

## Microassessments Report November 2022

### Assessment and Planning Department

### George Mason University Libraries

#### Project Overview

A series of “microassessments” were conducted in October-November 2022 to gather quick quantitative feedback from students on a series of questions related to Fenwick Library Space.

#### Methodology

Students were provided stickers to answer a series of questions posed on large format paper and flip charts. The assessments were conducted in the lobby portion in front of the south entrance to Fenwick Library, and assessment staff asked students to engage with the questions. Most data collection happened between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM. Different stickers were provided to track answers for four demographics:

1. Undergraduate Residents
2. Undergraduate Commuters
3. Graduate Residents
4. Graduate Commuters

The following questions were asked:

- What is your favorite spot in the library?
  - Does noise zone impact your choice?
  - What is your preferred noise zone?
- What is your favorite piece of furniture in the library?
- Do you prefer natural light?
- What activity are you usually doing in the library?
- Are you interested in storage in the library?
  - What is your preferred reservation length for storage?

#### High Level Analysis

The following are high level insights gained from the microassessments:

- Undergraduate commuters are the largest user group of Fenwick Library
- Students prefer to be on floors 2, 3, and 4 in the “middle” area of the new addition, which has the most natural light and most of the booths, the most popular piece of furniture.
- Studying is the most popular library activity.
- Only four students stated that they come to the library to meet with a librarian or ask questions.
- “Whisper” is the most popular noise zone.
- Overall, students are not interested in access to storage.

#### Detailed Analysis

What is your favorite spot in the library?

Students were provided with maps of each floor of the library, and images of the spaces were provided to help students visualize the areas. We do believe these photos may have impacted the decisions of where students placed their stickers. Overall, 42% of students chose the main study areas off of the central staircase for floors 2, 3, and 4 as their preferred place to be. 24% of all graduate students preferred the middle area of Floor 5.

Does noise zone impact your choice, and what is your preferred noise zone? (112 and 122 stickers)

87% of students indicated that noise zone impacts their decision of where to sit in the library, with 43% of students preferring the “Whisper” zone. Second to “Whisper,” undergraduate residents preferred “Silent” zones whereas undergraduate commuters preferred “Collaborative” zones.

What your favorite piece of furniture in the library?

12 images of furniture were provided for students to vote on. While the images tried to be representative of the 80+ different types of furniture in the library, this microassessment could use more information to be more representative. The furniture students could vote on included booths, carrels, group study tables, high top tables, and a variety of chairs. 42% of students prefer any sort of booth to sit in, and booths were most popular for all four categories of students. The least popular were high top tables and “mod” chairs, or the ones without arm rests. Undergraduate residents showed a preference for single carrels, while undergraduate commuters preferred group study tables and comfy chairs.

Do you prefer natural light?

Over 90% students indicated that yes, they do prefer natural light.

What activity are you usually doing in the library? (699 stickers)

Overall, the most popular activity across all participants was Studying (181 out of 699, or 26%). The least popular activities were meeting with a librarian (4 out of 699, or about 0.5%) and attending an event (8 out of 699, or about 1%). Most popular for Undergraduate Residents were: studying (44 out of 165, or about 27%) using library resources (26 out of 165, or 16%), eating or killing time (22 out of 165, or about 13%), and meeting with friends (21 out of 165, or 12.7%)

Are you interested in storage in the library, and what is your preferred reservation length for storage?

61% of students were not interested in having a storage option in the library, with the most no's coming from undergraduate commuters. 68% of students indicated if there was storage that they would prefer a shorter reservation time of 3-5 days, with 2 weeks and semester lengths receiving approximately 16% of the votes, respectively.

### **Open Comments**

Students often chatted with the assessment team while engaging in the microassessments. Of approximately a dozen comments written down, most related to complaints or suggestions for the furniture. Many students were interested in seeing the maps and learning more about

library spaces. Several students also identified that they did not want to give feedback on the library as that day's visit was their first to Fenwick.