ASSESSMENT OF THE VALIDITY
OF RUL BRAND ATTRIBUTES

September 2011

OVERVIEW

Purpose
Assess the continued validity of RUL’s four brand attributes (Higher Education Focus, Essential Services, Enriching Knowledge, Friendly Service). Performing ongoing assessments of our brand and its key attributes is vital to ensuring we continue to deliver upon our brand promises. This is the second such assessment. The first was in August 2010.

Methodology
Reviewed customer comments from the RUL Counting Opinions survey for references which applied to one or more of the Libraries’ brand attributes. Positive and negative comments were noted.*

The focus of the analysis centered upon the context in which a comment was given and if the comment included a definitive adjective clearly identifiable as positive or negative (e.g.: great, wonderful, poor, etc.). These comments were tallied under the appropriate attribute(s). If a comment provided either an indifferent or no sense of the responder’s feelings towards a particular aspect of the brand, it was not included in the final count.

Specific guidelines were established to help ensure consistency when (1) determining if a comment related to a brand attribute and (2) if it did, which specific attribute(s) it referenced. Those guidelines follow.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOCUS

- Praise/criticism for a specific resource or publication
- Praise/criticism for a specific collection or archive
- Use of the phrase “supported my research”

ENRICHING KNOWLEDGE

- Praise/criticism for a specific librarian or librarians in general
- Praise/criticism for an RUL digital project

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- Praise/criticism for a specific RUL service
- Person gives credit to RUL for a success
- Use of words “essential”, “vital” or other similar ones

FRIENDLY SERVICE

- Reports of favorable (or unfavorable) interactions with RUL librarians or staff
- Use of words “pleasant”, “friendly”, “smiling “, “helpful” or other similar ones

* The survey data analyzed was gathered from January 2011 through May 2011.
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RESULTS

As we did in August 2010 the RUL Marketing team analyzed current data gathered from the \textit{RUL Counting Opinions} survey and teased out comments relevant to our brand attributes. By using a more well-defined methodology this time and placing specific parameters on how to interpret comments we were able to perform a more consistent analysis.

In the current assessment two brand attributes received strong positive feedback.

- Enriching Knowledge (89.7% positive)
- Friendly Service (85.6% positive)

The other two brand attributes received moderately positive feedback.

- Essential Services (67.7% positive)
- Higher Education Focus (64.1% positive)

The primary concerns negatively impacting Essential Services and Higher Education Focus were difficulty effectively utilizing online search capabilities and the lack of some very specific subject-centric journals and articles. The percentage of positive feedback for these two attributes, while modest, remains above 60%. (A 60% positive response rate was the minimum threshold required for an attribute when the brand was first developed.)

It is relevant to note although this analysis provides a valuable snapshot of brand perception, the data is mined from only one source (an online survey). Other methods of data gathering, especially those which would give respondents the opportunity to provide feedback directly related to the brand, would allow for a more comprehensive analysis.

Along with providing a measure of how our brand is currently perceived, this assessment also supplies data enabling us to start tracking and identifying trends over time. This will allow us to focus efforts to re-solidify aspects of our brand in the future, if necessary. (Comparison chart included as an addendum.)

Overall, 74% of the comments touching upon an aspect of the brand were positive. This indicates our customers favorably perceive the attributes promoted through our brand.

\textbf{Higher Education Focus} (78 comments)

- 64.1% positive
- 35.9% negative
- Positive themes: Diversity and size of collections, online databases, online journals and scholarly articles
- Negative themes: Lack of journals and articles for certain subject matter; insufficient number of and/or old books
Enriching Knowledge (39 comments)
- 89.7% positive
- 10.3% negative
- Positive themes: Professionalism and knowledge of Librarians in general; specific acknowledgement of individual Librarians
- Negative themes: Unhelpful reference experiences

Essential Services (96 comments)
- 67.7% positive
- 33.3% negative
- Positive themes: EZ Borrow (and the general ease of resource borrowing); ILL; remote access; online catalog; Ask a Librarian
- Negative themes: Difficulty of online search; web site navigation; online catalog

Friendly Service (64 comments)
- 85.9% positive
- 14.1% negative
- Positive themes: Librarian and staff helpfulness; friendliness; overall staff interactions
- Negative themes: Rudeness; perceived indifference

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ADDENDUM: COMPARISON DATA (2010-2011)