The Library Staff Listens and Responds
by Anne Coleman and Steven Byrd

The Mary Livermore Library recently completed its annual satisfaction exit survey for 2008. In response to feedback from patrons, the Library is implementing several policy changes to better serve UNCP. This year, nearly 400 patrons responded to the surveys, with 168 providing detailed written comments.

The survey is an important event in the Library’s yearly calendar. It is a way for students to evaluate the Library’s performance and suggest improvements. In the past, the satisfaction surveys have been directly responsible for major changes to the Library’s operation, including extending hours of operation, increasing the number of laptops available for students, and influencing collection development.

One common request from students was an adjustment in the Library’s study room policy. Beginning March 31 all of the Library’s study rooms were locked, with keys available for groups of students to check out at the Circulation Desk. However, students felt that the key policy was confusing and often prevented groups from getting the study space they needed.

We listened to the suggestions, and changes have been made. Now, the four smaller study rooms, 241, 242A, 244, and 244A, are unlocked, allowing students to use them at any time, no checkout necessary. The two large study rooms, 240E and 240H, will remain locked. These rooms are designated for use by groups of three or more students. Study groups can check out the keys to these rooms for periods of three hours.

Student input has led to changes in the Library’s media collection, as well. Thanks to suggestions from students, the number of DVDs available at the Library has grown tremendously this year. Also, a wider variety of DVDs is making its way to our shelves, everything from the latest Hollywood blockbusters to cinematic classics to documentaries to animated features. Also, the DVD collection will soon be rearranged by genre, to make browsing and choosing a movie much easier.

Student input is a main factor in determining how the Library grows and changes. The Library thanks all of the patrons who took the time to fill out a survey. By making your voices heard and your opinions known, you help the Livermore Library continue to provide the kind of service that the University community deserves.

Are there improvements you would like to see the library make?

- Books: 179
- Video/DVDs: 204
- Electronic Resources: 56
- Longer Hours: 56
- Laptops: 98
- Less Noise: 46
- Study Rooms: 46
- Other: 18
- No Opinion: 19
- No Opinion: 84

The “Then” photograph shows student worker Amanda Cole in front of the periodicals shelves circa 1992. The periodicals were on the second floor of the older section of the Library (along the wall closest to the main reading room). In 1992, the Library had over 1,200 current serial subscriptions (in print and microfilm) and most students searched for periodicals by using a print index (e.g., Readers’ Guide to Periodical Literature). In 1992, current periodicals were part of a “closed” stack, which meant that if students wanted to use a current periodical, they had to complete a request form and the item was retrieved for them by periodicals staff.

The “Now” photograph shows Justin Jacobs, Serials Administrative Support Associate, in front of the Library’s current periodicals holdings. These are now available on an open-stack basis and anyone can browse and use these items. The periodicals area has been located on the first floor of the Library for about 15 years. The Library actually has fewer print subscriptions now – around 900, but according to Robert Wolf, Serials/Digital Operations Coordinator, “the Library has access to roughly 30,000 periodical titles through our electronic subscriptions.” And instead of using the print version of Readers’ Guide to search for journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, students use one of the Library’s more than 250 electronic databases and do so from the comfort of their dorm rooms or off campus, as well as in the Mary Livermore Library.