

# BEYOND USAGE DATA

## Evaluating Faculty Perceptions & Behavior to Improve Collection Development Practices

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### INTRODUCTION

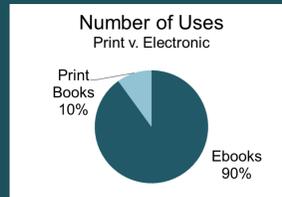
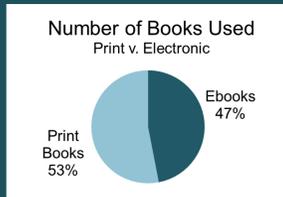
#### Muhlenberg College

- 4-year selective liberal arts college
- 2,490 student FTE
- 38 majors, 32 minors, & preK-12 certifications

### collection data

#### What does book use look like at Muhlenberg?

- Overall, books account for 59% of titles used and 47% of uses when looking at books, journals, & audiovisual resources.
- Print books remain important, although ebooks are used much more frequently than print.



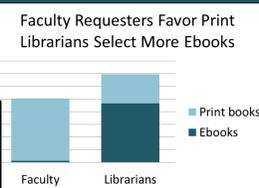
#### How do faculty participate in book selection at Muhlenberg?

As book selectors, faculty contribute:

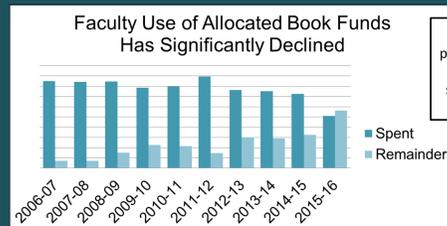
- Deep subject expertise
- Understanding of students as course participants & learners
- Course goals, objectives, & outcomes

Library book budget

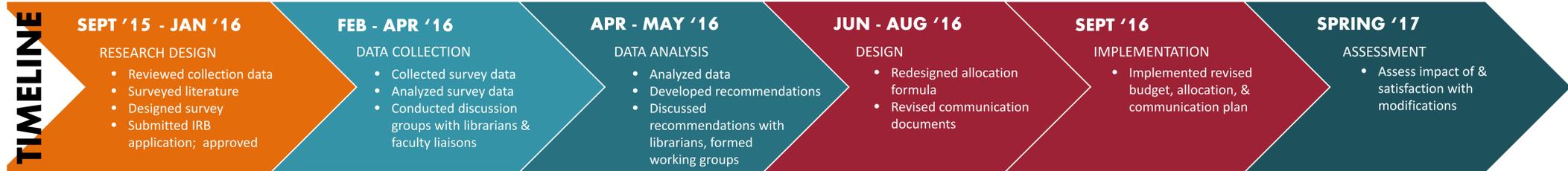
- 66% allocated to departments for faculty requests
- 34% reserved for librarians, who also spend faculty remainder



faculty choice of format does not align with ebook use trends



number of faculty participating in selection has remained stable; spending varies widely across departments



### METHODS

#### survey

Purpose –

Understand faculty perspective:

- Continued interest in selecting
- Perceptions on continuing need for books
- Book format preferences
- Understanding of purchasing options
- Satisfaction with purchasing procedures

Demographics –

90 faculty participated, representing 29.8% of total faculty; well-represented across faculty status & years at Muhlenberg.

#### discussion groups

Background –

Each academic department & interdisciplinary program is represented by a faculty member who serves as library liaison. Their primary responsibility is to manage the department's allocation fund & to serve as the department's or program's internal coordinator regarding the selection of items to be purchased. They attend 1-2 library liaison meetings per academic year.

Purpose –

Discuss survey findings to further interpret data from faculty perspective; identify faculty liaisons' priorities for modifications to:

- Budget allocations
- Requesting procedures
- Communication practices
- Satisfaction with available resources

Demographics –

21 faculty participated, representing 64% of liaisons.

### FINDINGS

#### survey data

#### faculty participation in collection development

- Most respondents want to be involved in collection development. **71% strongly agree**  
**22% agree**
- Respondents agree that allocated funds are important. **55% strongly agree**  
**33% agree**
- Majority of respondents are satisfied with funds available, but improvements needed. **65% satisfied**

#### discussion group data

- Question: Reduce the % allocated to faculty from the library's book allocation?
  - Burnout, overload may be impacting lower spending, not lack of interest.
  - Spending needs vary from year to year. If reduced, would there be a way to incorporate more flexibility for peak years?
- Question: Suggestions for improving communication about allocation amounts & spending?
  - Increase transparency.
- Question: Alternatives to setting allocations at department level?
  - Departmental level is appropriate – motivates participation.
  - Area of study should be the organizing principle, not departments.
- Question: What do you think of these or other ways to streamline the requesting process?
  - Don't remove the departmental liaison role; the liaisons motivate faculty participation.
  - Interdisciplinary program liaisons would like more autonomy in order to reduce confusion and streamline the process.

#### processes for requesting materials

- Most respondents are "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with ways to recommend purchases of books & audiovisual items. **52% very**  
**35% somewhat**

#### preferences for print vs. electronic books

- Respondents prefer print books for personal use overall. **57% print**  
**25% ebook**  
**23% no preference**
- Respondents prefer print books for long-form use and ebooks for short-form use.

- Question: Would faculty like to buy (more) ebooks? What information about ebook options do faculty need?
  - I didn't know I could request ebooks.
  - I would be interested in sometimes buying ebooks.
  - It would be nice if there was a mechanism to indicate preference when submitting requests.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

*Why are faculty requesting fewer books when book use remains strong?*

### APPLICATION TO PRACTICE

- ✓ Distributed collection development information to all faculty rather than only liaisons.
- ✓ Adjusted requesting & approval procedures.
- ✓ Modified our communication plan.
- ✓ Reduced the percentage allocated to faculty from the library's book budget.
- ✓ Revised the factors used in the book allocation formula.
- ✓ Established a separate book allocation for interdisciplinary programs.

### FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT

In spring 2017, we will assess the impact of and satisfaction with the modifications.

- Stable/increased faculty participation?
- Increased purchase requests from faculty?
- Better faculty understanding of resources and procedures?
- Increase in ebooks requested by faculty?
- Greater faculty satisfaction with interdisciplinary / process?

