

**Honnold Mudd Library  
All Staff Survey Findings  
August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005**

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## Introduction

The Honnold/Mudd Library has experienced several major changes in the past months. In the past couple of weeks several focus group sessions were conducted with different groups of library employees to gain a better understanding of how staff has been affected by the changes. Furthermore, an email based All Staff survey was conducted to gather more information in regards to the changes from staff that did not have an opportunity to participate in the focus groups or those who had more information to share. The survey questions were similar to the focus group questions and asked about the physical redesign, the internal work process between various desks, information technology, and the lobby elevator. A total of **26** staff members responded to the survey. Results of the all-staff survey are presented in this report and are organized by themes within questions. Like the focus groups, the objective of this survey is to highlight and present any likes/dislikes, issues, concerns, and suggestion staff has in regards to recent changes at the Honnold/Mudd Library.

### All-Staff Survey Questions

1. Considering your job duties, what do you like most about the redesign of the Information/Reference Desk and Search Center? What do you like least about it?
2. What can be done to improve the help and services offered at the Information /Reference Desk? Please give specific examples.
3. What do you like about the new Welcome Desk? What do you not like about it?
4. Do you think all library staff should be required to work a shift at the Welcome Desk? Please explain why or why not.
5. What recommendations do you have for making the Welcome desk a better working place for staff as well as good service point for patrons? Please give specific examples.
6. How do you feel about having an IT person on duty in the search center? During what hours is it most important to have an IT staff person on duty?
7. Do you have suggestions how the Information & Reference Desk can work more smoothly with other library units?
8. Opening the lobby elevator to serve all floors has had a positive impact on the library in general, yet it is not perfect. Can you think of any negative impacts because of the opening of the lobby elevator?

## Synopsis of Findings

A synopsis of the major themes that emerged from the survey analysis is presented below.

### **Major Themes:**

#### Question 1: Redesign of Information/Reference Desk & Search Center

##### -Likes:

- Professional
- Better for Patrons
- Great to combine various services at a central location

##### -Dislikes

- Too big
- Unclear job roles/duties
- Physical structure has changed, but process still remain an issue

#### Question 2: How to improve services at Information/Reference Desk & Search Center

##### -Suggestions:

- Clarify each desk's and each staff/student worker's role
- Staff is "alienated" and does not work well together
- Across the board training for all desk workers

#### Question 3: The new Welcome Desk

##### -Likes:

- Creates a friendly/welcoming atmosphere
- Easier to assist patrons
- Provides security

##### -Dislikes

- Design, structure, and location issues
- Takes away valuable time from staff members
- Seen as a restriction to access rather than a welcoming area

#### Question 4: Requirement of working at the Welcome Desk

##### -Likes:

- More staff participation will decrease staffing issues
- Benefits staff members
- Reminds staff of the purpose of library—to serve patrons

##### -Dislikes

- Should be encouraged, not required
- Unclear processes and procedures along with unhelpful training
- Not a part of staff's job description

Question 5: How to improve services at Welcome Desk

-Suggestions:

- A detailed, clear, and organized manual/guidebook
- Shorter shifts
- Allow for other duties at desk when not busy
- Formal Welcome Desk specific training

Question 6: IT staff on duty

-Likes:

- Staff and patrons appreciate the expert help
- Good to have IT accessible
- Helps non-technology savvy staff

-Dislikes

- Clarify/designate a process/person to contact in IT
- IT should primarily train staff
- Staff or student workers should be available during all open hours

Question 7: How can Information/Reference Desk work better with other units

-Suggestions:

- Mainly an issue with staff, not student staff
- Inaccurate information is sometimes given to patrons
- Lack of communication and cooperation—"turf wars"
- Clarify roles/job duties
- Cross training on all basic functions

Question 8: Lobby Elevator

-Likes:

- Multi-level access
- Maximizes space and resources
- Has removed a barrier to access

-Dislikes

- Slow
- Not everyone uses their ID card
- Paces an extra burden on Welcome desk staff
- Unaware of what staff members are in the library
- Unclear button-to-location signage

## **Question # 1:**

### **Considering your job duties, what do you like most about the redesign of the Information/Reference Desk and Search Center? What do you like least about it?**

#### **► Initial reactions:**

- Not enough experience at the desk

#### **► Likes:**

##### -Design:

- Professional look
- Desk is more visible
- Artwork in the search center
- More room
- Closer to the gates which makes it more welcoming to patrons as they enter
- Patrons can easily see the desk

##### -Computer:

- The new flexible turn around monitors

##### -Roles/Job Duties:

- Good to have librarians working with student assistants
- Reference Librarians are now more visible

##### -Functionality:

- Great to combine two services in one desk
- Good to have multiple search centers
- Search Center has better lighting now
- Provides a one stop area for students to get assistance
- Most library services can now be found at a central area
- Easier for patrons to get a variety of information by stopping just at one desk
- Great for serving multiple patron needs from just one desk
- Patrons can go to one desk for help
- Desk is easier to find
- Allows the presence of IT staff

#### **► Dislikes:**

##### -Design:

- Bland
- Big/Huge
- Too remote from everything else
- Space behind the desk is wasted
- Arrangement of computer and phones on the desk
- Seating area for patron being assisted by a reference librarian is too small for leg room

##### -Computer:

- Distraction from welcoming students
- Lack of wireless access

##### -Roles/Job Duties:

- Confusion about who is supposed provide what information
- Who should the patron ask for help at the desk?
- Student workers receive complex questions and are expected to answer it
  - “We are expecting too much...students handle nearly all reference tasks”
- Repetitive training of student workers does not solve the problem of complex questions they receive
- Staff members of the different desks do not work well together which defeats the one desk approach
  - “Don’t work together easily...Physical space? Attitudes?”
- It is difficult to work with other staff members in this space

-Functionality:

- When desk staff are busy, patrons are hesitant to ask questions
- Seating of staff & librarians is not helpful to patrons
- Too much emphasis on entrance gate
- Librarians are too far away form the gates
- It is one desk by vision, but two desks by operation
- There is one desk physically, but this does not transfer to practice
- Too large for two workers
- The internal workings & ways of providing services at the desk have not changed
- Unclear were students should be silent and where they can talk
- Circulation desk was not included in the redesign process, although many of the changes have highly impacted that desk
  - Leaving Circulation out is “more than irksome”
- The large physical separation at the desk causes confusion for patrons as to who they should ask for help

► **Alternative suggestions:**

-Design:

- Place art and flowers on desk
- Needs decorations

-Functionality:

- Have one name for the desk instead of “Information/Reference” desk
- New desk should also encompass circulation to make it more user friendly
- Welcome desk greets incoming patrons, Information/Reference desk should not have to do so
- Work processes at the desk need to be examined and redesigned

-Roles/Job Duties:

- Cross training for those who serve at the desk
- Clarify who the patron should approach at the desk if they need help

## **Question # 2:**

### **What can be done to improve the help and services offered at the Information/Reference Desk? Please give specific examples.**

#### **► Positive comments about current way of offering services:**

-Service:

- We are doing a fine job
- Student assistants and LSA's have valuable knowledge staff can learn from

#### **► Constructive comments:**

-Roles/Job Duties:

- Clarify the roles and duties of each desk and each staff/student worker
- Training for all staff on all desk duties
- Expand training to cover various types of information
- Reference assistants need training on search center duties
- LSA's need training for appropriate referral
- Staff should be trained to look accessible and welcome patrons

-Functionality:

- All staff and student workers should know each other
  - "Alienation" does not serve our patrons well
- Stop monitoring the gate—Welcome desk does that
- Seat the Information desk person at the center facing the gate
- IT staff should be available at all times
- Both reference desks need a second monitor
- Reference Librarians and Information desk staff/students don't know each other
- Staff does not work together, they still operate as separate desks

-Service:

- Have an "on-call" librarian in the building
- Shorten the shifts
- Allow staff to bring work to desk
- Computer monitors are a barrier between staff and patrons
  - "Monitors could be put under the counter and be made viewable through the top"
- Personal computer use is distracting
- A connection/virtual line between the desk and library terminals
- Physically accompany a patron to help them locate books & materials
- Seek user feedback on a consistent basis and revise process and services accordingly

-Teamwork:

- End "turf wars," focus on service
  - "There are librarians who look down on info desk people and others"
- Remove the distinction of who answers what question
  - "Patrons aren't going to care...they will be understanding if an info desk person says 'you know that's best answered by the ref librarian on duty, let me get him/her for you.'"
- Everyone should be able and willing to answer basic questions

-Signage:

- Need for clear book location signage through out the library
- Need for clear entrance signage outside the library

### **Question # 3:**

#### **What do you like about the new Welcome Desk? What do you not like about it?**

##### **► Initial reactions:**

- Not enough experience at the desk

##### **► Likes:**

###### -Design:

- Defines the entrance to the Honnold/Mud library
  - It has improved the “dark hole” at the entrance
- Visibility
- Height

###### -Public Service:

- Creates a friendly atmosphere
- Enjoy welcoming patrons
  - “It’s the best thing to come out of Redesign”
- Our Patrons appreciate it
- Good way for patrons to know more library staff members
- Easier to assist lost people (not necessarily patrons)

###### -Functionality:

- Provides security
- One can use the elevator instead of the stairs
- Great location for discussing immediate/ basic library questions with patrons

##### **► Dislikes:**

###### -Design:

- The card swipe is hard to find
- Too big
- Too tall
- Chair is too short
- The desk is too far out
  - “Would it work to angle the desk?”
- Can be made more attractive
- Short desk is ugly
  - Tall desk is “authoritative and detracts from the friendly atmosphere”
- People hide behind the lamp and computer/laptop
- Location and structure
- Sound/Noise at the desk carries up the stairs
- Very cold
- Dark

###### -Functionality:

- Boring
- Patrons just get on the elevator without using a card
- It does not offer enough services
- Does not address or solve the main problem of not knowing how to use the library

- “They (the students) think the library is lacking in user friendliness only because they don’t know how to use it...in spite of our good intentions and sincere efforts to be welcoming, student will still be negative...”

-Shifts:

- Interrupts the workday

-Purpose:

- Desk is designed to keep people out, not welcome them in
  - “Ridiculous forms, needing to keep track of who is in the building and who has forgotten a card, etc...”
- Monitoring access
- We restrict access
- Limitation of access is unwelcoming
- Purpose of desk is redundant

-Staff:

- Many staff members do not welcome patrons or make eye contact with them
- Overburdens staff member that have plenty other work to do
- Costs more money (wages) now and provides little benefits
- Welcome desk staff is isolated
  - “Safety concerns” and answering “routine questions”

► **Alternative suggestions:**

-Design:

- Take away the lamp
- Prohibit use of laptops
- Keep the desk clutter free

-Functionality:

- Moving the gate downstairs will reduce redundancy of the desk

-Shifts:

- Have 2 hour shifts

► **Points of disagreement:**

-Design:

- Polarized responses about height of desk, most either love or hate the high/short desk (one or the other)

#### **Question # 4:**

#### **Do you think all library staff should be required to work a shift at the Welcome Desk? Please explain why or why not.**

##### **► Initial reactions:**

- Not enough experience at the desk

##### **► Yes:**

###### **-Participation:**

- Have representatives from different departments serve at the desk
- More staff participation will solve staffing issues, especially during absence/vacation
- At least one hour per week
  - "...Reminds us why we're here and helps keep us in touch with our patrons"
- Librarians and circulation staff only
  - "...Will help the patrons recognize staff and feel comfortable asking for help"
- Everyone is capable of doing so
- Benefits staff members

###### **-Role/Job Duties:**

- Like welcoming people
- Desk duties should be included in new Librarians job description
- Nice to change duties for an hour

###### **-Public service:**

- Will establish a connection between staff and patrons

##### **► No:**

###### **-Participation:**

- Strongly encourage staff, don't require them (large emphasis on encouraging)
- Should not if they do not like that type of job
- Campus Librarians should not be required to
  - "It would give the message that users at Honnold are more important than users at the campus libraries"
- Those who dislike it will make patrons feel unwelcome
- Staff is already too busy
- Some feel uncomfortable

###### **-Role/Job Duties:**

- Dislike the day pass task
  - "It's one thing to sit there and say hi; it's quite another to be the door police"
- Some staff have other public service hours at other desks
  - "...No reason why they should be forced to take on additional hours of time taking away from other responsibilities"
- Only if specified on job description
- Some do not enjoy public service work
- Other duties, such as technical services, will suffer
- Staff not hired to perform public service duties

- "...Don't have the skills to direct/assist patrons properly"
- Some lack necessary skills
  - "Stressful both in the gate keeping function and in the wide range of knowledge required..."
- There are certain tasks only specific staff can do at the desk
- Takes staff away from duties only they can perform
  - For example "cataloging" and "digital projects"

-Public service:

- Staff already serve the public through assigned duties

► **Alternative suggestions:**

-Participation:

- Encourage, not require
  - "...People who won't/can't be effective in greeting the public"
- Only staff who enjoys welcoming students and gate keeping
- Only staff that has public service skills
- Create an incentive for working there
- Accommodate staff's workday to make participation easier

-Training:

- Provide complete and valuable training first
- Welcome desk volunteers can train staff
  - "A buddy system...might give hesitant staff the confidence to work at the Welcome desk"

-Role/Job Duties:

- If required, include standard back-up staffing plan for no-shows and or absence/sickness
- Clarify work process/procedures
- Should be included on future staff/librarian's job description
- Require those who have the knowledge and skills to work there instead of performing non-work related duties such as playing games in their offices

### **Question # 5:**

**What recommendations do you have for making the Welcome desk a better working place for staff as well as good service point for patrons? Please give specific examples.**

**► Positive comments about current way of offering services:**

-Computer:

- Helps assist with searches and information

**► Constructive comments:**

-Manual/Guidebook:

- Provide more detailed and clear instructions/procedures
  - “Things are scratched and re-entered”
- Organize by function alphabetically
  - “Access,” “Day Pass,” “Guest,” “Link+” etc...

-Location:

- Move it back upstairs
- Combine it with the Information Desk

-Design:

- Have an ergonomic/adjustable chair
- Have a more attractive and comfortable desk
- Modify desk for better leg room
- Have normal/regular sized desk
- Better/more lighting
  - Such as an “OTT-LITE” task lamp
- Area should be sound proof
  - “Normal level” conversations “can be heard up to at least the third floor”
- Install security cameras
  - “Immediately” because library is open until 1:00am during the year
- Eliminate the turnstiles
- Place gates at the entrance and not on top of stairs

-Roles/Job Duties:

- Should be an “opportunity” to work there not an “obligation”
- One hour shifts only
  - Short shifts will “keep the staff enthusiastic”
- Need to have allowed duties for staff when desk is not busy
- Unclear as to if staff can do their own work at desk

-Functionality:

- Not an important service point
- Simplify, combine and reduce amount of forms
  - “Too much of the information is duplicative...and I always have to rifle through the entire pile to find the one I am looking for”

-Training:

- Formal training for Welcome Desk duties
- Provide PR skills training
- Person at desk should know more information about the different campuses in order to answer questions appropriately

-Service:

- Provide appropriate staffing plans including backup for absence & tardiness
- Relax library admittance rules
  - Monitoring “can be done in a less intrusive manner”
  - “Staff members who forget their id card should be treated with more respect”
  - “If the person working at the welcome desk knows who you are, then they should be able to hand you a day pass without filling out the green card”
  - More strict entrance causes waiting lines; “We don’t want users to rename it the waiting desk”

-Staff behavior:

- Staff members should allow person at desk to do his/her job
  - For example: don’t engage in long, unnecessary conversations
- Staff members should pay attention and welcome incoming patrons

-Computer:

- Eliminate the computers/laptops
  - Some staff members “huddle behind the screen”
- Person at desk should be greeting, not working on a computer
- Have a specific welcome desk computer with necessary tools
- Is used for playing games

## **Question # 6:**

### **How do you feel about having an IT person on duty in the search center? During what hours is it most important to have an IT staff person on duty?**

#### **► Positive comments:**

##### -Service:

- It's great!
  - "It is very important that a frustrated student not have to wait for someone to come down from IT—if there is even anyone there"
- Staff and patrons appreciate the help and support

##### -Accessibility:

- Accessibility and visibility of IT is good
- Great to have Joel office near by

##### -Expertise:

- We need to have IT to help with technological problems
- Good because non-IT staff does not have the expertise to help with technology issues
- Non-IT staff can learn from them
- Good for those who are not technology savvy

#### **► Constructive comments:**

##### -Service:

- Rumors that IT will only be able to answer certain questions
  - That is "ridiculous"
- Clarify procedures for contact in IT
- Good, but all staff should be able to answer basic IT questions
  - "...There are always questions about laptops, connectivity, and problems with the equipment in the Search Center"
- Some times they don't respond to email
- Who do we call at IT if help is needed
- Have a designated IT contact person specifically for patron questions

##### -Unnecessary:

- No, IT staff should not be at the search center
  - "They should engage in training staff ...and develop better systems...if IT people have to be present at all times, systems are too complex"
- Most questions can be handled by regular staff
  - "...We keep hiring IT people...do they not have enough to do?"
- Presence of IT should not be used by staff as a way to refuse learning technology
- Unnecessary to have them there unless it is busy

#### **► Alternative suggestions:**

##### -Hours:

- Needs to be staffed during all open hours
- When search center is busy
- When search center is open

- Afternoons, evenings, and weekends
- Late afternoons, late evenings, and late weekends
  - “Many of our users want timely technology help—they don’t want to come back a day later during regular business hours”
  - “Early morning and late night users usually know what they are doing”
- Evenings
- 12:00 noon to 9:00 pm
- Outside the normal 9-5 business hours
  - “During regular business hours, we can easily check with IT upstairs”
- 4:00 pm to closing
- 2:00 pm –9:00 pm, seven days a week
- If unable to staff all open hours, staff “student hours” 10am to closing
- As many hours as possible

-Staffing:

- Needs to always be staffed, whether by a staff member or student
- Have IT staff during normal working hours and student staff at other hours
- Have IT on the spot
- Have IT on call, “within a three minute wait” during open hours

## **Question # 7:**

### **Do you have suggestions how the Information & Reference Desk can work more smoothly with other library units?**

#### **► Positive Comments:**

##### -Interaction:

- Conscious effort by staff to acknowledge presence of other staff members
- Student staff work with each other and staff great
- There are no problems between desks

#### **► Constructive Comments:**

##### -Interaction:

- This is mainly an issue with regular staff, not student staff
- Don't know/Can't remember all the rules of all the desks
- Lack of communication between the Information/Reference desk and Circulation

##### -Service:

- Not everyone at the desk gives accurate information

#### **► Suggestions:**

##### -Interaction:

- Increase communication
- Increase cooperation
- Everyone has specialized knowledge that other can learn from
- The "Shadows" program can address this question
- Communicate new information immediately to all desks
- Have more personalized methods of dispersing information
  - Emails are fine but "a personal touch" such as "an open house type of event" can energize staff

##### -Roles/Job Duties:

- Desk staff should have an "in depth" understanding of the library and our services
  - "For example, what BAS does, and how everything fits in with everything else"
- Reporting lines and activities of librarians should be clarified and examined
- Have one supervisor/coordinator for that desk
- More sharing of knowledge instead of just "refer/defer"
- Mandate a semester long commitment for staff at the desk
  - This should increase the "willing to learn how to help patrons"
- Post work schedules of all desk staff on the all-staff calendars
- Clarify who should be contacted for which questions
- Clear and deep understanding of interfaces
- Certain questions can be answered by anyone
  - Staff at different desks should answer a question as long as they can

##### -Training:

- Have a general training session soon about policy and procedures of various desks

- This “would help other Library Units understand what is expected and why they do so - of what they do at that desk”
- Training on the basics of serving at the desk
- Training modules would help
- Group training sessions
  - “Everyone is hearing the same information at the same time”

### **Question # 8:**

#### **Opening the lobby elevator to serve all floors has had a positive impact on the library in general, yet it is not perfect. Can you think of any negative impacts because of the opening of the lobby elevator?**

► Positive comments:

- It's great
- It's about time
- Having it closed was a "barrier" that has been removed
- Maximizes use of library space and resources
- Having multi-level access from the lobby is great

► Constructive comments:

-Staff:

- Can not see librarians, Reference, Information, or Circulation staff leave
- Places a "bell-ringer" burden on Welcome Desk staff

-Usability:

- Very slow
- Decrease the time for the doors to open
- Many patrons do not use ID card and enter the library
- Security issues
- Possibility of patrons skipping the check out procedure all together
  - "They can take materials from the library, get onto the elevator to go directly to the first floor"
- Is being used by many who don't require using it
  - Increases wait time times
- Confusion as to what patrons should do
  - Some patrons "swipe their card at the welcome Desk and then head up the stairs...I have also seen (college) staff head straight for the elevator without swiping an ID card
- Slow when used for transporting items such as carts, paint, etc...
- Potential negative effect on disabled patrons if it was to go out of order

-Signage:

- Unclear what button inside elevator leads to what floor/area
- Clear and more maps/directories of content of each floor
- Unclear which buttons to push

-Book locations:

- Needs Call number location guides