

Faculty Opinion of Subject Librarian Survey

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Introduction

A subject librarian (SL) is “a library employee who is assigned to work in a liaison role with individuals on campus in specific subjects.”¹ SLs are employed in academic libraries to connect the library to the university (Wilson et al., 2024).² Their subject assignment and related expertise allow them to work with patrons in specific disciplines to best meet their needs.

The BYU Library employs SLs as experts in materials related to specific subjects. These librarians have specialty training and assignments that allow them to better communicate with faculty and students in their assigned disciplines. Their relationship and interaction with faculty members are key to their position.

In previous studies, Wilson set out to understand the SL and faculty perspective on the SL position using a qualitative case study method. These case studies helped determine how the BYU SL and faculty members who worked frequently with SLs defined their roles and positions.

This study is a follow-up to two previous studies related to SLs.³ After completing the faculty study, the investigators wanted to know if the qualitative findings were representative of the opinions of a larger body of faculty members. This study was undertaken to answer this question.

Literature Review⁴

Multiple published articles describe assessments of faculty opinion of SLs. Faculty members typically saw SLs as service staff and couldn't differentiate between them and library support staff.⁵ They valued SLs for their service and support roles but often did not understand their duties.⁶ Studies were mixed on the importance of library instruction to faculty members, though more found that instruction was less important than other duties.⁷ Faculty members stated that they collaborated with SLs for a variety of reasons.⁸

Faculty members reported that service, research, data and information management, subject knowledge, and IT skills were important to SL success.⁹ However, some thought that a subject background was unimportant.¹⁰

Faculty members and SLs considered the SL position in very different ways. SLs saw working with faculty members as a critical part of their job, while Faculty members did not consider working with SLs in the same way.¹¹ Faculty members had positive opinions of SLs but low expectations of working with them.¹² A higher frequency of interaction between faculty and SLs tended to increase positive opinions and the frequency of referrals to SLs.¹³

Though Faculty members typically supported SL faculty status, there was no demonstrated improvement in the success of SLs in working with faculty members based on SL faculty status.¹⁴

Method

The authors reviewed survey questions from all studies in the literature review. These questions were categorized, and question types that best related to Wilson's prior studies¹⁵ and the research team's follow-up questions were selected for inclusion. The final survey questions were revised for clarity and survey cohesion and approved by the principal investigators. They were sent to a small sample of university faculty members to test for errors (see Appendix A for the survey).

To obtain survey respondents, we gathered a stratified sample by requesting each subject librarian to provide the names of faculty members. Not only did we stratify on faculty subject area, but we also stratified on the frequency of faculty contact with subject librarians. This allowed us to obtain a varied sample of faculty members that imitated the campus population even though the sample was not truly random.

Each of the twenty-four SLs was asked to provide the names and emails of thirty-five faculty members with whom they worked. They were asked to stratify their sample of faculty by frequency of SL faculty contact: frequent, moderate, and infrequent. Eighteen SLs responded, and faculty members who had participated in the faculty interviews or who had received the survey draft were removed from the final list of those who participated, leaving 609 faculty members (32% of all faculty at Brigham Young University in 2022) who were invited to complete the survey. The Qualtrics survey link was emailed on the morning of October 2, 2023, and two reminders were sent before the survey was closed on the morning of October 16. The data was analyzed using Excel, Tableau, and SPSS. To determine statistically significant differences between demographic characteristics, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run on the differences between values. Because of the large number of items tested, only differences with statistical significance are reported in the findings, with most included in the appendix.

Findings

Two hundred forty-four faculty members completed the survey with a response rate of 40%. Seventy percent of respondents were male, and 30% were female, which is similar to the survey sample percentages and the overall male:female faculty ratio on the BYU campus (see table 1). Most respondents were Professors or Associate Professors, as shown in table 2. As seen in table 3, respondents with infrequent contact with SLs were slightly less likely to respond than those with moderate or frequent contact.

Table 1

Gender of Faculty Respondents and Sample

Gender	Respondents		Sample		University ¹	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	74	30.3%	161	26.4%	668	35.2%
Male	170	69.7%	448	73.6%	1232	64.8%
Total	244	100%	609	100%	1900	100%

¹ Data from the 2021–2022 BYU IPEDS common data set (Brigham Young University, 2022).

Table 2
Rank of Faculty Respondents and Sample

Rank	Respondents		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Adjunct	16	6.6%	36	5.9%
Assistant	63	25.9%	137	22.5%
Associate	72	29.6%	198	32.6%
Professor	92	37.9%	237	39.0%
Total	243	100%	608	100%

Note: One individual responded to the survey but had an instructional support title, not a faculty rank. This individual is excluded from these percentages.

Table 3
Frequency of Subject Librarian Reported of Faculty/Subject Librarian Contact

Frequency	Respondents		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Frequent	57	23.4%	122	20.0%
Moderate	68	27.9%	146	24.0%
Infrequent	62	25.4%	213	35.0%
No Data	57	23.4%	128	21.0%
Total	244	100%	609	100%

The largest percentage of responses and sampled faculty came from faculty members who were assigned to SLs in the Science and Engineering Department, and they also responded at a slightly higher rate (see table 4). In the case where more than one SL submitted a faculty member's name, the department of the SL with the primary assignment was included in the count. Respondent colleges are shown in table 5.

Table 4
Department of Primary Subject Librarian by Respondents and Sample

Department	Respondents		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Humanities	49	20.1%	146	24.0%
Science & Engineering	106	43.4%	244	40.1%
Social Sciences	89	36.5%	219	36.0%
Total	244	100%	609	100%

Table 5
College of Faculty Respondents and Sample

College	Respondents		Sample	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Business	26	10.7%	64	10.5%
Education	15	6.1%	35	5.7%
Engineering	25	10.2%	55	9.0%
Family, Home, and Social Sciences	30	12.3%	82	13.5%
Fine Arts and Communications	19	7.8%	62	10.2%
Humanities	35	14.3%	81	13.3%
Life Sciences	29	11.9%	75	12.3%
Nursing	21	8.6%	49	8.0%
Physical and Mathematical Sciences	26	10.7%	65	10.7%
Religious Education	18	7.4%	41	6.7%
Total	244	100%	609	100%

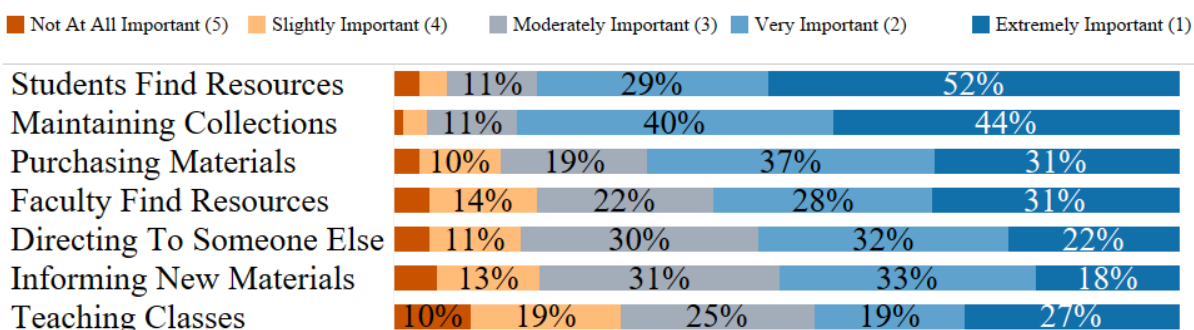
Of the 244 respondents, seven (3%) did not know they had an SL assigned to them. All seven were assigned to different librarians, and there was no trend between them and the demographics of SL Department, Rank, Department, or College. These seven were excluded from additional survey questions. Of the remaining 237 respondents, twenty-one (9%) did not know the name of their assigned SL, and seven skipped the question about the SL's name, leaving 88% of respondents who reported knowing the name of their SL.

Faculty members were asked to rate the importance of the following library duties:

- Purchasing library materials
- Informing me of new library materials in my discipline
- Maintaining library collections in my discipline
- Helping me find resources
- Helping my students find resources
- Teaching classes to my students about library resources
- Directing me to someone in the library who can help me with my need

Figure 1 shows the ratings of each of these items. To better understand the rankings of these duties, we assigned a numerical value to each ranking, with the number 1 assigned to Extremely Important and the number 5 to Not At All Important, and the other rankings assigned the numbers in between. Respondents ranked helping students find resources and maintaining library collections as most important, with informing about new library materials and teaching classes as least important (see table 6). Respondents were able to enter in "other" duties to rank. Nine respondents did so; however, they entered duties that were unique to them, and there were no commonalities or trends in these "other" duties.

Figure 1
Importance of Subject Librarian Duties to Faculty



Note: See Appendix B, Table 14, for full numeric data.

Table 6
Average Importance of Subject Librarian Duties to Faculty

Duty	Average	Std. Deviation
Students Find Resources	1.76	1.01
Maintaining Collections	1.77	0.86
Purchasing Materials	2.18	1.09
Faculty Find Resources	2.32	1.18
Directing to Someone Else	2.46	1.09
Informing New Materials	2.55	1.10
Teaching Classes	2.65	1.32

We examined differences in duty importance by the department of the primary SL to which the faculty member was assigned. The statistically significant differences are shown in table 7. Faculty in the Humanities, on average, were more interested than their colleagues in informing about new materials, purchasing materials, and maintaining collections. Even though these differences are statistically significant, the greatest difference between rating levels is .7 (less than one rating level).

Table 7
Primary SL Department: Statistically Significant Difference Importance Ratings

Duty	Humanities Average	Science & Engineering Average	Social Sciences Average	Statistical Significance
Informing New Materials	2.02	2.66	2.72	0.001
Purchasing Materials	1.75	2.44	2.12	0.001
Maintaining Collections	1.51	1.89	1.77	0.041

We examined the data by faculty college and included the statistically significant results in table 8. Faculty in Humanities; Family, Home, and Social Sciences (FHSS); and Religious Education thought that purchasing was more important than their colleagues in other colleges.

Faculty in Fine Arts and Communications (FAC) and Humanities thought that informing was more important than their colleagues. Faculty in Education and Nursing thought that finding resources for faculty was more important than their colleagues. Faculty in Religious Education, Humanities, FAC, and FHSS thought collections were more important than their colleagues. Though many of these differences are small, some were larger than one full rating level, which means that college had a bigger impact on the difference between ratings than other demographics.

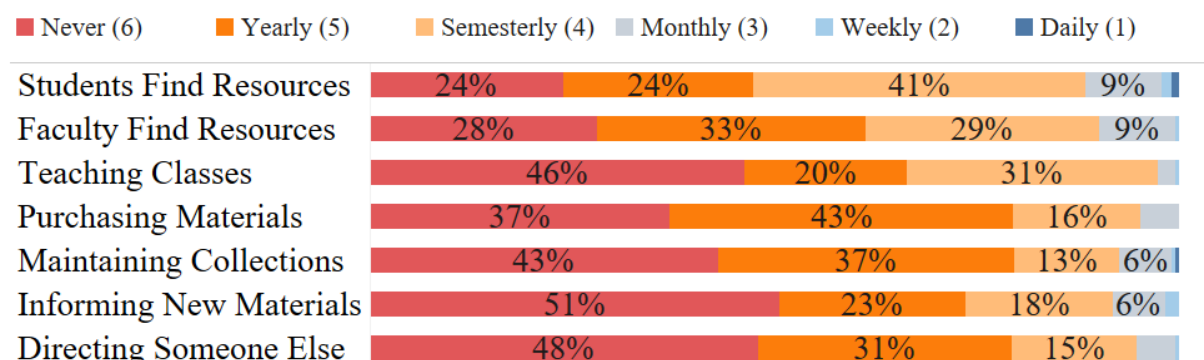
Table 8

Faculty College: Statistically Significant Differences Important Ratings

College	Average Duty Rating			
	Purchasing	Informing	Finding Resources	Collections
Business	2.75	2.88	2.24	2.08
Education	2.07	2.27	1.47	1.80
Engineering	2.40	2.92	2.36	1.92
Family, Home, and Social Sciences	1.89	2.41	2.56	1.61
Fine Arts and Communications	2.11	1.94	2.17	1.59
Humanities	1.56	2.15	2.35	1.47
Life Sciences	2.39	2.54	2.29	1.82
Nursing	2.10	2.43	1.90	1.86
Physical and Mathematical Sciences	2.76	3.00	2.68	2.12
Religious Education	1.89	2.94	2.89	1.44
Statistical Significance	0.000	0.004	0.028	0.046

Note: Other statistically significant differences by groups are found in Appendix C.

Faculty members were asked how frequently they contacted SLs about the same duties listed in the previous question (see fig. 2). Each response was assigned a number with Daily assigned number 1, Never assigned number 6, and other frequencies assigned respectively. As seen in table 9, faculty said they contacted SLs most frequently about students finding resources or finding resources themselves. On average, faculty members reported contacting the SLs less than once a semester for all duties. Faculty members could enter “other” duties, and the six respondents who did so entered duties specific to individual faculty members and their SL. Many faculty members never contacted their SL for any of these duties.

Figure 2*Frequency of Contacting Subject Librarian for Various Duties*

Note: See Appendix B, Table 15, for full numeric data.

Table 9*Average Frequency of Contacting Subject Librarians for Specific Duties*

Duty	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students Find Resources	4.57	1.05
Faculty Find Resources	4.79	0.97
Teaching Classes	5.10	0.94
Purchasing Materials	5.12	0.84
Maintaining Collections	5.14	0.95
Informing New Materials	5.14	1.04
Directing to Someone Else	5.22	0.90

We ran a Pearson correlation to determine if there was any correlation between the reported importance and frequency of contact (see table 10). Though the responses were all correlated to some degree, most correlations were low. Teaching classes had the highest, with the rest having a moderate correlation, except maintaining collections, which had a very low correlation. These correlations mean that rating a duty as more important did not necessarily result in increased SL contact.

Table 10*Correlation Between Subject Librarian Duty Importance and Frequency of Contact*

Duty	Correlation
Teaching Classes	0.69
Faculty Find Resources	0.55
Students Find Resources	0.49
Purchasing Materials	0.45
Informing New Materials	0.44
Directing to Someone Else	0.42
Maintaining Collections	0.25

Faculty members assigned to an SL from the Humanities department reported contacting their SL more frequently for purchasing than those in other groups. Those assigned an SL from the Science & Engineering department reported contacting their SL more frequently about informing about new materials (see table 11). The difference between these groups was less than .6 of a rating level.

Table 11*Primary SL Department: Statistically Significant Differences Contact Frequency Ratings*

Dut	Humanities Average	Science & Engineering Average	Social Sciences Average	Statistical Significance
Informing New Materials	5.02	4.94	5.45	0.002
Purchasing Materials	4.83	5.25	5.12	0.015

There were multiple differences in ratings based on faculty college (see table 12). Faculty in the College of Nursing were more likely to contact SLs more frequently to help students find resources, teach classes, and find resources for themselves. Faculty members in FAC, Nursing, and Humanities reported contacting SLs most frequently for purchasing. Some of these differences are much larger than one rating level, making these differences by college practically important.

Table 12*Faculty College: Statistically Significant Differences Contact Frequency Ratings*

College	Average Duty Rating			
	Students Find Resources	Teaching Classes	Faculty Finding Resources	Purchasing Materials
Business	4.68	5.21	4.60	5.42
Education	4.53	5.13	4.40	5.07
Engineering	4.72	5.48	4.88	5.08
Fine Arts and Communications	4.13	4.71	4.56	4.76
Family, Home, and Social Sciences	4.25	4.96	5.00	5.04
Humanities	4.79	5.21	4.82	4.91
Life Sciences	4.44	4.96	4.82	5.25
Nursing	3.76	4.33	4.10	4.81
Physical and Mathematical Sciences	5.08	5.36	5.12	5.64
Religious Education	5.11	5.50	5.44	5.11
Statistical Significance	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.008

Note: Other statistically significant differences by groups are found in Appendix C.

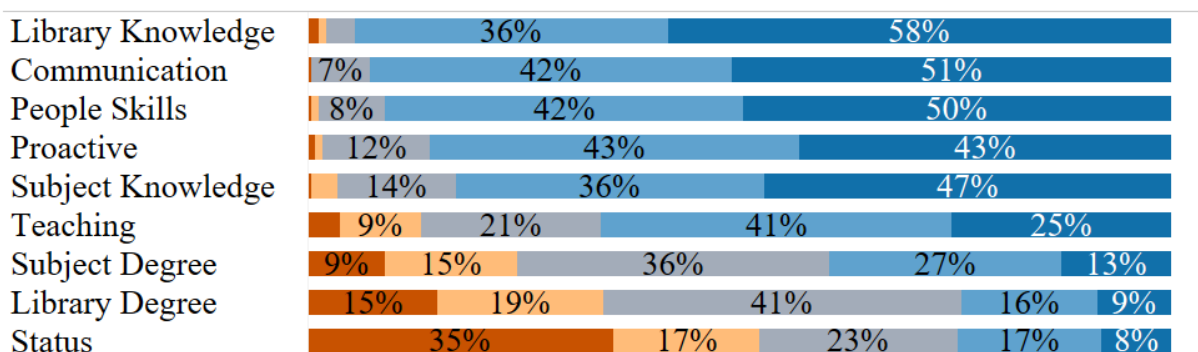
Faculty members were asked how important certain SL characteristics were in working with faculty and students. These characteristics were as follows:

- Subject knowledge
- Subject degree
- Library knowledge
- Library degree
- University status (faculty, admin, staff)
- Communication skills
- People skills
- Teaching skills
- Proactive

Figure 3 shows the faculty rankings of these items. The responses were coded into numbers like the previous questions. As illustrated in table 13, library knowledge and communication were most important to faculty members. University status was the least important, followed by library degree and subject degree.

Figure 3*Importance of Subject Librarian Characteristics to Faculty Members*

■ Not At All Important (5)
 ■ Slightly Important (4)
 ■ Moderately Important (3)
 ■ Very Important (2)
 ■ Extremely Important (1)



Note: See Appendix B, Table 16, for full numeric data.

Table 13*Average Importance of Subject Librarian Characteristics to Faculty*

Characteristic	Mean	Std. Deviation
Library Knowledge	1.51	0.72
Communication	1.57	0.66
People Skills	1.61	0.70
Proactive	1.74	0.77
Subject Knowledge	1.74	0.84
Teaching	2.25	1.06
Subject Degree	2.81	1.12
Library Degree	3.16	1.13
Status	3.55	1.33

Eighty-eight percent of faculty members reported that email was their preferred method of contact, with 9% preferring in-person contact and 2% preferring phone. Four “other” respondents said that they used different contact methods depending on the type of need they had. There were no statistically significant differences in communication preference by any demographic factor. Seventy-six percent of faculty members were extremely satisfied with their SL. The average satisfaction rating was 1.36.

Faculty were asked what SLs could do to improve, and the 109 responses were coded into themes. Fifty-one respondents (47%) complimented their SL, sharing things like “He is great already!” and “[She] is amazing! We love her and are so grateful for her” and “Our subject librarian is a rock star.”

Thirty-three (30%) had no recommendations. The most common suggestion was more SL communication with university faculty (14 respondents, 1%). Comments about this included, “I would love a quick check-in at the beginning of the semester” and “Perhaps touch base with faculty a little more frequently.” Some requested that they receive more information about new materials or issues related to the library (8 respondents).

Other suggestions included better maintaining the collection, communicating more, not overstepping bounds, helping with database searching, better interacting with students, and more teaching collaboration. One individual said the SL “could pay more attention to maintaining the collections. [SL] seems to care very little about the books and other resources in the library. [SL] might inform himself on the whole range of the topics [SL] covers.” Regarding the topic of overstepping boundaries, faculty members said, “Sometimes our subject librarian has overstepped [SL] bounds when working with students, giving [SL] opinion on topics that are not [SL] specialty and contradicting the advice of the committee chairs of our MA students. [SL] could improve by just providing the instruction on skills needed to do searches rather than [SL] opinion on topics [SL] feels are worthwhile to pursue or not.”

Some faculty members stated they don’t use their SL because they don’t need to. Two faculty members mentioned that they stopped using their SL because of the SL’s lack of interest in the collection or because the SL overstepped their boundaries. A couple of faculty members said that the SLs are underutilized, and a few faculty members provided suggestions specific to their SL.

When asked if they had any additional comments, 85 faculty members responded. They frequently complimented their SL (33%), providing positive feedback (35%) and expressing appreciation (14%). One faculty member wrote, “[SL] is a wonderful colleague and contributor in the [SL Assigned Area]. [SL] is brilliant and effective in [SL] role and fulfills that role with kindness and diligence. [SL] is so responsive to requests from faculty, as well as changes in [Discipline], library science, and our students’ needs. I love that [SL] also anticipates our needs and proactively addresses them.”

Several faculty members discussed how SLs need to do a better job of increasing their exposure and promoting themselves. One faculty member said, “If only we could help more people on campus know of the tremendous resources (especially human capital) we have at the library.” Another said it “would be helpful to have them be more proactive and remind us of possibilities so they stay on our radar.” Some faculty members shared specific SL traits they appreciated, such as passion, friendliness, helpfulness, communication, and people skills.

Limitations

This study originally proposed using a random sample of faculty members on campus. This proposal was not accepted by the university. Though the survey was sent to a stratified sample and seemed representative of the faculty population, a random sample would be more useful to generalize the findings to the faculty as a whole.

Discussion and Implications

A full 97% of respondents knew that they had an assigned SL, and 88% of these knew the name of their SL. This means that most of the faculty members who participated knew their individual SL. It means that the message of what an SL is and what they do has largely reached faculty members.

There was good representation from all sampled groups by gender, rank, frequency of contact, SL department, and faculty college. Even though this study cannot be used to make direct inferences about the opinion of the faculty population, given the demographic

representation, these responses likely represent the opinion of a large percentage of faculty members on campus.

Helping students find resources and maintaining collections were the duties that faculty members reported as being most important. This collaborates with Wilson et al.'s findings that the duties of managing collections and helping others with library resources were most important.¹⁶ The fact that helping with resources and maintaining collections illustrates that most faculty see SLs in more traditional roles. These service roles are what SLs have been known for and are what faculty members expect.

Though most faculty members thought teaching classes and informing about new library materials were important in some way, they were the lowest rated of the included duties. This corresponds directly to the finding by Wilson that instruction was important but only in certain limited contexts.¹⁷ This finding is also similar to others in the literature who found that instruction was considered less important to faculty members.¹⁸ This lower importance of teaching is likely because only a small percentage of faculty members have SLs help them teach classes. Those faculty members who regularly use SLs for teaching would likely rate teaching as much more important. Faculty members are likely to want to purchase items or send their students to get help from an SL.

Faculty assigned to an SL in the Humanities department were likelier than those assigned to other departments to rate collection development, purchasing, and informing about library collections as important, though these differences were small. Faculty members in the colleges of Humanities, FHSS, and Religious Education thought that purchasing and collection development were more important than their colleagues. These findings are not surprising given the heavier print focus of these disciplines. Faculty from these areas would naturally want more help from SLs in print and collection-related functions. Since different subject areas have different preferences related to SL duties, SLs should change their focus based on their faculty members' discipline and individual needs.

Overall, faculty members reported contacting SLs for all duties less than once a semester, and many never contacted their SL about any of the listed duties. They contacted them most frequently about helping themselves or students find resources. This infrequent contact shows that most faculty members do not often use SLs. Though the faculty members are grateful for and aware of their service, it is not a service that they need frequently.

Interestingly, there were no strong correlations between the reported importance of duties and how frequently faculty members contacted SLs about those duties. The highest correlation was for teaching classes, which was the item rated lowest in importance for faculty members. This means that faculty members did not contact SLs more frequently about duties they had rated as more important.

Faculty members thought that library knowledge was the most important skill SLs needed, followed by communication and people skills. Wilson found that subject and library knowledge were important to faculty, but library knowledge was rated as most important in this study.¹⁹ These findings show that faculty members primarily value the library knowledge that they don't possess themselves, and other traits are less important to them. This library knowledge is likely the primary reason that faculty members value SLs and why they seek them out.

Faculty rated formal requirements such as subject or library degree and university status as much lower in importance than other qualifications. This is similar to the finding by Wilson that faculty members valued competence much more than a degree and did not care about university rank and status.²⁰ It also supports Weng & Murray's conclusion that faculty status does not improve an SL's ability to work with faculty members.²¹ Though there may be other reasons for an SL to have degrees or faculty status, such as increased skills and job security, the actual formal act of having a degree and a specific status does not affect an SL's relationship with most faculty.

People skills were rated as important, showing the importance of an SL's ability to work with others. However, it was not the most important skill as it was in Wilson's study.²² Faculty members overwhelmingly preferred email as their main contact method. Other contact types might be used if they were more appropriate for the situation. This was the same as Wilson's findings.²³ SLs should focus their communication efforts with faculty on emails.

Like Wilson, who found that faculty members appreciated and were grateful for SLs,²⁴ this study found that overall, faculty members were very satisfied with their SLs. When asked what SLs could do to improve, few suggestions were given. Some faculty members wanted increased collaboration, and some wanted to be more informed about library materials or library issues. This suggestion about being more informed is curious, given the survey finding that being informed was less important than other library duties. This likely means that some individual faculty members value learning about new library materials even though many do not. SLs could work to understand individual faculty members' preferences about new materials and seek to fulfill them. Some faculty members thought SLs needed to better promote themselves and their services.

These findings are particularly helpful for SLs seeking to shape how they interact with faculty members. Focusing on faculty needs and terminology would help an SL be more successful. This focus could also be very useful for hiring committees that want to focus on people skills and librarian skills as they seek SLs to fill their positions. Other institutions could also administer this survey to their own faculty members so that they can better understand the faculty perspective at their institution.

Conclusion

The faculty members who participated in this survey were aware of their SLs and happy with what they did. They thought that helping students find resources and maintaining collections were the most important SL duties, though they consider most SL duties as important. Though they appreciated SLs and the duties they performed, they did not contact them frequently. There were differences in duties rankings based on gender, SL department, and faculty college, though only the differences by college were practically and statistically significant.

Faculty members thought the most important SL skills were library knowledge, communication, and people skills. SL degrees and university status were much less important to faculty members than an SL's other characteristics. Faculty members overwhelmingly preferred email as their main contact method, though other methods were used depending on the context.

- ¹ Duane E. Wilson, “Constant Change or Constantly the Same? A Historical Literature Review of the Subject Librarian Position,” *College & Research Libraries* (November 2024), manuscript in preparation.
- ² Duane E. Wilson et al. “Subject Librarian Definition and Duties: Connecting the Library and the University,” *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 50, no. 3 (May 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2024.102867>.
- ³ Duane E. Wilson, “Understanding the Experiences and Perceptions of Subject Librarians and Faculty at Brigham Young University” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 2023), BYU ScholarsArchive (<http://hdl.lib.byu.edu/1877/etd13065>).
- ⁴ This review is summarized from *Faculty Opinion of Subject Librarians* (Wilson, 2023).
- ⁵ Gaby Divay et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians at the University of Manitoba,” *College & Research Libraries* 48, no. 1 (1987): 27–35; Harriet Uche Igbo and Nwabuisi Thomas Imo, “Collaborative Teaching as a Strategy for Imparting Information Literacy in Students: Faculty-Librarian Perceptions,” *Library Philosophy and Practice* (2017): 1–17; Robert T. Ivey, “Teaching Faculty Perceptions of Academic Librarians at Memphis State University,” *College and Research Libraries* 55, no. 1 (1994): 69; Larry R. Oberg et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians at Albion College: Status, Role, Contribution, and Contacts,” *College and Research Libraries* 50, no. 2 (1989): 215–30.
- ⁶ Lars Christiansen et al., “A Report on Librarian-Faculty Relations from a Sociological Perspective,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 30, no. 2 (March 2004): 116–21; Kathy M. Cook, “Rank, Status, and Contribution of Academic Librarians as Perceived by the Teaching Faculty at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale,” *College & Research Libraries* 42, no. 3 (1981): 214–23; Divay et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians,” 27–35; Oberg et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians,” 215–30.
- ⁷ John Budd and Patricia Coutant, “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians: A Survey,” *ERIC Document Reproduction Service* (1981); Cook, “Rank, Status, and Contribution,” 214–23; Divay et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians,” 27–35; Jody Condit Fagan et al., “Librarian, Faculty, and Student Perceptions of Academic Librarians: Study Introduction and Literature Review,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 27, no. 1 (January 2020): 38–75; Jody Condit Fagan et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Academic Librarians: Experts, Connectors, and Resource Stewards,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 28, no. 1 (October 2020): 79–116; Ivey, “Teaching Faculty Perceptions,” 69; Gloria J. Leckie and Anne Fullerton, “Information Literacy in Science and Engineering Undergraduate Education: Faculty Attitudes and Pedagogical Practices,” *College and Research Libraries* 60, no. 1 (1999): 9–29; Oberg et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians,” 215–30.
- ⁸ Christianse et al., “A Report on Librarian Faculty Relations,” 116–21; Louise Cooke et al., “Evaluating the Impact of Academic Liaison Librarians on Their User Community: A Review and Case Study,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 17, no. 1 (2011): 5–30; José O. Díaz and Meris A. Mandernach, “Relationship Building One Step at a Time: Case Studies of Successful Faculty-Librarian Partnerships,” *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 17, no. 2 (April 2017): 273–82; Fagan et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Academic Librarians,” 79–116; Igbo and Imo, “Collaborative Teaching as a Strategy,” 1–17.
- ⁹ Cooke et al., “Evaluating the Impact,” 5–30; Divay et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Librarians,” 27–35; Fagan et al., “Faculty Perceptions of Academic Librarians,” 79–116; Ivey, “Teaching Faculty Perceptions,” 69.
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Appendix A: Survey

Q1

The Library Assessment Department is conducting a research assessment to better understand BYU Faculty opinion of subject librarians. Because you are a faculty member at Brigham Young University, you are invited to provide feedback through a short 5-minute survey.

Participation in this assessment is voluntary. You may stop the survey at any time or skip any questions that you would like, but we would appreciate hearing from you. There is no direct benefit to you, but your responses may help improve other faculty members' experiences with subject librarians.

This study is being conducted by Duane Wilson, User Experience Specialist at the BYU Library on behalf of Mike Hunter, Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning.

If you have any questions regarding this assessment please contact Duane (duane_wilson@byu.edu, 801-422-9144). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the Associate Director, Human Research Protection Program at ; (801) 422-1461.

I will participate in this survey.

- Yes
- No

Skip To: End of Survey If The Library Assessment Department is conducting a research assessment to better understand BYU Fa... = No

Q2 Did you know that the library assigns a subject librarian to help faculty members in your department?

- Yes
- No

Skip To: End of Survey If Did you know that the library assigns a subject librarian to help faculty members in your departm... = No

Q3 Do you know the name of your assigned subject librarian?

- Yes
- No

Q4 How important are the following subject librarian duties to you?

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Purchasing library materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informing me of new library materials in my discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining library collections in my discipline	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping me find resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping my students find resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching classes to my students about library resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Directing me to someone in the library who can help me with my need	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 How important to you are the following subject librarian characteristics in working with faculty and students?

	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Subject knowledge	•	•	•	•	•
Degree in related subject	•	•	•	•	•
Library knowledge	•	•	•	•	•
Library degree	•	•	•	•	•
University status (faculty, admin, staff)	•	•	•	•	•
Communication skills	•	•	•	•	•
People skills	•	•	•	•	•
Teaching skills	•	•	•	•	•
Proactive	•	•	•	•	•

Q7 How satisfied are you with your subject librarian?

- Extremely satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q8 How do you prefer to communicate with your subject librarian?

- Email
- Phone
- In-person meeting
- Other

Q9 What could your subject librarian do to improve?

Q10 What else would you like to share about subject librarians?

Appendix B: Additional Data

Table 14
Importance of Subject Librarian Duties to Faculty: Numeric

Duty		Importance				
		Not At All (5)	Slightly (4)	Moderately (3)	Very (2)	Extremely (1)
Students Find Resources	Respondents	8	8	27	69	123
	Percent	3%	3%	11%	29%	52%
Maintaining Collections	Respondents	3	7	27	95	104
	Percent	1%	3%	11%	40%	44%
Purchasing Materials	Respondents	8	24	44	86	73
	Percent	3%	10%	19%	37%	31%
Faculty Find Resources	Respondents	11	32	53	66	74
	Percent	5%	14%	22%	28%	31%
Directing To Someone Else	Respondents	11	27	71	75	51
	Percent	5%	11%	30%	32%	22%
Informing New Materials	Respondents	13	31	72	77	43
	Percent	6%	13%	31%	33%	18%
Teaching Classes	Respondents	23	45	58	45	64
	Percent	10%	19%	25%	19%	27%

Table 15
Frequency of Contacting Subject Librarian for Various Duties: Numeric

Duty		Frequency					
		Never (6)	Yearly (5)	Semesterly (4)	Monthly (3)	Weekly (2)	Daily (1)
Students Find Resources	Respondents	56	55	96	22	3	2
	Percent	24%	24%	41%	9%	1%	1%
Faculty Find Resources	Respondents	66	78	68	22	1	0
	Percent	28%	33%	29%	9%	0%	0%
Teaching Classes	Respondents	109	47	73	5	1	0
	Percent	46%	20%	31%	2%	0%	0%
Purchasing Materials	Respondents	87	100	37	11	0	0
	Percent	37%	43%	16%	5%	0%	0%
Maintaining Collections	Respondents	100	85	30	15	1	1
	Percent	43%	37%	13%	6%	0%	0%
Informing New Materials	Respondents	119	54	43	15	0	0
	Percent	51%	23%	18%	6%	0%	0%
Directing Someone Else	Respondents	112	73	36	11	1	0
	Percent	48%	31%	15%	5%	0%	0%

Table 16*Importance of Subject Librarian Characteristics to Faculty Members: Numeric*

Characteristics		Importance				
		Not At All (5)	Slightly (4)	Moderately (3)	Very (2)	Extremely (1)
Library Knowledge	Respondents	3	2	8	86	138
	Percent	1%	1%	3%	36%	58%
Communication	Respondents	0	1	16	99	120
	Percent	0%	0%	7%	42%	51%
People Skills	Respondents	1	2	18	98	117
	Percent	0%	1%	8%	42%	50%
Proactive	Respondents	2	2	29	100	101
	Percent	1%	1%	12%	43%	43%
Subject Knowledge	Respondents	1	7	32	83	110
	Percent	0%	3%	14%	36%	47%
Teaching	Respondents	9	22	49	96	60
	Percent	4%	9%	21%	41%	25%
Subject Degree	Respondents	21	36	85	63	30
	Percent	9%	15%	36%	27%	13%
Library Degree	Respondents	35	45	97	37	20
	Percent	15%	19%	41%	16%	9%
Status	Respondents	83	40	54	39	19
	Percent	35%	17%	23%	17%	8%

Appendix C: Data by Demographic

There were multiple differences in importance rankings based on gender, and those with statistical significance are reported in table 17. Females rated Helping Faculty Find Resources, Students Find Resources, Teaching Classes, and Directing to Someone Else as more important than their male counterparts. Males were more likely to rate Purchasing Materials as being more important than females. Though these differences were statistically significant, they were all less than .7 of a level on the rating scale on average, which means that the average differences were not large even though they were statistically significant.

Table 17

Faculty Gender: Statistically Significant Importance Rating Differences

Duty	Female Average	Male Average	Statistical Significance
Purchasing Materials	2.40	2.09	0.042
Faculty Find Resources	1.89	2.51	0.000
Students Find Resources	1.42	1.91	0.000
Teaching Classes	2.16	2.87	0.000
Directing to Someone Else	2.11	2.61	0.001

Adjuncts were more likely to rate teaching as important than faculty in other ranks (table 18). No other duty rating difference was statistically significant by faculty status.

Table 18

Faculty Rank: Statistically Significant Difference Importance Ratings

Duty	Adjunct Average	Assistant Average	Associate Average	Professor Average	Statistical Significance
Teaching Classes	1.53	2.59	2.86	2.72	0.011

Females reported a statistically significant difference in contacting SLs more frequently than males to help students find resources and for teaching (table 19). These differences were less than .7 of a rating level. Adjuncts reported a statistically significant difference in contacting SLs more frequently for teaching than the other groups, and these differences were larger than one full rating level (table 20).

Table 19

Faculty Gender: Statistically Significant Differences Contact Frequency Ratings

Duty	Female Average	Male Average	Statistical Significance
Student Find Resources	4.23	4.72	0.001
Teaching Classes	4.63	5.30	0.000

Table 20*Faculty Rank: Statistically Significant Differences Contact Frequency Ratings*

Duty	Adjunct Average	Assistant Average	Associate Average	Professor Average	Statistical Significance
Teaching Classes	4.20	4.97	5.14	5.29	.000

Females reported certain characteristics as more important than males (table 21). Though they were statistically significant, most of these differences were low, and all were less than .6 or less than a full rating level. There were no significant differences in characteristics ratings by faculty rank. Faculty members assigned to an SL from the Humanities department ranked a subject degree, subject knowledge, and a library degree as more important than their colleagues (table 22). Again, most of these differences were small, even though they were significant.

Table 21*Faculty Gender: Statistically Significant Characteristic Differences*

Characteristic	Female Average	Male Average	Statistical Significance
Subject Knowledge	1.55	1.82	0.022
Library Knowledge	1.36	1.57	0.033
Library Degree	2.81	3.32	0.001
Communication	1.38	1.66	0.002
People Skills	1.40	1.70	0.003
Teaching	1.81	2.45	0.000

Table 22*Primary SL Department: Statistically Significant Characteristic Differences*

Question	Humanities Average	Science & Engineering Average	Social Sciences Average	Statistical Significance
Subject Degree	2.32	2.96	2.90	0.003
Subject Knowledge	1.46	1.91	1.69	0.007
Library Degree	2.79	3.33	3.16	0.022

Having a library degree was more important to those in the Colleges of Nursing, FAC, and Religious Education than their colleagues. Faculty in Humanities, Religious Education, and Life Sciences thought that a subject degree was more important than their colleagues. Subject knowledge was more important to faculty in Nursing, FHSS, Humanities, and Religious Education. Communication was more important to faculty in Education and Nursing (table 23). Some of these differences were a full rating level, meaning that college did make a big difference in how faculty rated these items.

Table 23*Faculty College: Statistically Significant Characteristic Differences*

College	Average Characteristic Rating			
	Library Degree	Subject Degree	Subject Knowledge	Communication
Business	3.29	3.46	1.83	1.52
Education	3.14	2.67	1.71	1.07
Engineering	3.72	3.08	2.28	1.64
Fine Arts and Communications	2.65	2.88	1.61	1.59
Family, Home, and Social Sciences	3.18	2.61	1.50	1.82
Humanities	3.03	2.29	1.50	1.53
Life Sciences	3.32	2.50	1.75	1.50
Nursing	2.48	3.24	1.48	1.43
Physical and Mathematical Sciences	3.72	3.12	2.17	1.72
Religious Education	2.72	2.44	1.53	1.72
Statistical Significance	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.046

There were no statistically significant differences between satisfaction ratings for gender, rank, or faculty college. The rating difference between SL Department (table 24) and Frequency of Contact (table 25) was statistically significant; however, these differences were less than half of a ranking level and were not practically significant.

Table 24*Primary SL Department: Statistically Significant Satisfaction Differences*

Question	Humanities Average	Science & Engineering Average	Social Sciences Average	Statistical Significance
Satisfaction	1.25	1.27	1.53	0.028

Table 25*Contact Frequency: Statistically Significant Satisfaction Differences*

Question	Frequent Average	Moderate Average	Infrequent Average	Statistical Significance
Satisfaction	1.03509	1.37879	1.44068	0.000