

# Gardner (MAIN) Stacks Survey Task Force Report

## Executive Summary

### Background

The Gardner (MAIN) Stacks is a large multi-level, multi-purpose space housing 2.1 million circulating and non-circulating volumes on 50 miles of shelving in open ranges and compact shelving. Arranged throughout the Stacks are 454 study seats (at tables and carrels), and 17 enclosed group study spaces. The total assignable square footage is 132,583, compared to Doe (including the core) 90,779, Doe Annex 104,600 and Moffitt (incl. corners) 82,766. From east to west, it is often characterized as two football fields in length. Several factors illustrate the dynamic nature of the Stacks: 346,269 items were checked out during FY 05/06; 118,962 non-circulating volumes were reshelfed in FY 05/06; Level C is a bridge to Moffitt with traffic flowing continuously back and forth between Doe and Moffitt; it is open to all with a UC ID or UCB Library Card. In addition, the NRLF quota is 70,000 per year, and Stack materials are periodically pulled for digital projects resulting in ongoing movement and displacement of material. In that space, library users are without permanent staff stationed in the area to provide assistance and frequently go to the Circulation Desk for assistance in locating items they are unable to find on the shelf.

In February 2007 Elizabeth Dupuis, Associate University Librarian for Educational Initiatives and Director of Doe/Moffitt Libraries convened a task force to help determine the problems users experience in the Stacks and recommend the types of services that would be helpful in addressing the identified problems. The task force was charged with developing a survey instrument and administering it during spring semester 2007. A final report and recommendations, including an analysis of related resources required for implementation of any new services were to be submitted to the Doe Moffitt Advisory Group (DMAG) for review. Members of the task force were Anne-Marie Basso, Tim Dennis, Willyce Kim, Mark Marrow (Chair), and JoD Wright.

## Survey

### Methodology

The Task Force met in early March 2007 to develop questions for the survey. Using the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks Survey Task Force charge, the Fall 2000 Library User Survey

Team's 2001 Final Report, and the Workgroup on Access to Collection 2000 report as guides, members met over a three week period to brainstorm ideas for survey questions. The draft questions were submitted to a wiki created by task force member Tim Dennis. The questions focused on the following themes: ease of locating materials in the Stacks or access to the collection, staff's responsiveness in providing service to Stacks users, service expectations from users of the Stacks, and possible new services or improvement of existing services in the Stacks. A refinement process produced 29 questions focused on the aforementioned themes. Using the final 29 questions, two separate survey instruments were developed: a web-based version and a shorter print version. There was some overlap in questions asked (see [Appendix A](#)). Users of the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks were able to participate in the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks Survey from April 28 through May 10, 2007.

The print survey was designed to be completed by participants within five minutes. It consisted of nine questions and a field for additional comments or suggestions for improving the Stacks. The question format varied from single-select, multi-select, and open-ended. The survey was distributed by library staff to every user who entered at the entrances to the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks from Doe Library or Moffitt Library. Completed surveys were collected as users exited the buildings. There were 1027 print surveys completed and returned by survey respondents, 713 self-identified as undergraduates (69%), 163 as graduate students (16%), 48 as faculty/instructors (5%), and 103 as other (staff, alumni, and non-primary cardholders) (10%).

The longer web-based version of the survey consisted of 29 questions and a field for additional comments or suggestions for improving the Stacks, including the nine questions from the print version. The design of the web-based version was created from the survey package Unit Command Climate Assessment Survey System (UCCASS). An invitation to participate was distributed through the University of California, Berkeley News Center, the Library's web page, and via campus mailing lists. The question format varied from single-select, multi-select, and open-ended. There were 242 web-based survey respondents, 97 self-identified as undergraduates (40%), 39 as graduate students (16%), 46 as faculty/instructors (19%), 60 as other (staff, alumni, and non-primary cardholders) (25%).

## Summary

The surveys asked questions related to three major dimensions: Access to the Collection, Staff Responsiveness and Service Expectations, and Service Improvements/New Services. In addition, the survey briefly touched on the dimension of Gardner (MAIN) Stacks as a Place (see print survey question 2, and web-based survey

questions 1, 2, 10-12). In other words, why do library users utilize the Stacks? To address "Gardner (MAIN) Stacks as a Place", a more in-depth survey of Stacks users is recommended by the task force.

## The Dimensions

**Access to the Collection** dimension addresses ease of finding books in the Stacks and service hours (see print survey questions 3, 5-7, and web-based survey questions 3-8, 22, and 23). The main points identified by the survey questions and comments included: the majority of users felt they could locate needed materials in the Stacks, the materials were usually in their proper place, and that when asked Stacks users indicated they utilize the Stacks mainly between 8am and midnight.

When utilizing the additional comments field, many respondents had concerns about missing books, lack of regular shelf-reading, not understanding Library of Congress classification system, and better signage in the Stacks. For example: "Read shelves -- its an old, maybe quaint, library custom, but it finds books...", "Signage could be clearer...When moving stacks, it is unclear where the rest are...", "Missing and misplaced books are my main problem...", "Books, in my experience, are often missing. I don't know what can be done, but still...", and "I dunno where to find books and stuff. I don't get all the abbreviations and stuff."

It may be possible to conclude from this dimension that better signage, instructional materials, concentrated shelf reading and straightening, and an inventory of the collection are needed to improve users experiences when accessing the collection. To further support this conclusion, in fiscal year 2006-2007 library users placed 14,397 initial searches for MAIN collection items that they could not find on the shelves. In addition, 1,590 MAIN collection items were declared missing.

Although usage hours were not specifically addressed in the print survey, the web-based survey asked participants to select "Hours you are most likely to use the Stacks: 9am-noon; noon-4pm; 4-8pm; 8pm-midnight; midnight-8am". Since library users utilize the Stacks during all operating hours, respondents were able to multi-select when they were most likely to use the Stacks. Of the 491 total multi-selected responses, 376 or 77% were between the hours of noon and midnight:

Noon-4pm – 142 (29%)  
4pm-8pm – 138 (28%)  
8pm-midnight – 96 (20%)

Even though the noon to midnight hours were the core usage times for web-based survey respondents, comments from both survey participant groups indicated they would like for the Stacks to be open earlier and closed later.

It is important to note that the issue of the Stacks hours carried over into the other dimensions, especially the Service Improvement/New Services dimension.

**Staff Responsiveness and Service Expectations** dimension focuses on ease of getting staff assistance while in the Stacks, what type of staff assistance, and service expectations in general. (See print survey questions 3, 4, 8, and web-based survey questions 4, 5, 9, 13-16). The main points identified by the survey and comments included: Respondents felt that it is easy getting assistance when they have problems in the Stacks; the importance of having staff assistance in the Stacks; and the need for face to face assistance.

It is interesting to note that respondents who included additional comments had concerns about the variable levels of helpfulness from staff. Some library employees were seen as helpful, while others, according to respondents, "basically refuse to do anything". Student employees were often seen as unhelpful, rude, and "give assistance only begrudgingly". These respondents felt that customer service can be greatly improved and that the Library "needs quality control over employee behavior".

Also of note, when asked "If you cannot find a book in the Stacks, what do you do?" a quarter of all respondents replied that they give up (26% undergraduates, 23% graduates, 14% faculty, and 17% other). These respondents as a group were of great concern to the task force. The results made the task force consider how do we provide service to this segment of users if we do not know who they are, let alone how to address their service needs?

**Service Improvement/New Services** dimension relates to how users feel services already existing in the Stacks can be improved and what new services they would like to see implemented (see print survey questions 4 and 9, and web-based survey questions 13-21, 28). The main problem identified is the lack of printing in the stacks. All survey participants ranked printing as the new service they would like to see offered (22% print as compared to 26% web). Self-checkout closely followed printing (21% print as compared to 23% web).

Cross-tabulating the results by campus status show that 64% of undergraduates are interested in printing while in the Stacks. This number drops off considerably for

graduates and faculty (27% and 19% respectively). This difference may suggest that graduates and faculty may have other printing options, such as office printers.

General comments received that were specifically about improving Gardner (MAIN) Stacks and the users' experiences mentioned the importance of stack users following the rules (cell phones and food/drink in particular) and library staff enforcing those policies, improving issues related to the physical space (i.e. missing task lighting lamp bulbs), increasing library hours (especially weekend hours), improving circulation services (i.e. checkout available after 10pm), and having functional computers in the Stacks.

A few example comments: "Ensure quiet study environment in Main Stacks and enforce NO FOOD policy with more zeal.", "Cell phone use is the biggest problem in the library. We need to enforce "no cell phones" and "no food/drink.", and "Biggest problem in the stacks is lack of discipline in evenings -- especially w/r [with regards] to cell use. There is general lack of respect for ban on using cell phones and you can always hear a conversation going on -- very distracting for serious library users. Perhaps some more signs could be put up at entrance and perhaps security guys could pass through once and a while."

## Survey

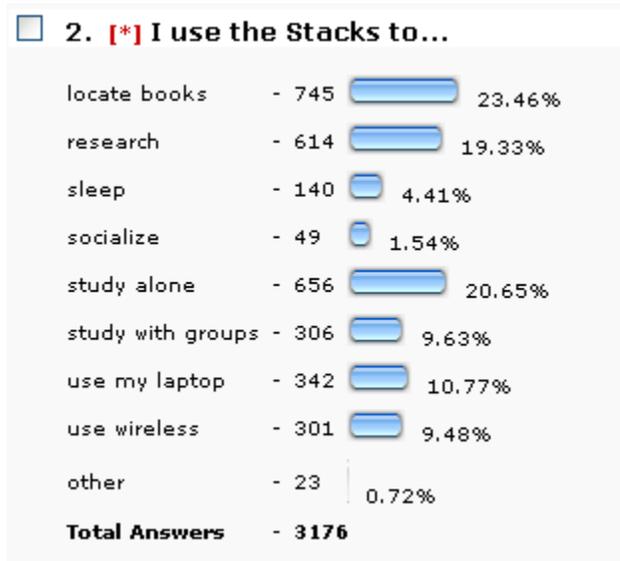
### Results Summary

Results of the surveys show that 88% of the print survey and 84% of the web-based survey respondents felt confident that they know where to go for what they need in the Stacks. A high percentage of respondents (93% print and 91% web) felt that they were able to help themselves in the Stacks.

Face-to face interaction with library staff was overwhelmingly the preferred method of communication for all categories of survey respondents (84% undergraduates, 79% graduates, 67% faculty/instructors, and 85% other). Email and instant messaging, which ranked second and third respectively, even when responses were combined did not come close to the importance respondents placed on face-to-face assistance (see survey results and cross-tabs).

## Survey Results – Sample

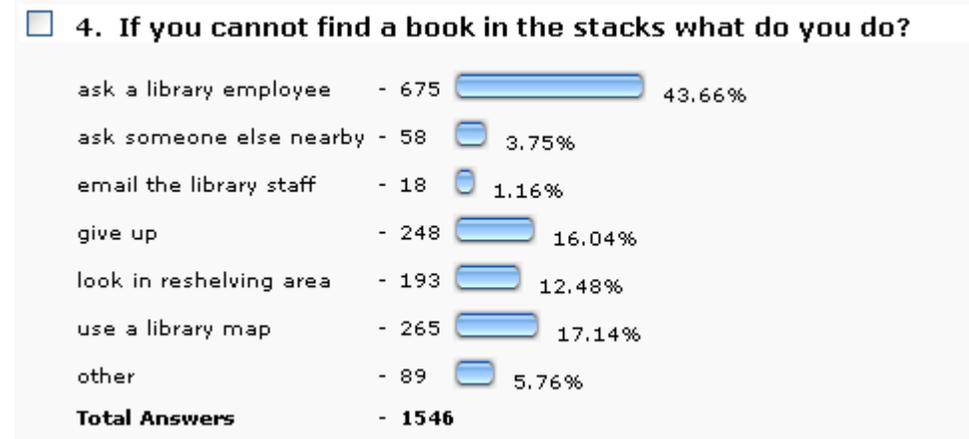
*Print Survey - Respondents use of Stacks:*



*Online Survey - Find book on shelf:*

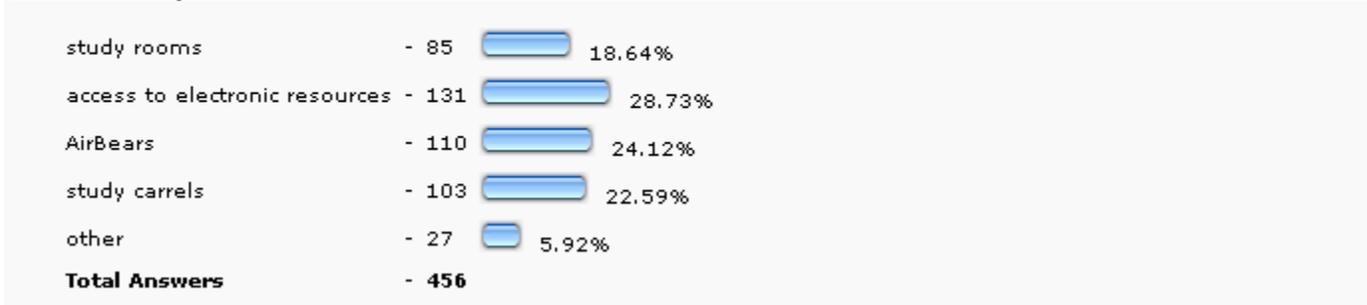


*Print Survey - What users do when they cannot find a book:*



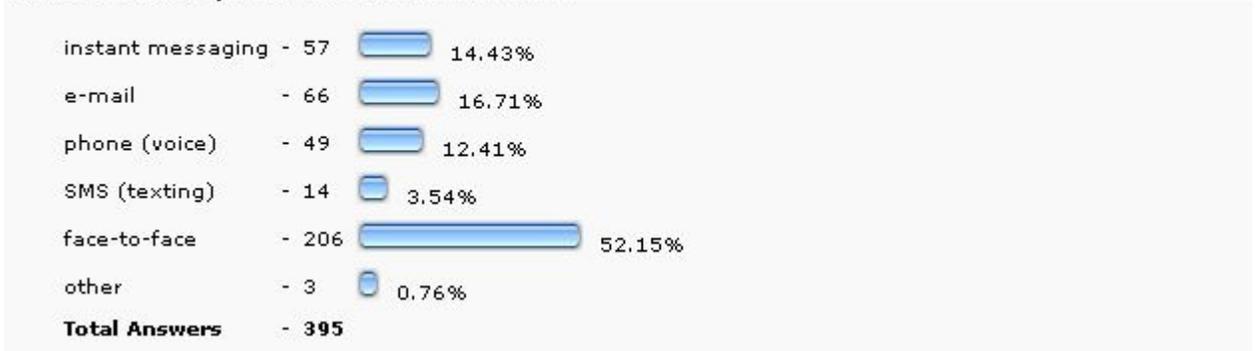
Online Survey - Current Services Evaluation:

17. [\*] Which services currently provided in the Stacks do you find most valuable for your educational, research and recreational needs?



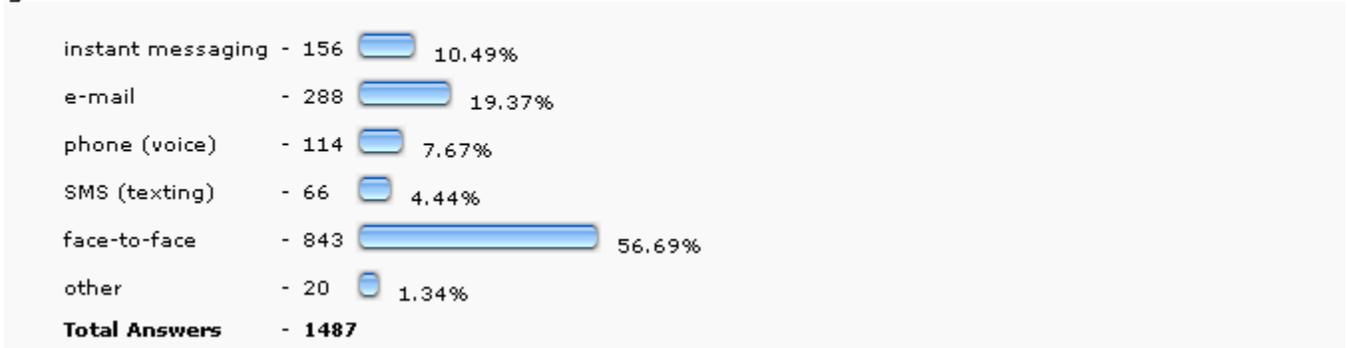
Online Survey - Communication Method Preference for Assistance:

15. [\*] If available in the Stacks, what method(s) would you most prefer to use to communicate your need for assistance?



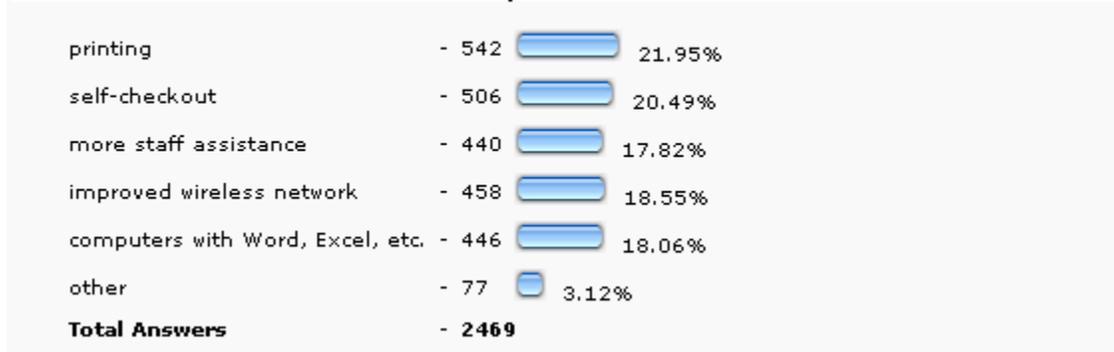
Print Survey - User's assistance request communication preference:

6. If all of these methods were available which would you find the most useful way(s) to get assistance?



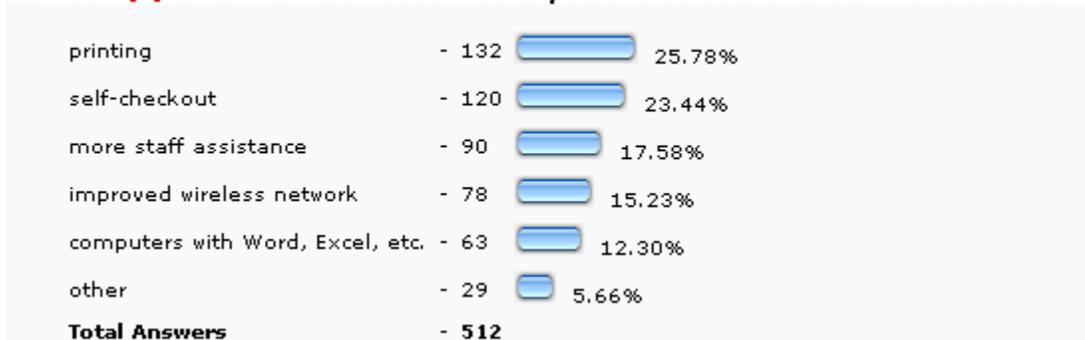
Print Survey - New services preferences:

17. What new services would you like to see offered in the Stacks?



Online Survey - New Services Preference:

19. [\*] What new services would you like to see offered in the Stacks?



For the full results please see [Appendix B](#).

## Recommendations

The task force asks that the Doe Moffitt Advisory Group (DMAG) considers the following recommendations we believe would improve users experiences while in the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks. In addition, the task force requests that DMAG consider having a full needs assessment preferably an assessment by an outside organization, such as the Association of Research Libraries' LibQUAL+ .

### Recommendation 1: Shelf-reading and Collection Inventory

Shelf-reading (or fine ordering) is an essential maintenance procedure and function of the Stacks unit. It has always been considered part of the stack student's daily work assignment. Traditionally the entire collection, bolstered by a robust GA and a large student workforce, is fine ordered at least once during the academic calendar year. High use areas are fine ordered much more frequently.

Currently, Stacks student employees are scheduled to shelf-read throughout the collection roughly 80 hours per week. With approximately 100,000 items added to the collection each year, close to 80,000 volumes being pulled for storage, over 300,000

items circulating annually, and the high volume of returned materials to reshelve, regular shelf-reading tends to take a backseat to other stacks maintenance duties: sorting, shelving, pulling and packing for storage, and searching for missing items.

The goals of a shelf-reading project are to make finding materials easier for users and to allow the library's student staff to shelve materials correctly, as well as prepare the collection for an inventory. Shelf-reading will only allow us to correct items shelved incorrectly and find misplaced materials. It does not tell us if something is actually missing from the shelves. To be able to know what is missing from the collection or what is on the shelves but not represented in the catalog, we need to do an inventory.

The Gardner (MAIN) Stacks collection has never been inventoried. The advantages of doing an inventory are that we will be able to know what is truly missing from the collection and refer those items for replacement, and we will be able to correct the database to match the physical collection. Collection inventories are large projects that take time to complete.

Before an inventory of the collection is undertaken, the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks Task Force recommends a two step approach. The first step would be a shelf-reading project. This would require four to five student employees per hour dedicated to reading and straightening the shelves. The second step would be the actual inventory of the collection.

There are currently over two million volumes housed in the stacks. A minimum of 14 student employees dedicated to inventorying the collection will be needed to jumpstart the project. State of the art portable barcode readers and other equipment will be needed, as well as full commitment from the Library Systems Office for programming and report generation needs. The success of a collection inventory is highly dependent on being able to process data in real time and generate error/comparison reports on demand.

## Recommendation 2: Improved Signage

Even though 88% of the print survey and 84% of the web-based survey respondents felt confident that they know where to go for what they need in the Stacks. Respondents' comments say otherwise. The Gardner (MAIN) Stack can be confusing for new users. The Stacks are not in A to Z order. There are folio sized materials, collections not fully cataloged (IP or in-process materials), as well as continuous shifting and pulling materials for storage. In addition, the collection is spread over three levels.

It is recommended that a review of signage in Gardner (MAIN) Stacks be completed by the Graphics Department with the Head of Doe Moffitt Circulation Services. A proposal of recommendations should be submitted to DMAG for review and approval. The goal of the signage review is to improve user access to the collection.

### Recommendation 3: Printing in the Stacks

Respondents in both surveys were (22% print and 26% web) interested in printing in the stacks. The Gardner (MAIN) Stacks Task Force recommends that the Doe Moffitt Advisory Group (DMAG) consider offering printing in the Stacks. It is the preference of the task force that DMAG look closely at, and consider the adoption of the current campus Information Services & Technology (IST) run Workstation & Microcomputer Facilities (WMF) printing model.

#### **Existing Situation**

Gardner (MAIN) Stacks currently has no printing access for students. To print documents within the library, students have to come into Moffitt Library or Doe Library and print either from the current vendor operated print system (henceforth referred to as the *Vendor-operated print method*) or via the campus IST Workstation & Microcomputer Facilities print system (henceforth referred to as the *WMF print method*) on the first floor of Moffitt Library. From the users' perspective the current printing configuration is confusing.

The *Vendor-operated print method* requires users to obtain a print card with monetary value added. Each time the student prints from a library PC he/she must pay for the print job before it prints at a print release station which is adjacent to the printer. To print via the *WMF print method* students must add money to their print account via a web-based interface that works with their Campus Accounts Receivables System (CARS) account. Each print job deducts a certain amount per page.

Recently, the WMF has also established wireless printing available via the wireless access points on the first floor of Moffitt Library. In order to print wirelessly, students must go to the Student Computer Consultation in Moffitt and have Pharos client software installed on their laptops. After setup, the student can print to the Microcomputer Facility printer in Moffitt Library for the same fee as regular WMF printing.

#### **Printing Options**

##### **Option A - Extend *WMF print method* to Gardner (MAIN) Stacks**

There are two alternative ways of bringing the *WMF print method* to the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks. The first would involve extending the current wireless printing program to Gardner (MAIN) Stacks wireless subnets. Currently, students can only print wirelessly from the Moffitt Library access points on the first floor to the Microcomputer Facility printers. Technically, it would be possible to extend coverage into the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks. Students could then print from their laptops while in the Stacks. The students would be required to go to the first floor of Moffitt Library to pick up their print jobs.

The second would be to explore the possibility of installing printers in the Gardner (Main) Stack that work with the *WMF print method*. One possible arrangement could include the Library providing networking and WMF providing printers and paper. Some staff time to replace paper and maintain the printers would also be necessary. Students could then print from their laptops or public PCs in the Stacks, and their print jobs would be routed to the nearest Gardner (MAIN) Stacks printer.

### **Option B: Add Vendor Operated Printing to Gardner (MAIN) Stacks**

Add print release stations and printers in the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks that support the *Vendor-operated print method*. This could be accomplished by converting existing copiers to network printers in the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks and adding vendor operated print release stations to the Stacks.

### **Outcomes**

The task force highly recommends that the library provide printing in the Stacks. Ideally, because of the size of the Stacks, we recommend having a print station on every floor. At a minimum, two floors (levels B and C) should have print stations. Additionally, we recommend making printing as seamless, simple, and familiar for students as possible. We strongly recommend that the library considers supporting the existing *WMF print method*. To make this a successful print solution in the Stacks, it is important that students be able to:

1. add value to their existing *WMF print method* account via a browser
2. pay the same amount in the Stacks as they pay at other campus Workstation & Microcomputer Facilities
3. be able to print from their laptops or public machines in Gardner (MAIN) Stacks
4. and pick up their print jobs in Gardner (MAIN) Stacks

### **Recommendation 4: Staff Assistance in the Stacks**

The Gardner (MAIN) Stacks is the primary collection for the humanities and social sciences. With a collection of 2.3 million volumes in a variety of formats and languages, the Stacks can be challenging and problematic to navigate for library users who are not only unfamiliar with the footprint of the Stacks spatially, but also fundamentally unskilled in locating library materials in an academic library setting (i.e. use of online catalogs, Library of Congress classification system).

Currently, the library does not provide dedicated staff assistance for library users at the time of need in the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks. When a user needs assistance, whether it is

a logistical question such as the location of a call number range or a reference question, he/she is required to leave the Stacks and seek assistance in Moffitt or Doe libraries. This is a frustrating situation for many users. The public service desks are of great distances from the Stacks and usually the staff member is unable to leave his/her post to assist the user. As indicated earlier in the report many users give up, leaving the library without having their research needs met. (See Staff Responsiveness and Service Expectations dimension).

A cross-tabulation of the print survey results across respondents' status, show that 52% of undergraduates, 18% graduates, 27% faculty/instructors, and 33% other (staff, alumni, and non-primary cardholders) would like to see more staff assistance in the Stacks.

When asked "Would more staff in the Stacks be valuable for your educational, research and recreational needs?", 44% of all web-based survey respondents indicated that more staff would be valuable to them. This same group of respondents when asked which hour blocks they would prefer staff assistance in the Stacks, 64% indicated that they would prefer additional staff assistance from noon to 8pm (33% noon to 4pm and 31% 4pm to 8pm).

In recommending staff presence in the Stacks, the task force devised two options for consideration: Plan A – Staffed Kiosks and Plan B – Rovers.

The first option or Plan A ideally would be to create staffed kiosks on 2 levels of the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks (at a minimum a kiosk on Level C). The primary advantages to having permanent staffed kiosks are that staff's presence will be highly visible and users will have a physical location to go to for assistance while in the Stacks. Some disadvantages may be centered on startup costs (i.e. furniture, networking needs) and scheduling staff to cover another public service point.

The second option or Plan B would be to have rovers actively approaching users who they may see as needing assistance in the Stacks. Some advantages to having rovers are the following: the rovers could actively engage users while in the Stacks (another opportunity for instruction); a highly visible and accessible staff presence that would not require users to go to one stationary place for assistance; minimal startup costs. Some disadvantages to having rovers are the following: a large Stacks footprint staff would have to cover (3 levels and over 50 miles of shelving area); possible to lose the staff presence the library is aiming for (users not able to locate a rover); time it may take for staff and users to adjust their comfort levels to a new service model.

## Recommendation 5: People Counters

During the initial review of the survey results, it became apparent to the task force that we did not have a real method for collecting usage data. We felt it to be important to accurately count the number of people entering/exiting the stacks. We highly recommend that the Doe Moffitt Advisory Group (DMAG) consider purchasing patron counters (see appendix) to aide in collecting quantitative usage data.

The task force recommends minimally placing counters at the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks portals on Level A and the Moffitt Library entrance to the Stacks on Level C. It is highly recommended that the Doe Moffitt Advisory Group (DMAG) also consider the placement of people counters at the entrance/exits in Moffitt and Doe Libraries.

## Recommendation 6: Self-checkout Workstations

Of the 1013 respondents who answered question 9 on the print survey (What new services would you like to see offered in the Stacks?) 505 (49.9%) were interested in self-checking out. Undergraduates far more than any other group were interested (58.3%). When asked how often library users would use self-checkout workstations, 64% of web-based survey respondents would self-checkout materials frequently/very frequently.

Self-checkout workstations would allow Gardner (MAIN) Stacks users the ability to check out library materials during hours when the circulation desks were closed. This would satisfy users need for longer circulation desk hours.

## Recommendation 7: Full User Needs Assessment

In the survey, users responded that they use the stacks to locate books, study alone, and do research. These responses are in-line with the intended purpose of the Stacks to provide both access to the Library's research collections and physical spaces for research and study. The survey also indicates that users are utilizing the stacks for computing and group study.

<b>I use the stacks to...</b>	
<b>Print Survey Results (3176 Total Answers)</b>	<b>Web-based Survey Results (758 Total Answers)</b>
1. locate books (23.46%)	1. locate books (27.84%)
2. study alone (20.65%)	2. research (21.77%)
3. research (19.33%)	3. study alone (15.83%)
4. use my laptop (10.77%)	4. use my laptop (12.14%)
5. study with groups (9.63%)	5. use wireless (10.16%)
6. use wireless (9.48%)	6. study with groups (6.07%)
7. sleep (4.41%)	7. sleep (3.69%)
8. socialize (1.54%)	8. socialize (1.06%)

However, the task force feels that the information gained from the survey only covers what we thought to ask in the questionnaires. We readily recognize that we are not our users and cannot anticipate or imagine all tasks and scenarios our users might need to complete in the Stacks. Therefore, we believe the Library should explore more qualitative information on how our users encounter the Gardner (MAIN) Stacks, if we are to fully determine all areas for improving their experiences. We suspect that both changing technologies and user behaviors and expectations are diversifying the use of the Stacks from primarily access to the physical collections, study space, and traditional print-based research to more variegated uses, including accessing digital collections and using wireless-enabled laptops and devices to aid in research, coursework, communication, and collaboration. The task force feels more information is needed about who the users of the stacks are, why they come to the Stacks, and what they are doing there. We also believe more qualitative information is needed about those situations when our users get frustrated about existing services or navigational signage in the Stacks.