FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF LIBRARIANS AND THEIR USE OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Exploring The Effect Of Librarian Faculty Status

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Outline

- Academic librarians and faculty status

- Research questions

- Study methods

- Findings

- What we have learned from the study

Academic Librarians and Faculty Status

- ACRL Standards – Library faculty should have the same privileges and responsibilities as other faculty on campus
  - Librarianship – unique contributions to the academic community and to higher education
  - Research – contributions to the sum of knowledge through their research in the information science and other areas of study
  - Service – contributions to improvements in service and other advancements in the field resulting from their participation in professional and scholarly organizations

Librarian Faculty Status

Previous studies suggest:

- Librarian faculty status paves the way for better relations with teaching faculty.

- Librarian faculty status may better motivate librarians to fulfill the university's mission.

- Librarian faculty status can strengthen librarians' voices and validate their roles, which can help promote collaboration with teaching faculty.

- Faculty status for librarians increases participation in campus governance.

- Research skills developed help improve customer service and librarianship.

The Reality

- Relations with faculty have long been a significant component of the profession for librarians. For faculty, however, relations with librarians are of little or no concern.

- Faculty do not have a solid understanding of librarians' work and are not seeking contact.

- Faculty believe that the function of the library and librarian is the organization and facilitation of access to resources and collections.

- Unlike librarians, faculty acknowledge the disconnect between faculty and librarians, but do not consider it problematic.

*Christiansen, L., Stombler, M., Thaxton, Lyn (2004) "A Report on Librarian-Faculty Relations from a Sociological Perspective," Journal of Academic Librarianship, 30:2, 116-121.

Research Questions — Faculty Perceptions

- ☐ Whether and how librarians' faculty status may affect the faculty-librarian relationship

- ☐ Whether and how librarians' faculty status may affect faculty use of library

- ☐ Whether and how librarians' faculty status may affect faculty perceptions of librarians' role in teaching/research/service

Study Methods

- A Survey Study
  - A total of 18 questions (including 3 demographic and 2 open-ended questions)
  - Use of library (resources & services)
  - Knowledge of librarians' status and feelings
  - Perceptions of relationship with librarians
  - Perceptions of librarians' role and relevance in teaching/research/service
- Survey targets
  - Gettysburg College
  - TCNJ
  - Indiana University Bloomington
  - University of Pennsylvania
- Email invitations sent to randomly selected faculty (April–May 2017)

Survey Results — Demographics

Institution	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn	Total
Responses	12% (61)	32% (159)	37% (189)	19% (96)	505

Faculty Rank	Full professor	Associate professor	Assistant professor	Adjunct professor	Lecturer
Responses	172	133	109	55	29

Discipline	A&H	Sciences	Social Sciences	Education	Business	Health Sciences	Engineering	Law
% (N)	34% (168)	20% (98)	17% (86)	11% (53)	9% (44)	6% (32)	3% (16)	1% (4)

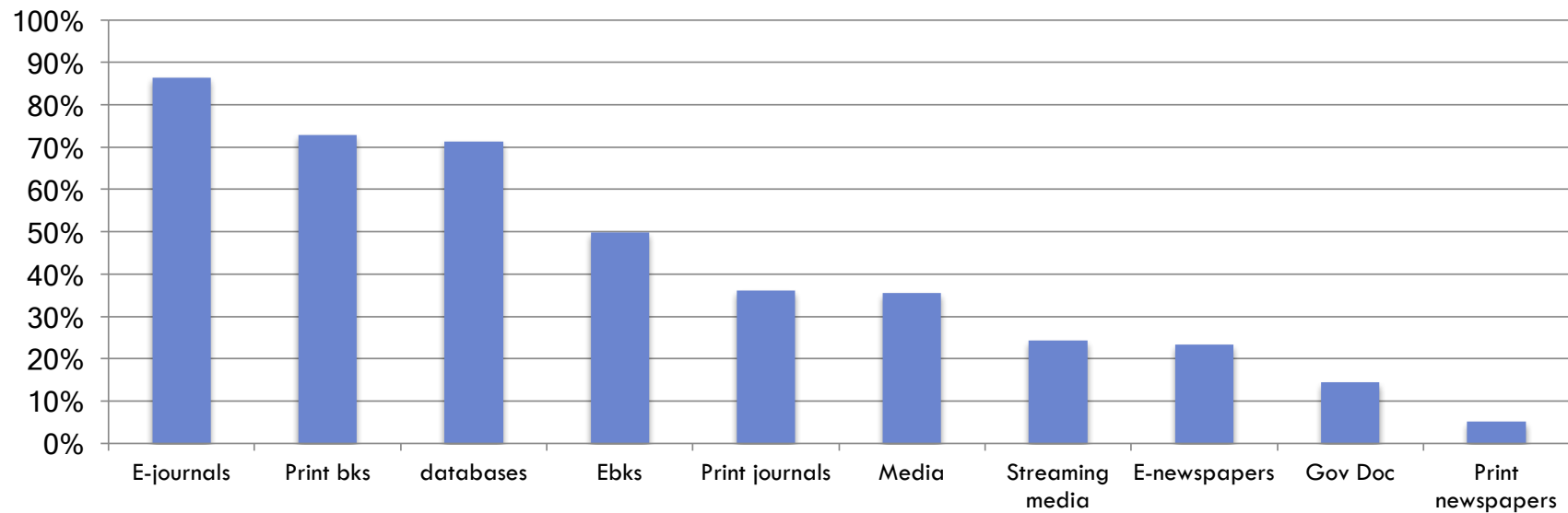# Faculty *Use* of Local Libraries (Physical or Online)

Institution	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn	All
Daily+Weekly	85%	56%	71%	82%	70%

Discipline	Social Sciences	A&H	Sciences	Education
Daily+Weekly	77%	75%	74%	64%

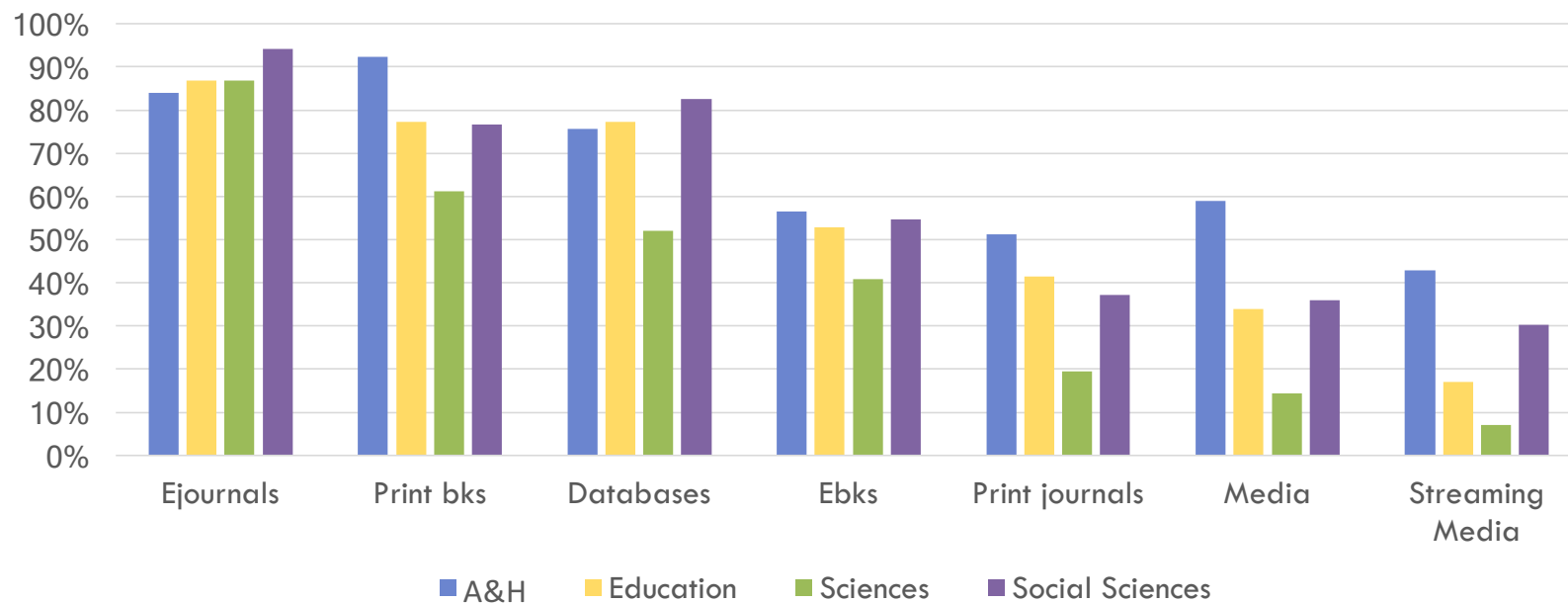# Faculty *Use* of Library Resources (All Respondents)

Faculty Use of Library Resources

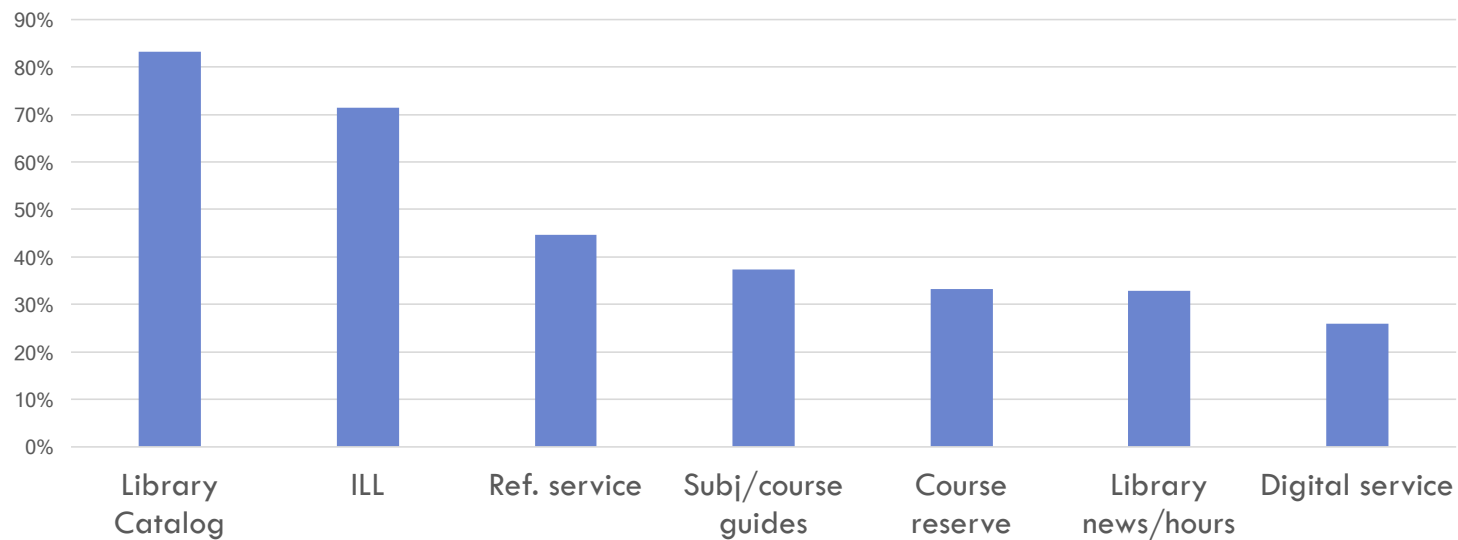# Faculty *Use* of Library Resources by Discipline

Faculty Use of Library Resources by Discipline

Faculty *Use* of Library Services (All Respondents)
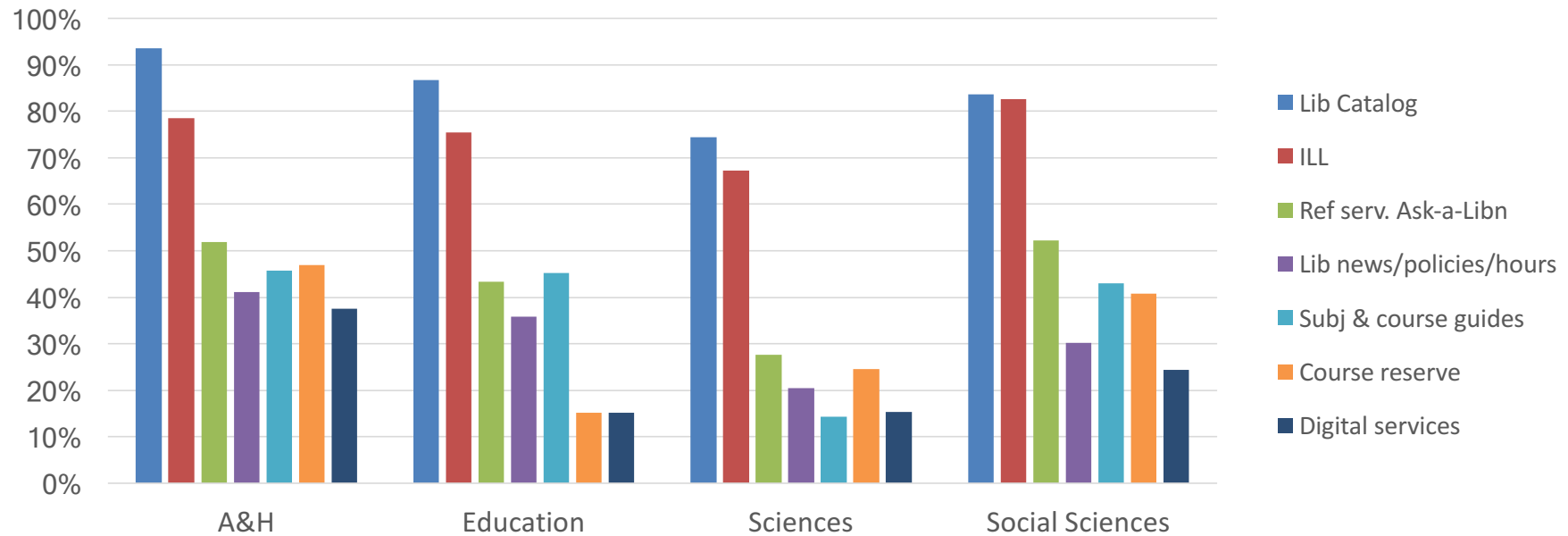
Faculty Use of Library Services

Faculty *Use* of Library Services by Discipline

Faculty Use of Library Services by Discipline

Faculty *Perceive Helpfulness* of Seven Library Services

Helpfulness of Services Provided by
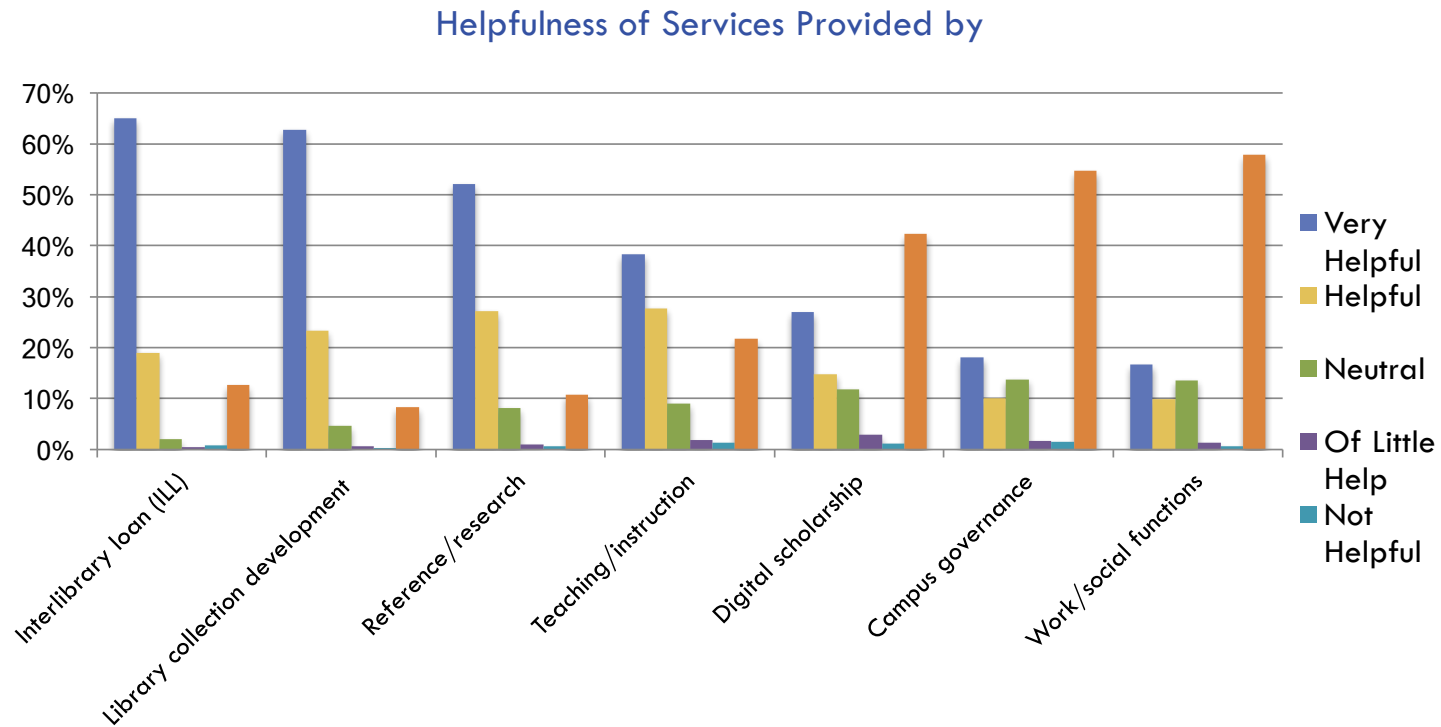
Faculty *Perceive* Librarians' Helpfulness with Campus Governance

Governance	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn	All
Very Helpful	16%	27%	17%	7%	18%
Helpful	11%	18%	6%	3%	10%
Total	26%	45%	24%	10%	28%

Faculty *Interacting* with Librarians

Q: Have you interacted with librarians at your institution?
- On average, 90% of faculty respondents answered yes.

Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
95%	90%	88%	95%

Faculty *Interacting* with Librarians by Frequency and by Institution

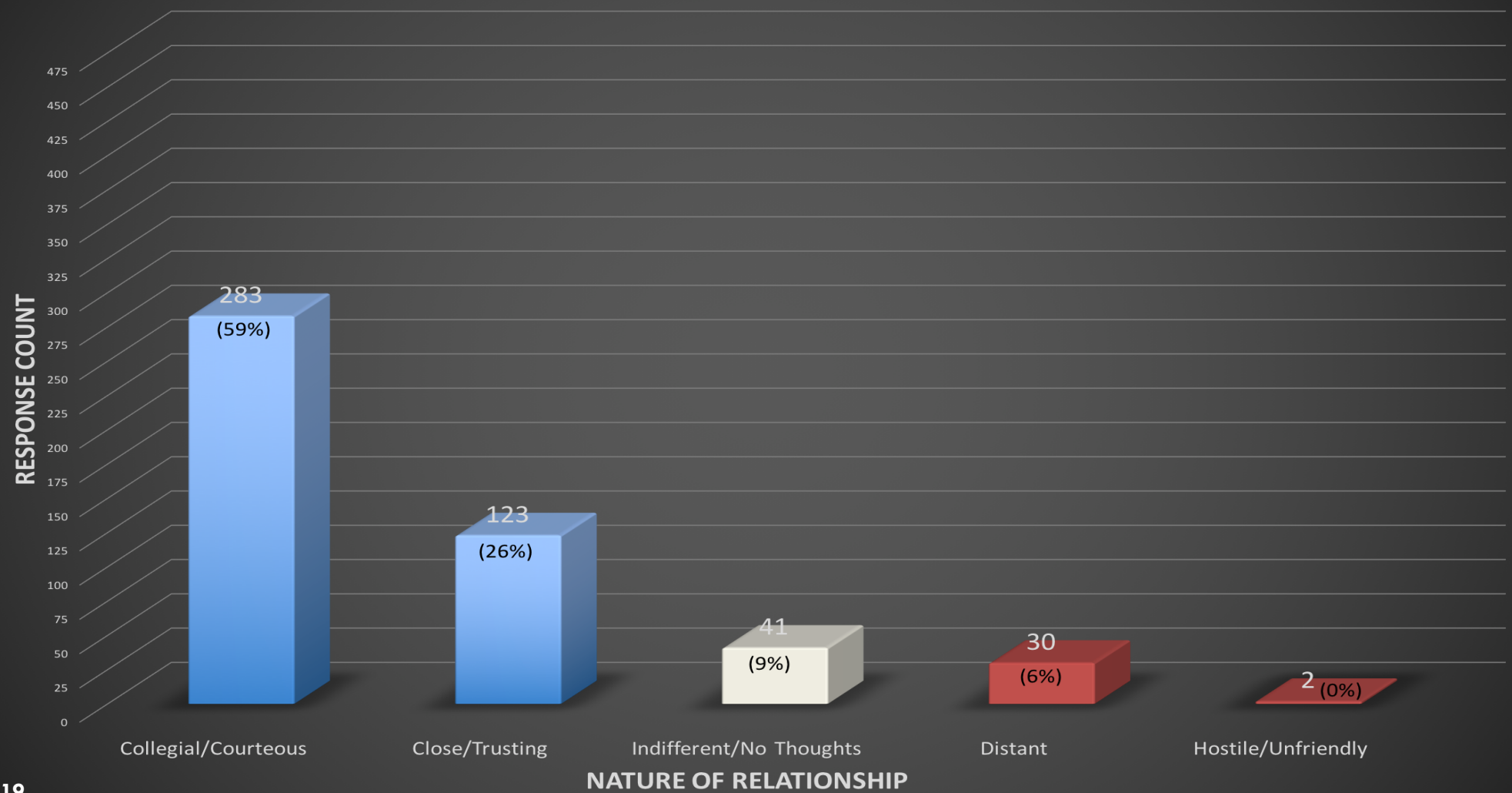| Weekly	Monthly	Several times a year	1 or 2 times a year
13%	19%	40%	27%

Frequency of Interactions	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
Weekly	25.45%	10.37%	10.00%	15.73%
Monthly	32.73%	16.30%	16.25%	21.35%
Several times a year	30.91%	48.15%	41.88%	31.46%
1 or 2 times a year	10.91%	25.19%	31.88%	31.46%

Faculty *Interacting* with Librarians (Frequency) by Discipline

Frequency of Interactions	A&H	Social Sciences	Sciences	Education	ALL
Weekly	24%	13%	7%	4%	13%
Monthly	23%	15%	20%	17%	19%
Several times a year	34%	41%	43%	42%	40%
1 or 2 times a year	19%	31%	30%	38%	27%

Faculty *Perceive* Relationship with Local Librarians

RESPONSE COUNT

- Collegial/Courteous: 283 (59%)
- Close/Trusting: 123 (26%)
- Indifferent/No Thoughts: 41 (9%)
- Distant: 30 (6%)
- Hostile/Unfriendly: 2 (0%)

NATURE OF RELATIONSHIP

Faculty *Perceive* Relationship with Local Librarians by Institution

**Q:** How do you describe your relationship with librarians in your institution?

Nature of Relationship	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
Close/Trusting	41%	28%	19%	25%
Collegial	53%	59%	59%	60%
Total (Close+Collegial)	95%	87%	78%	84%

# Faculty *Perceive* Relationship with Local Librarians — Frequency of Contact by Nature of Relationship

Frequency of Interactions	Close/trusting	Collegial	Distant
Weekly	69%	26%	2%
Monthly	44%	54%	1%
Several times a year	19%	73%	4%
1 or 2 times a year	10%	67%	11%

Faculty *Perceive* Librarian *Roles* on Campus
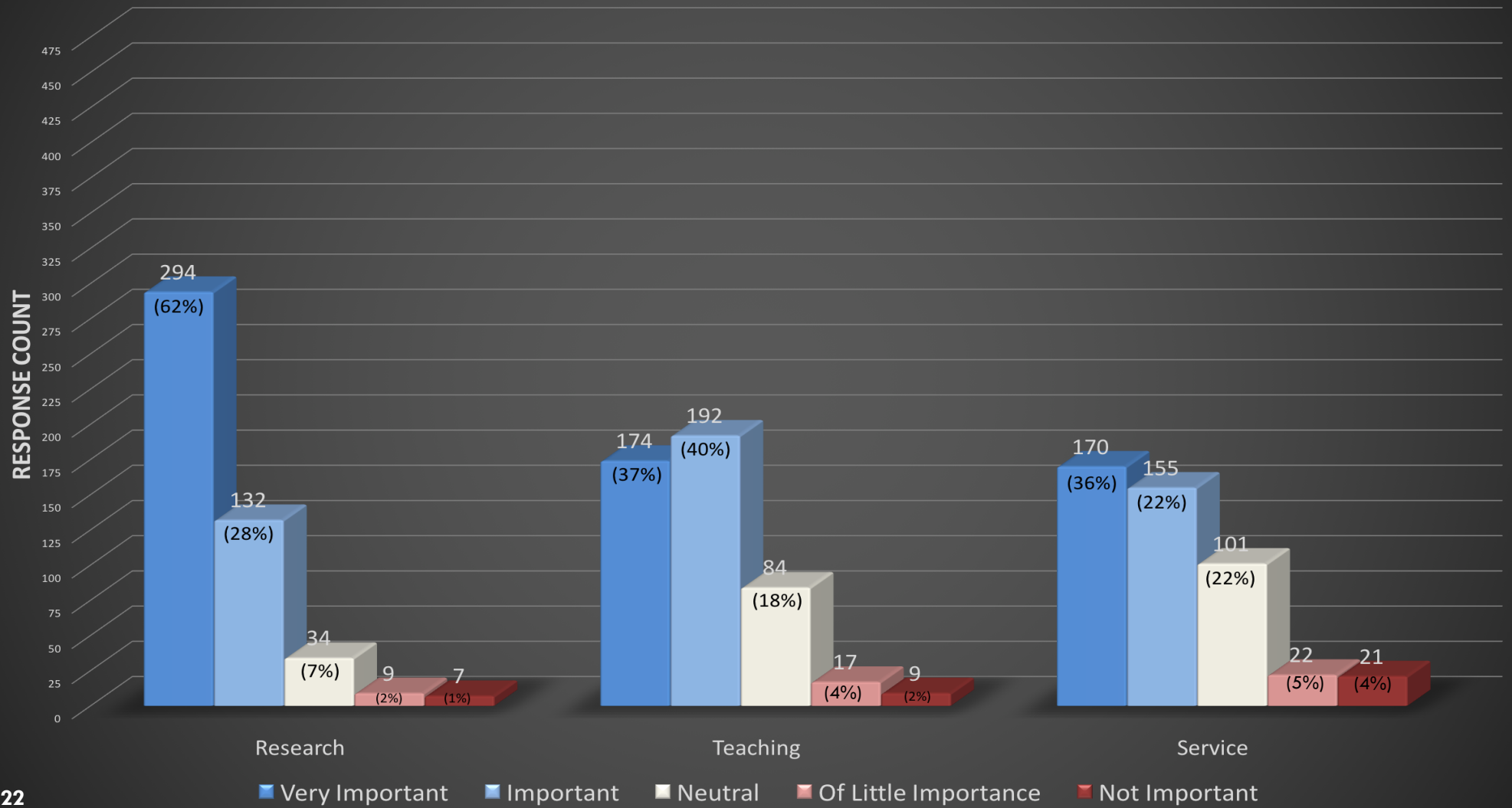
Perceptions of Librarians' Relevance In Assisting Faculty *Teaching* and *Research*

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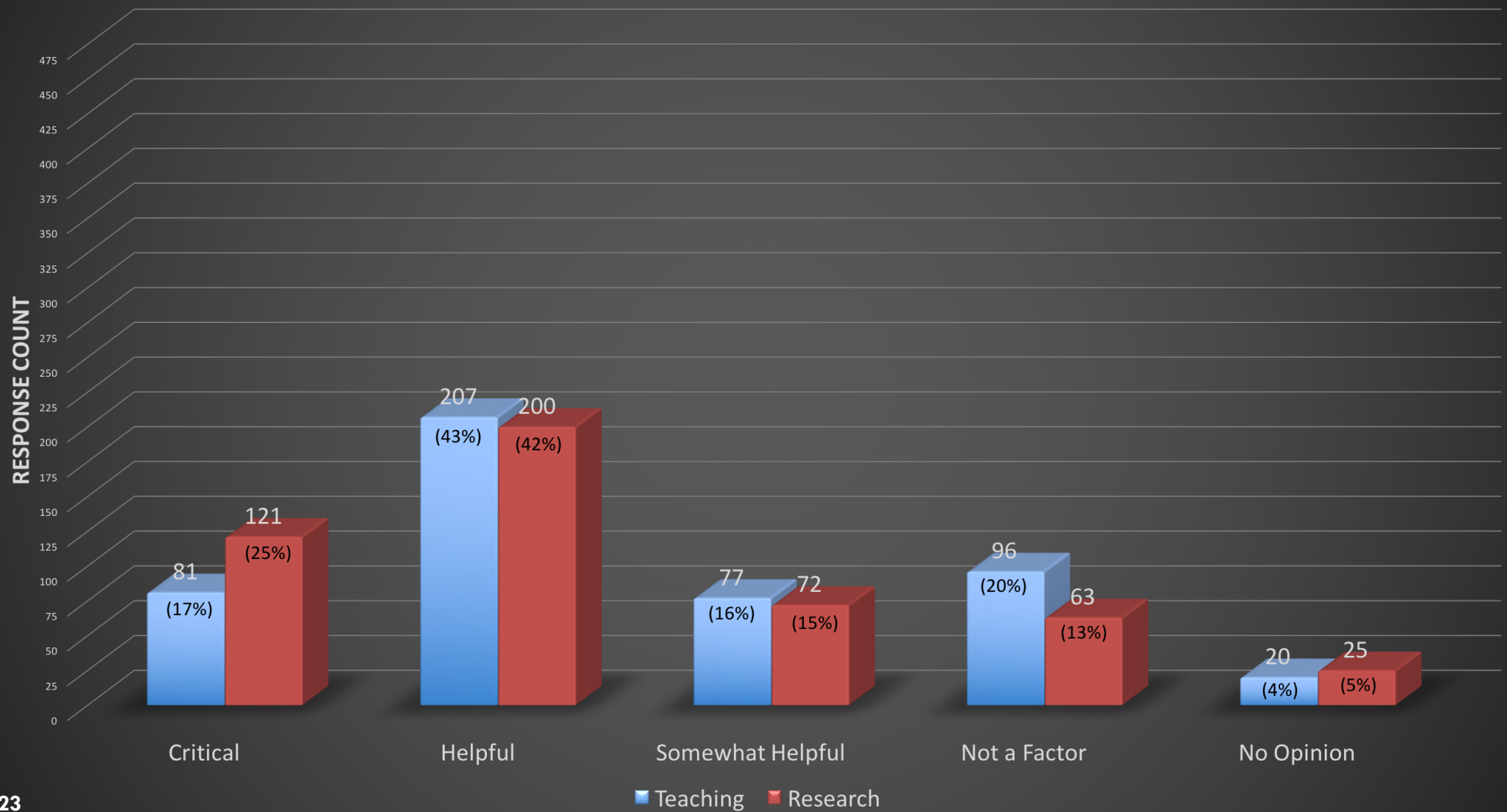
Perceptions of Librarians' Relevance in Assisting Faculty *Teaching* and *Research* by *Frequency of Interaction* with Librarians

Q: Overall, how relevant are librarians in assisting you in teaching/research?

Relevance in Teaching	Interact Weekly	Interact Monthly	Several times a year	1 or 2 times a year	ALL
Critical	34%	24%	16%	8%	18%
Helpful	45%	56%	50%	33%	46%

Relevance in Research	Interact Weekly	Interact Monthly	Several times a year	1 or 2 times a year	ALL
Critical	40%	35%	25%	15%	26%
Helpful	48%	49%	44%	39%	44%

Faculty Knowledge of Librarian Status

Librarian Status	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
Academic rank/ faculty status	0%	70%	63%	0%
No academic rank/ faculty status	62%	0%	0%	37%
Don't know	38%	29%	33%	61%

Faculty *Perceive* Relationship with Librarians by *Knowledge of Librarians' Status*

Nature of Relationship	Knowledge of Faculty status	Knowledge of No Faculty status	Don't know	All Respondents
Close/trusting/collaborative	29%	39%	15%	25%
Collegial/courteous	60%	56%	58%	58%
Total	89%	95%	73%	84%

Faculty *Knowledge of Librarians' Status* by Perceptions of Librarians' Role Relevance

Importance in teaching	Knowledge of Faculty status	Knowledge of no Faculty status	Don't know	All respondents
Very important	35%	43%	35%	37%
Important	41%	48%	36%	40%
Total	76%	91%	71%	77%

Importance in research	Knowledge of Faculty status	Knowledge of no Faculty status	Don't know	All respondents
Very important	66%	64%	56%	62%
Important	26%	28%	30%	28%
Total	92%	91%	85%	89%

Importance in service	Knowledge of Faculty status	Knowledge of no Faculty status	Don't know	All respondents
Very important	38%	29%	38%	36%
Important	37%	41%	24%	33%
Total	75%	70%	62%	69%

Faculty *Knowledge of Librarians' Status* by Perceptions of Librarians' Role Relevance

Relevance in teaching	Knowledge Faculty status	Knowledge of no Faculty status	Don't know	ALL
Critical	17%	20%	15%	17%
Helpful	44%	58%	36%	43%
Total	61%	78%	51%	60%

Relevance in research	Knowledge Faculty status	Knowledge of no Faculty status	Don't know	ALL
Critical	30%	21%	20%	25%
Helpful	44%	46%	37%	42%
Total	74%	67%	57%	67%

Faculty Satisfaction w/ Local Librarians' Academic Rank/Status (Q13 / Q2)

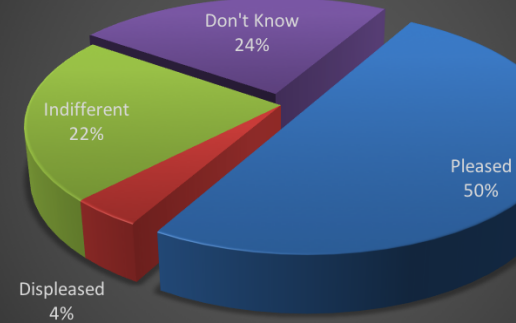**Gettysburg College**
(NO Faculty Status for Librarians)

Don't Know 44%
Pleased 36%
Indifferent 18%
Displeased 2%
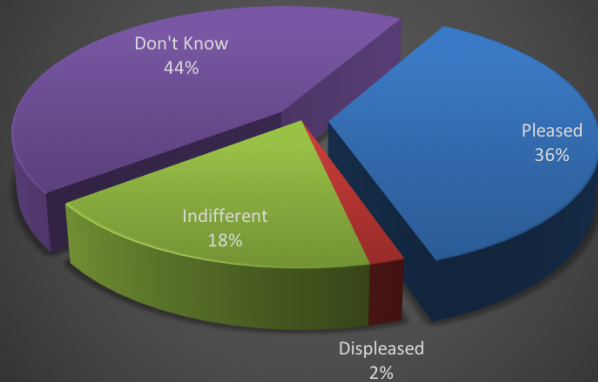
The College of New Jersey (TCNJ)
(Faculty Status for Librarians)

Don't Know 19%
Indifferent 13%
Displeased 2%
Pleased 66%
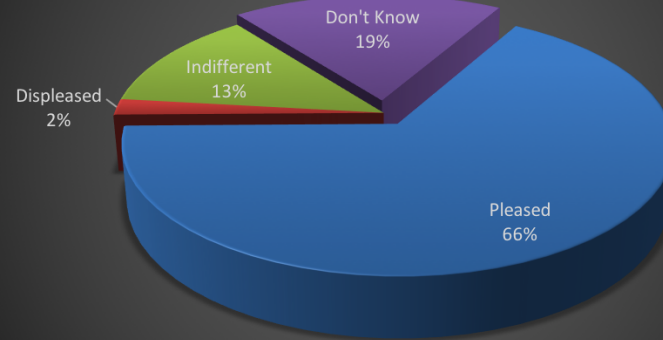
University of Pennsylvania
(NO Faculty Status for Librarians)

Don't Know 50%
Pleased 20%
Displeased 9%
Indifferent 21%
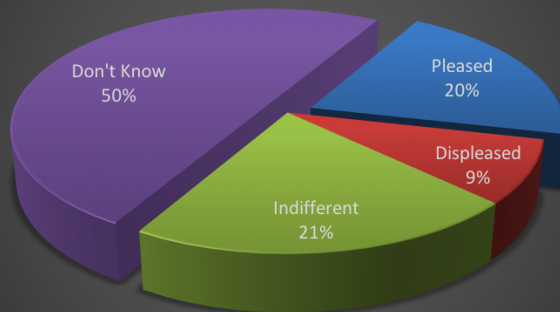
Indiana University Bloomington
(Faculty Status for Librarians)
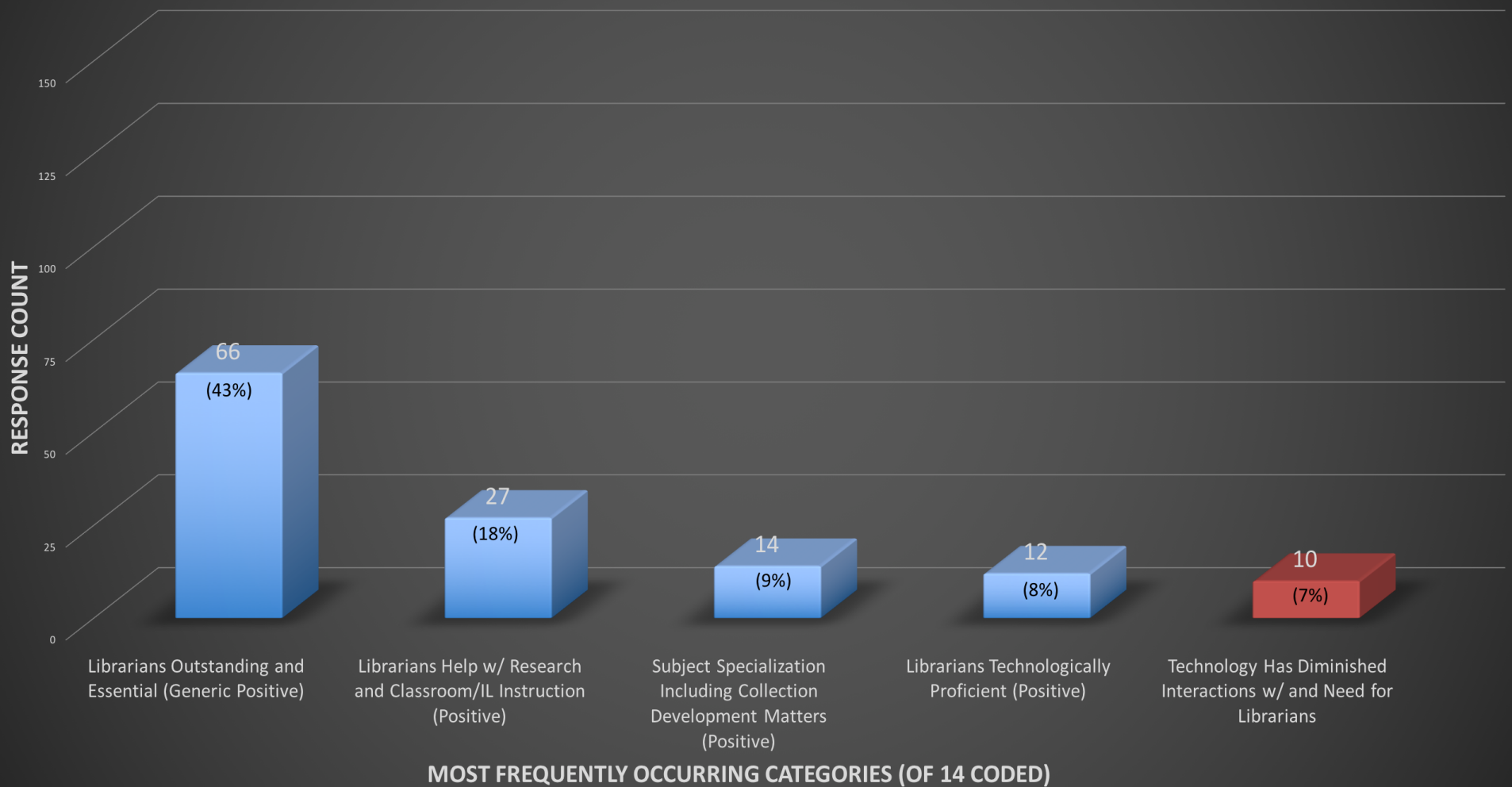
Don't Know 24%
Indifferent 22%
Pleased 50%
Displeased 4%

Qualitative Data

- **Q18**: "Do you have any other comments on the perceptions of faculty about librarians at your institution?"
  - 152 of 505 survey participants entered text into the comment box
  - Data coded by investigators reflected 14 categories
  - Five categories each received 10 or more comments
- **Q19**: "In your opinion, how can the effectiveness of the partnership between librarians and faculty be enhanced and strengthened?"
  - 155 of 505 survey participants entered text into the comment box
  - Data coded by investigators reflected 11 categories
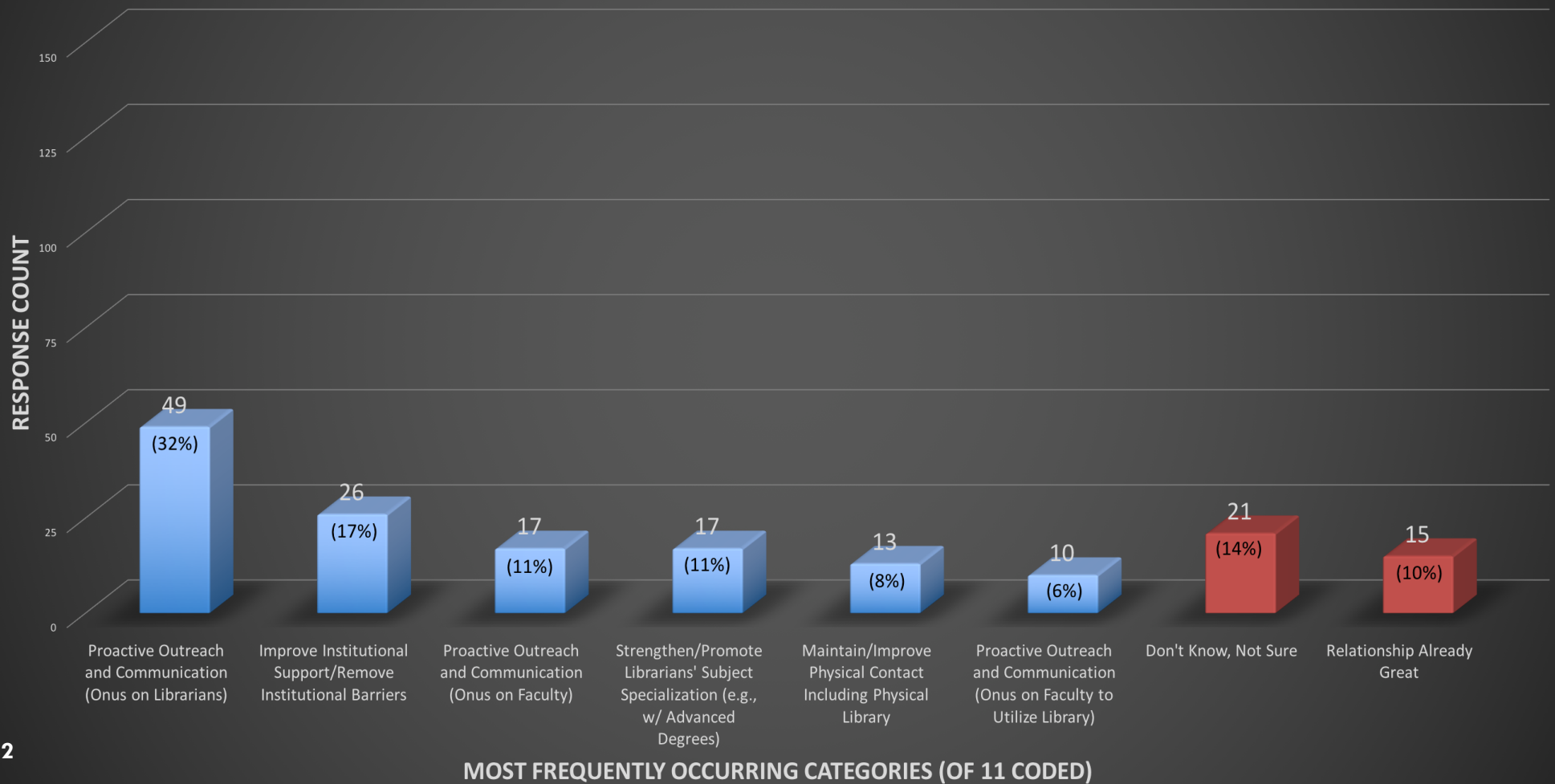 - Eight categories each received 10 or more comments

Faculty Perceptions of Local Academic Librarians (Q18)
n=152

Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Partnership Between Faculty and Librarians (Q19)
n=155

RESPONSE COUNT

MOST FREQUENTLY OCCURRING CATEGORIES (OF 11 CODED)

- Proactive Outreach and Communication (Onus on Librarians): 49 (32%)
- Improve Institutional Support/Remove Institutional Barriers: 26 (17%)
- Proactive Outreach and Communication (Onus on Faculty): 17 (11%)
- Strengthen/Promote Librarians' Subject Specialization (e.g., w/ Advanced Degrees): 17 (11%)
- Maintain/Improve Physical Contact Including Physical Library: 13 (8%)
- Proactive Outreach and Communication (Onus on Faculty to Utilize Library): 10 (6%)
- Don't Know, Not Sure: 21 (14%)
- Relationship Already Great: 15 (10%)

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Preliminary Conclusions

☐ Faculty *use* of library resources and services:

- A majority of faculty (70%), even in science disciplines, continue to make ready use of resources and services offered by their local academic libraries.

- Printed books are the most heavily used format after e-journals.

- The OPAC is the most heavily used library tool/service, exceeding even ILL, reference services, and course reserves.

☐ Faculty *perceptions* of librarians:

- The vast majority of faculty across all demographic slices perceive librarians as either very important or important in assisting teaching/research/service.

- Faculty with *knowledge* of librarians' status (not librarians' actual status) who regularly interact with librarians perceive closer relationships.

- Librarians perceived as integrated into the academic life of their institutions are likelier to be empowered to further institutional missions.

Questions?

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