

# What if we closed the library?

Amanda Wakaruk

Ontario Library Association

February 27, 2010

[printable version](#)[ShareThis](#)

*Stanford Report, June 10, 2009*

## Budget cutbacks announced in Libraries, Center for Professional Development

Stanford University Libraries and Academic Information Resources, the academic unit that oversees more than a dozen libraries, and the Stanford Center for Professional Development in the School of Engineering have announced 2010 budget cutbacks.

University Libraries announced Wednesday that it has laid off 32 employees. It also offered nine other staff members the option of being laid off and receiving severance benefits instead of staying in revamped positions at reduced pay or reduced hours.

The unit also announced plans to permanently close the Physics Library in the summer of 2010 and transfer its holdings to other locations, including the Engineering Library in the Jen-Hsun Huang Engineering Center—currently under construction—and the Stanford Auxiliary Library in Livermore.

Most of the affected employees were laid off Wednesday and will be eligible for the university's enhanced severance package, which expires June 30.

All told, more than 60 library positions have been affected by layoffs, reassignments and other cost-cutting measures to meet the 2010 budget reduction mandated by the university.

University Libraries has also eliminated 26 vacant positions.

In addition to trimming its workforce, University Libraries has cut expenses by reducing the purchase of books, journals and online subscriptions; closing Green Library at 1 a.m.; eliminating patron outreach programs, including the semi-annual magazine *Imprint*; and eliminating most staff travel. It also decided to close the Physics Library, located in the Varian Building, after close consultation with the School of Engineering and the School of Humanities and Sciences, as well as the departments of Physics and Applied Physics.

Keller noted that the vast majority of the Physics Library's holdings are now available in digital formats. As a result, faculty and students are less reliant on its print collection.

"Given budget-mandated reductions in our staff, we determined this measure to be the most effective method of preserving student and faculty services and access to information resources," Keller said, adding that the move will provide much-needed space for the Physics Department.

### **Cutbacks at the Stanford Center for Professional Development**

Andy DiPaolo, executive director of the Center for Professional Development and a senior associate dean in the School of Engineering, announced Tuesday that the center had laid off 11 employees—including four staff members who volunteered to leave—and reduced the work hours of three others.

"This difficult decision is a result of the economic downturn and its unprecedented impact on corporate support for the continuing education of technical professionals and managers," DiPaolo wrote in a June 9 memo to the center's staff.

He said the center "carefully and thoroughly analyzed each position relative to our long-term outlook and strategic position" and made decisions based on "thoughtful and lengthy deliberations."



[The California Aggie](#) // [Campus News](#) // Budget cuts close Physical Science and Engineering Library

## Budget cuts close Physical Science and Engineering Library

**Collections relocated to alternate libraries, decision met with criticism**

*Written by LAUREN STEUSSY*

*Published August 24, 2009*

Over 400,000 collections will be moved out of the Physical Sciences and Engineering Library in the next two years, as the library will close by 2011.

Faced with a 3.5 percent budget cut, librarians collaborated on how to cut the cost of maintaining their campus libraries. Following a recommendation from the Office of Resource Management and Planning to downsize the library, administrators announced that they will close the PSEL and move the majority of the books to Shields Library and the Carlson Health Sciences Library.

"Closing the PSEL wouldn't be our choice, but given the reality of budget cuts something has to go," said Karen Andrews, head librarian at the PSEL. "We think this is the best possible option and it will allow us to come out of this budget cut with the least amount of damage."

### Interact:

[Print This Article](#)

[E-Mail This Article](#)

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on del.icio.us](#)

[Share on Digg](#)

[Share on Reddit](#)

[Leave a Comment/Discuss](#)

[What is del.icio.us, Digg, Reddit?](#)

Many administrators are optimistic that the closure will in fact benefit the library and its patrons. Mainly, the books that will not stay within the UC Davis system are duplicates or have been moved online. The removal of these collections will free space and allow staff to be better positioned, Andrews said.

"This is actually going to preserve our resources," she said. "The amount of money we will save will allow us to provide much better service in the end."

Many students who use the PSEL facility to research or study do not believe the closure will debilitate their work, as most of the resources are available electronically in Shields as well as the PSEL.

"It is marginally more convenient to go from the Engineering buildings to the PSEL, so I don't think that going to Shields is really that much further," said Frank Maker. "Most of the other students in my lab rarely use the library anyway since the vast majority of the information available in our field is online."

Several librarians involved in the budget cutting decision, however, have expressed concern that the closure will not serve the interests of the students and researchers on campus, as the Carlson Health Sciences Library is located far from the science buildings on campus, next to the new football stadium.

"This is one of the worst decisions I have ever seen a library make," said Axel Borg, librarian subject specialist and librarian of over 25 years. "Library administrators want people to use the Carlson Health Science Library because it's not getting a lot of use. One of the ways you do this is by putting the books a lot of students use out there. But now they're going to have to walk over a mile to do their research. The deans are not thinking about the students and that's just wrong."

Borg also felt that he and his fellow librarians were not consulted as thoroughly as they should have been in the decision of making cuts.

"Most of us were unaware of this decision until they announced it last week," he said. "We had to hear it from other faculty. But we're the ones who work with these books and with the students who work with these books. We have a better sense of how things work best and they ignored us."

## Univ. closes biology, math libraries due to budget cuts, reduced traffic

By **Becca Krock**

STAFF REPORTER

Posted September 2, 2009 at 1:14 am

 [ShareThis](#)  [Print This Post](#)

In light of departmental budget cuts, Washington University closed its biology and math libraries this summer, reflecting a nationwide trend in universities to cut satellite libraries that are becoming increasingly obsolete as more materials go online.

The biology and math libraries, previously on the second floor of Rebstock Hall and the lower level of Cupples I, respectively, were targeted because their diminishing traffic did not justify their continued existence, Dean of Libraries Shirley Baker said. Their collections are now housed in Olin Library's B Level.

Currently, study spaces in those two locations remain open to students, and the biology and math departments have yet to determine the future use of the space.

Slashing the salaries of two employees provided the bulk of the savings. Both of the assistant librarians whose positions were eliminated were re-hired in open positions at the Olin and the chemistry libraries.

“What scares me is if we have to cut another 12 percent next year,” Lewis said. “That’s going to be really hard.”

According to Baker, the decision depends primarily on how departmental libraries are used. The biology



*The biology library, above, and the math library closed last summer due to budget cuts and decreasing foot traffic. (Matt Mitgang | Student Life)*

the assistant math librarian and now the chemistry and engineering assistant librarian.

“Our strategic plan includes downsizing and perhaps even consolidating some libraries because the materials are going electronic and the use is happening elsewhere,” Baker said. “Biology especially had become incredibly quiet.”

library was already losing foot traffic dramatically because access to biology journals, previously one of the most important functions of the biology library, is now available online.

The art and architecture library, on the other hand, is unlikely to ever close since print materials are critical for those disciplines.

The chemistry library houses journals that are only available in print, often due to high prices, said Chris Goodman, formerly

# UCLA has arts library on chopping block

August 15, 2009 | 9:45 am



Facing drastic budget reductions this year, UCLA has begun implementing cuts across its departments to make up for an estimated \$131-million shortfall. Among the proposed victims is one of Los Angeles' largest cultural resources -- the [arts library](#) on the Westwood campus.

The university has confirmed that it is looking at eliminating the library, which contains more than 270,000 volumes in the fields of art, architecture, design, film, television, theater and more. If the plan is approved, UCLA will shut down the arts library in the Public Policy Building and move some

# Scott Library, York University



# Exploring Library as Place

## Master's in Environmental Studies (MES)

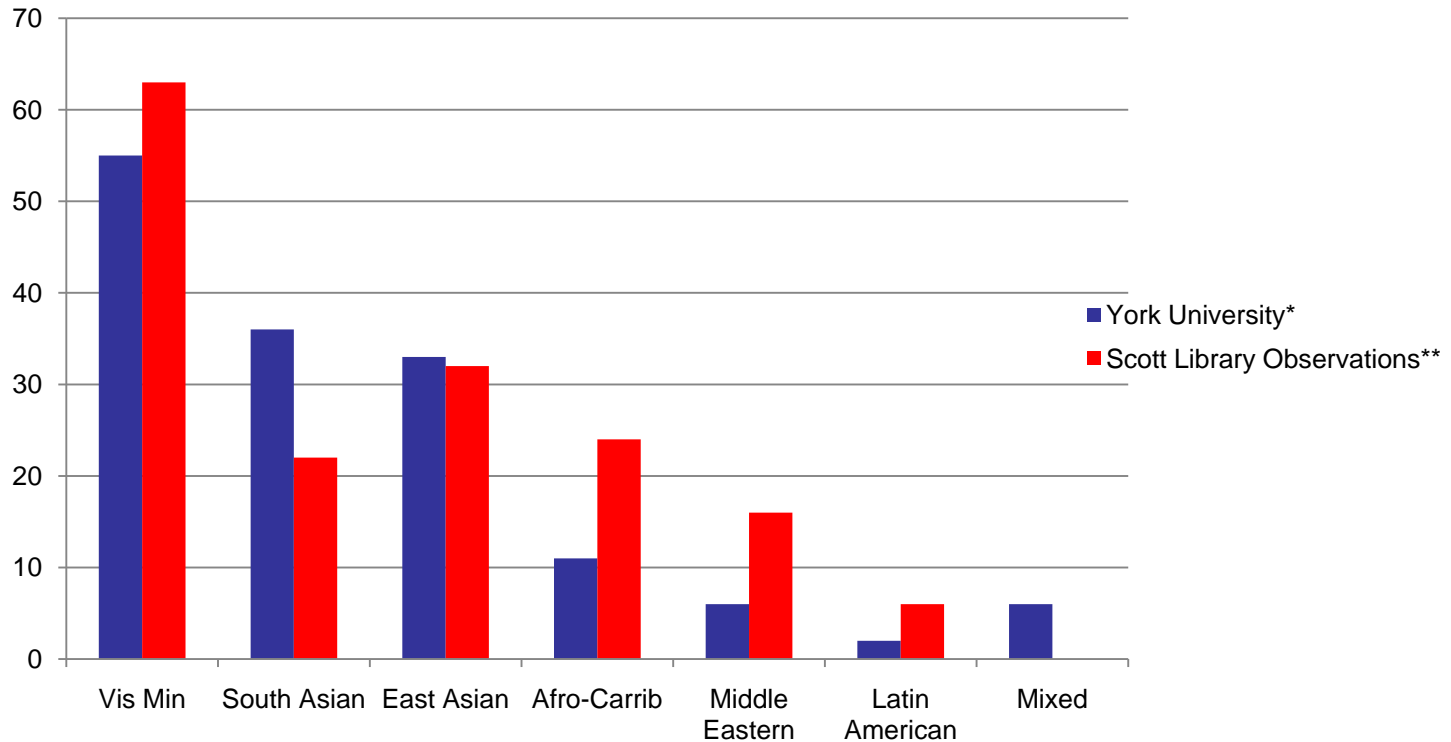
- public space theory
  - urban planning / urban studies
  - environment-behaviour studies
    - environmental psychology
  - sociology / social theory
  - social anthropology
  - phenomenological psychology

# Exploring Library as Place

## Major Research Paper (MRP)

- successful public space:
  - democratic
  - responsive
  - meaningful
- MRP methods
  - library users' memorable experiences (writing)
  - interviews with library users
  - observational seating sweeps

# Scott Library Observations: Ethnic Origin

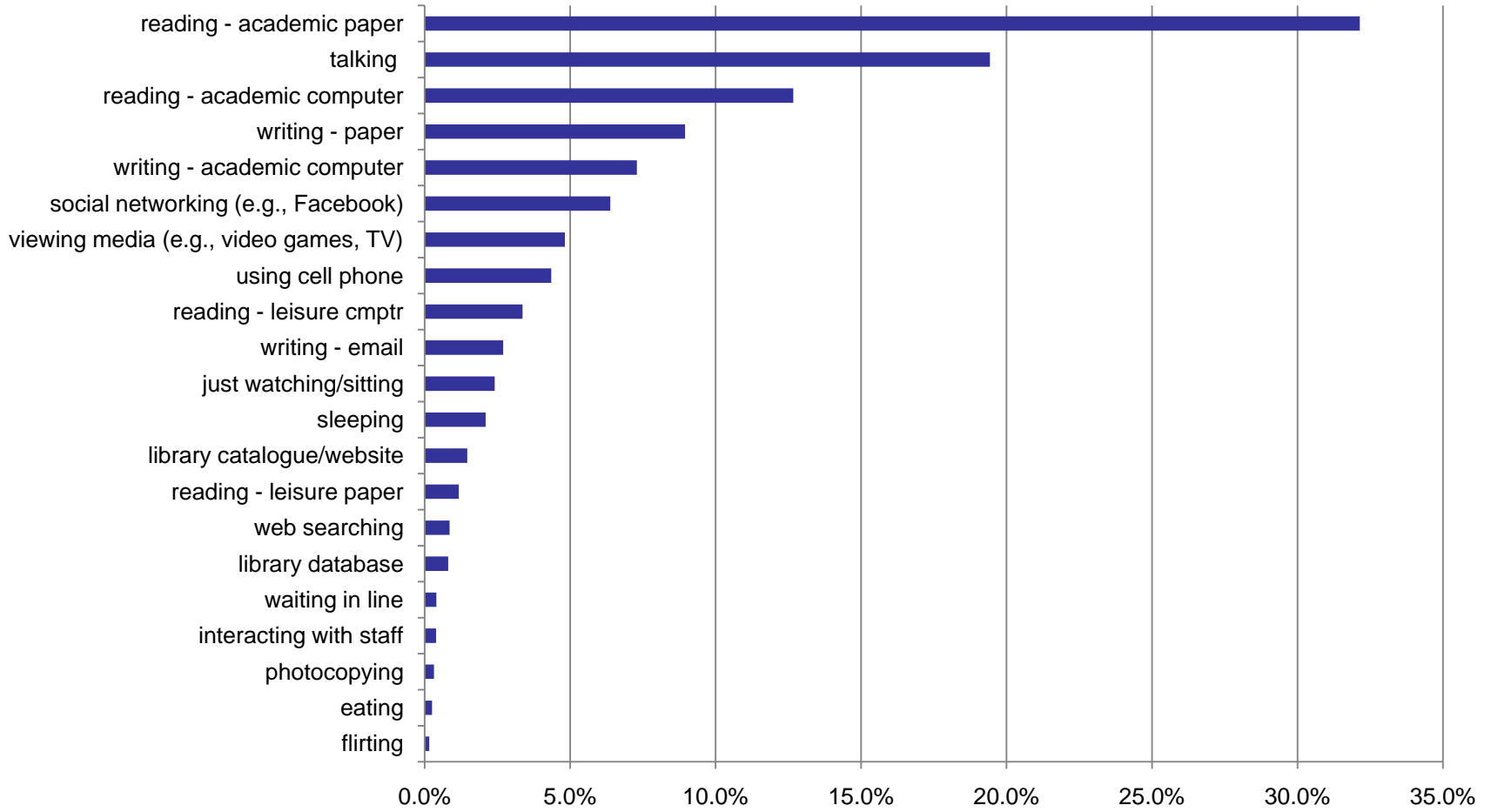


\* summary derived from YorkU administrative survey

\*\* data collectors' assessment of predominant ethnic origin

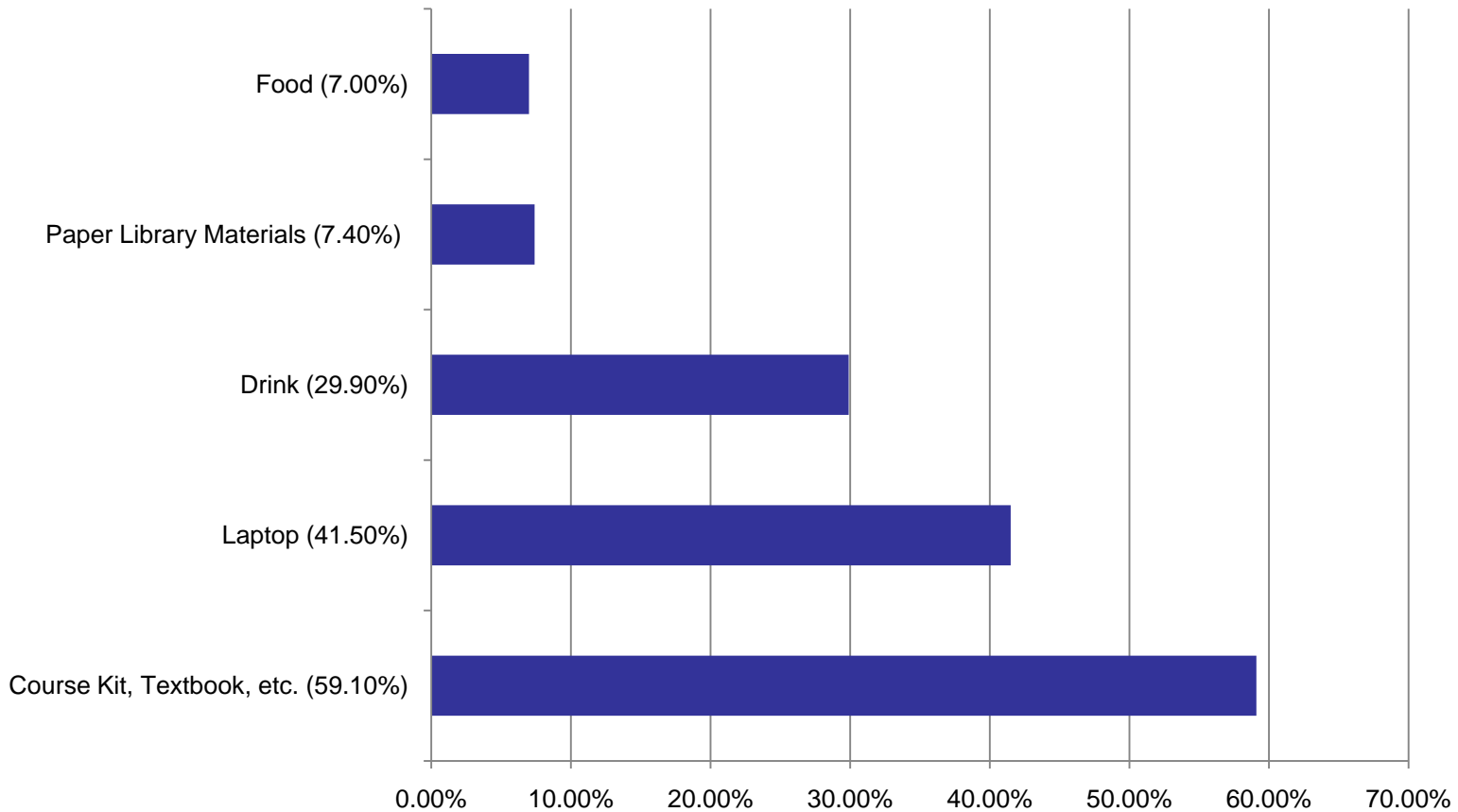
# Scott Library Observations: Activities

## Most Common Activities as % of All Activities



# Scott Library Observations: Possessions

Visible Possessions as % of All Possessions



# Paper-Based Library Materials (books/bound periodicals)

“It never really crossed my mind that I could sit down at the library and do the readings... I never felt like that it was an option for me. I don't know... I never thought about it. To actually just sit down and do it... I was just like, here are the books, let's go.”

“We just kind of go and use our notes from the classroom. Like if one of my friends has to write a paper or something, we'll pick up library materials and go.”

“If it looked like it was really, really related and worth it I would come here and check it out and photocopy it or whatever and then I would take it home and read it.”

“... I've really just gone in, grabbed stuff and left.”

# Interview Participants

## Status

- 2 jr. undergrad 1-2yr
- 5 sr. undergrad 3-5yr
- 6 graduate, masters
- 3 other (diploma, alumni, post-doc)

## Cultural Group Responses

- Middle Eastern
- French-Canadian
- Canadian
- Canadian-Italian
- White
- Bangladeshi
- African

Gender: 10 female, 6 male

## Area of Study:

- 7 social sciences
- 5 applied programs
- 2 humanities
- 2 science and engineering

# Memorable Library Experiences

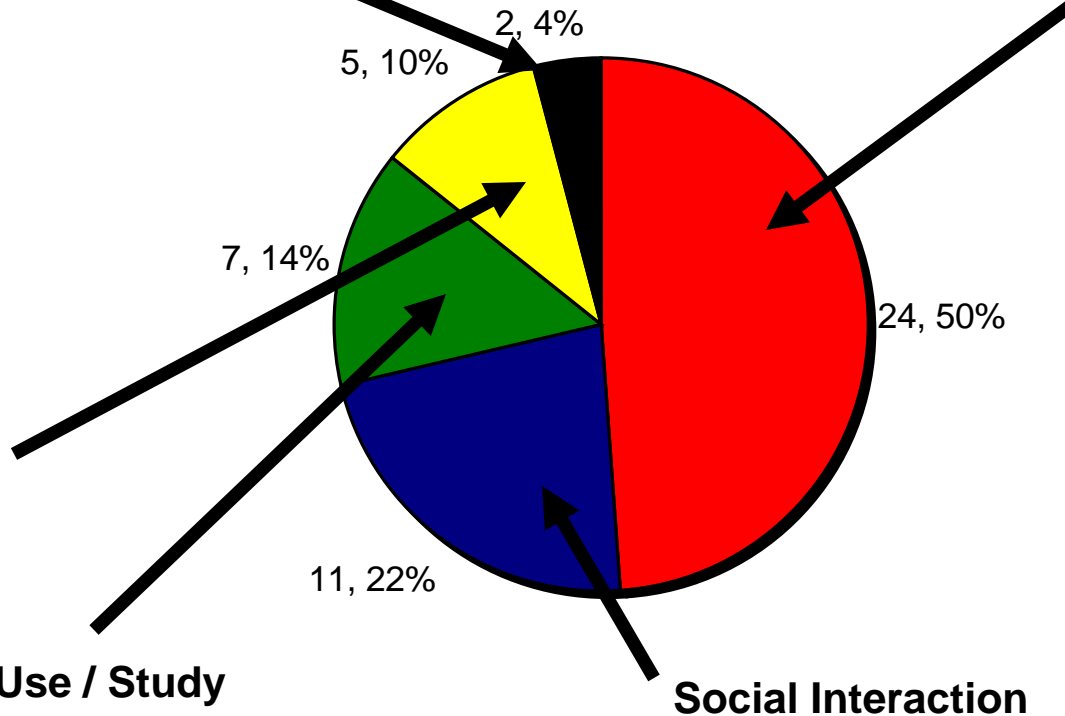
**Positive Interaction  
With Library Staff**

**Negative Stress**

**Refuge**

**Solitary Use / Study**

**Social Interaction**



# Memorable Library Experiences

## Positive Interaction With Library Staff (1)

"...asked the man at the circulation desk where the hard copies of the journal were kept. He took me there, and also explained that since York did not have a medical school, purchasing the e-resource was too expensive. So I learned something new, and at the same time, got a photocopy of the article I needed."

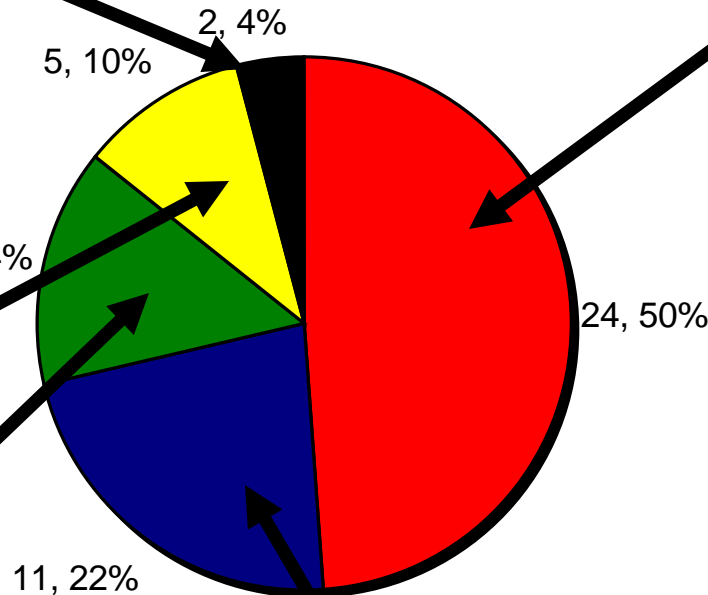
## Refuge (1)

"Have fallen asleep on the library couches."

## Solitary Use / Study (1)

"Just the plain library story of going to the library to study as soon as it opens then moving to every location, floor, study carrel possible until the library closes."

"Aristotle on the balcony."



## Negative Stress (10)

"Spending 20 minutes trying to find a place to study."

"Trying to find books."

"Disrupted from studying because too many people converse in the library."

"Have been asked to dispose of my coffee at least 20 times this year."

"The library washrooms and their statement on the future."

"Trying to print a paper."

## Social Interaction (3)

"Sitting on the balconies at the library and studying with my friends."

"A girl, whom I've never met, sitting beside me left and came back 10min later with 2 coffee's and offered me one."

# What if we closed the library?

“Close it? No... the library is a good place to study, especially... some people live at home, you know, they got brothers and sisters that are so annoying, like me for example.”

“I wouldn't have any place to study. I wouldn't get any work done. I come here to study.... I know tons of commuters who are like, 'I just spent twelve hours in the library.' I mean, they probably talked for six of them... it's helping guys pick up [girls] because they can't get phone numbers in class. There's also the fact that every now and then you find the environment stimulating...”

“That would be awful... It's somewhere you can sort of be on your own in a social atmosphere and be working... it's just like, a community atmosphere that I like. And knowing that everyone else is studying too, it helps me concentrate. It's sort of like... a little sanctuary.”

“I have a habit of studying at home, maybe I would be ok.”

# Differentiated Study Areas

“I find that if you’re in a big room full of people and most of them are studying, it makes you study too. Sort of like keeps you focused. And like I don’t want to be seen like... I’m not going to sit there and scroll through Facebook or whatever if I’m in a big room full of people that are studying... So that’s also why I go there – because it really helps me focus and that’s why I come to the library in the first place.”

“I personally like the individual, enclosed rooms... it feels like I have my own space even though it’s within the bigger space of the library. You feel like this is somewhere you can drop all your guard down and just be yourself... [In the library carrels] you have some privacy but again it’s just sitting down and doing work whereas I need to be able to engage with the work on different levels, I have to stand and walk around to do that kind of thing.”



# Responsive Space: Atrium Balconies

“I like [the balconies]. It’s like you can still study and you can still socialize at the same time. I find that you get a lot of work done but it doesn’t feel like you’re doing a lot of work... I was comfortable up there, you’re open, I guess you can’t really describe it though, it just kind of felt good.”

“[It’s different from other study sessions] cause we were more open and able to talk whereas most times I study with a friend we just sit there and study and that’s it... I like the balcony because it’s just quiet enough... I don’t like it when it’s dead silent. Cause that makes me nervous.”



# Place Attachment in the CPRR – or whatever it's called

“I absolutely love that room, there, the lounge, whatever it is... they have those low walls... where the seats are... that gives you the feel of having cubicles to yourself and I love that... you have a lot of large space where you can sit and kind of stay by the windows... they're still open enough where you don't feel suffocated but there's a nice table beside you, the wall behind you, so the sound is kind of like blocked out and they're comfortable chairs.”

“I wouldn't even know it's for periodicals – it's a reading room. I didn't even know that it has current periodicals... I didn't even know that! And you know what, actually, from sitting in there and reading myself, it's annoying when people are looking for their periodicals or books or whatever it is... and so I want to say, 'Stop rattling your newspapers!' Cause I'm reading and why are they in there with a newspaper, you know?”

# Grad Student Reading Room

“The grad section - that’s the only place I’d go pretty much... someone mentioned it in one of my classes... and then someone else in class said, ‘Shhh! Don’t tell them because then everyone will go there.’ I added that on to the [faculty’s graduate student association] web site... It got hacked and I had to redo it and the section is gone now.”

“It’s nice, because I see a lot of people I know, I can catch up with friends, I can talk with people in my class, find out what they’re up to, if there’s questions about readings, it’s sort of like a social area for me and it’s quiet... I can just bring a coffee and sort of plough into my work and I get a lot of work done there than I do at home or anywhere else. And I meet friends there, too. It’s nice – to have social aspects mixed with academic time.”



# Library as Social Space

“In first year I didn’t really know anybody and so when I had a three hour break... I was like, ‘I’ll just go sit in the library.’ I remember last year I had a seven hour break so... I would study for a few hours and come and socialize for another like whatever and if I need to go back, I would go back to the library. I find it’s a spot where you can always... I guess you’re always welcome and there’s always spots for you.”

“I noticed a few days ago... a girl was sitting beside another girl and she looked over and she was just like, ‘you’re in my whatever class’ and she was like, ‘yeah’ and she was all, ‘well, could you help me with something?’ And then, so, for like the last hour they just sat there discussing for the next exam that they had together and so they were just feeding information off of one another, total strangers, they had just met that day and completely like learning off one another and giving each other information.”

# Role of the Library

“When there was in-between time, I would just come here... And also, I use the library to meet people. Cause everyone knows where it is. And so, if I’m meeting someone for lunch or if I’m selling or buying a book, I just say, ‘Meet me at Scott or the Library’.”

“We live in that residence with no common space... there’s not even a TV room where people can mix... the student centre is just another place I feel could have been a really good common space but it’s so commercialized... York Lanes... it’s another great common space but again it’s just too commercialized.”

“I think that the library - even a university library - offers much more than just a place to get the stuff you need... It’s a place where you don’t have to pay anything, you don’t have to have any economic status to be able to get the information and you can come here and do your own studying on a personal level.”

# Recommendations

- Recognize the primary role of the physical library as a place for learning and engagement.
- Support student-generated spaces conducive to learning and engagement.
- Help create responsive spaces by recognizing place as a dynamic and emergent phenomenon.

# Assumptions



# Assumptions



# Assumptions



Thank you for listening.