

Have you attempted to study elsewhere? How was it different? What was that like?

Do you study here alone or in groups?

Have you tried to study [alone]/[in a group]? How did that work for you?

Do you find your ways of studying in the library to be changing? If so, what causes these changes?

What don't you like about studying at Lilly?

If Lilly Library were to create better spaces for students like you, what would they look like, and how would they help you to study more effectively?

How would you describe your feelings of membership and belonging when you are in this library?

What makes you feel that you "belong" (or not)?

Thank you for your time and information today. You have been very helpful to me.