

SUMMARY

NEW BRUNSWICK STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS, SPRING 2008

The Rutgers University Libraries held three student focus groups in New Brunswick during spring semester 2008. The impetus for having these groups was the desire of the current Reference and Lobby Redesign Committee to know from students what kinds of spaces they wanted in the library. There was also a desire to know from students their perceptions and desires of reference service. In addition, the libraries have been seeking information from graduate students about a possible redesign of the Graduate Reading Room. To this end we held three focus groups: March 26 for undergraduates (two students) and one for graduate students (5 students); and April 23 for undergraduates. (eight students). Lila Fredenburg facilitated the discussions; and Jeanne Boyle, Valeda Dent, and Françoise Puniello took notes.

The following questions directed the discussions:

1. We often hear that atmosphere is important for studying. What do you think is the ideal atmosphere for individual study? Group Study?
2. What three things do you like most about the library? What three things do you like the least about it?
3. What do you imagine being in the perfect university library?
4. What do you imagine the perfect graduate reading room looking like? What do you imagine the perfect undergraduate study space?
5. What do you think is meant by reference service?
6. Do the services offered by the library meet your needs?
7. What would make reference service better?

SUMMARY OF THEMES

1. Overall - All Groups

Appropriate study spaces - quiet and group

Hours – especially weekends and late night

Complexity of library website

Outlets for laptop use

2. Undergraduate Students

Quiet spaces

Hours

Computing - wireless, access to computers

Aesthetics

More seats

3. Graduate Students

Comfortable and diverse spaces

Equipment and costs to use

Digital resources and services

Librarian contact and help