

Saint Louis University Libraries

User Perceptions of Space in Special Collections and Archives & Records Management—Spring 2015

Submitted May 29, 2015



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Introduction

At the beginning of 2015, Dave Cassens, Dean of Libraries, requested that the Pius/Medical Center Libraries Assessment Committee develop an assessment tool to ascertain user perceptions of the spaces in Pius XII Memorial Library's Special Collections (Vatican Film Library and Rare Books) and in Archives & Records Management. Dean Cassens hoped that the results could be part of a plan to improve the facilities for both the strategic plan and for the upcoming capital campaign. The libraries are deeply concerned about user satisfaction with services, collections, and facilities. However, this project concentrated solely on space in the two reading rooms: Vatican Film Library (VFL) on Level 1 and Room 307 shared by both Rare Books and Archives & Records Management.

Method

The Assessment Committee developed a short Qualtrics survey that was sent to a targeted group of faculty, students, and researchers who had used the collections in the past few years. This group included the following: two years of visitor logs from the VFL and patron registration forms from Archives and Rare Books; five years of VFL Mellon Fellows and CMRS NEH Fellows; and SLU faculty and students who were known users of either facility. Gregory Pass, Assistant Dean for Special Collections, sent out 244 e-mail messages to this group asking them to complete an attached survey between February 9 and February 20. He sent them reminder messages at the beginning of the second week on February 16. Differing numbers of respondents addressed each of the six questions, with 90 as the highest number of responses for Question 1. The overall total was 77 with these leading respondents: 27 non-SLU-affiliated researcher/visitors; 26 SLU faculty; and 18 SLU graduate students.

Summary

Respondents were generally satisfied with layout, equipment, and noise levels but were generally dissatisfied with spaces for teaching, exhibitions and public programming, and research consultation. This data is consistent for both the Vatican Film Library (VFL) on Level 1 and Room 307 shared by both Rare Books and Archives & Records Management. These specific negative results were consistent with what Special Collections and Archives & Records Management faculty and staff have observed for a while about their spaces.

Survey Results

All survey findings are summarized in this section with six questions corresponding to the survey. See Appendix A for actual survey questions and responses and Appendix B for further data analysis.

Question 1: Importance of special and unique collections

Survey question 1 asked participants to indicate the degree of importance of the materials in special collections for their teaching, learning, and research. The vast majority (80/90 or 89%) indicated that the special collections are "very important" or "extremely important" (see Figure 1 below and Appendix A, Figure A-1). Twenty-three respondents chose to add a written comment remarking on the value of these collections. The comments listed below are typical (see Appendix A, Figure A-2 for all comments and Appendix B, Figures B-4, B-5, and B-6 for further analysis).

- “The VFL and Rare Books collections are extremely valuable for my teaching and research.”
- “They are vital to a research university.”
- “The collection at the VFL is one of the most complete and important in the country for manuscript research.”
- “The Vatican Film Library is one of the major reasons I came to Saint Louis University. It is the collection around which the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies was built. When I came to SLU in 1992, there were 21 faculty associated with the new Center--now there are more than 70. The Special Collections at Pius helped place SLU's Philosophy Department's medieval program as the top medieval Philosophy program in the world. Two other Departments' graduate programs, English and History, are rated in the top 100 because of the strength of Special Collections at SLU. These collections are critical to undergraduate research in History and the other humanities disciplines.”
- “I come to Saint Louis particularly to use the microfilm collection from the Vatican library, but also the early printed editions and manuscripts house in Special collections.”
- “I take my students to visit Special Collections at least once a semester. It is vital for them to have contact with rare primary materials in order to get an authentic view of the material culture of the period under study (the nineteenth century).”

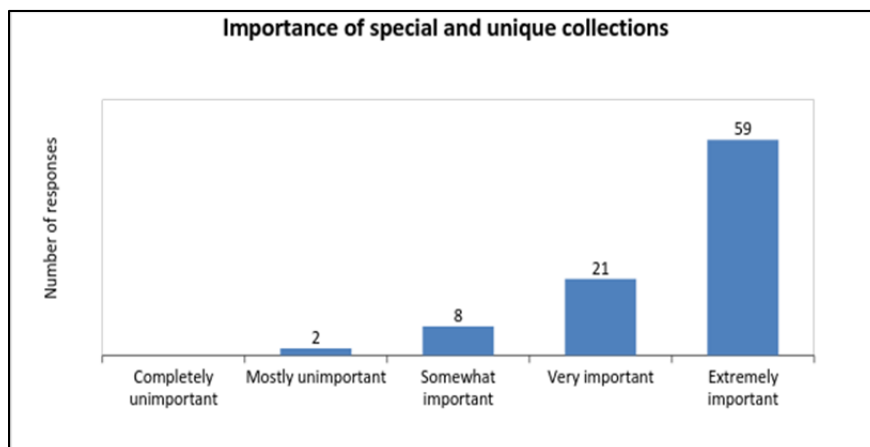


Figure 1

Question 2: Extent of familiarity with/use of facilities at institutions other than SLU

Most of the survey participants had previous experience using special collections and archives spaces at institutions other than SLU. Forty percent (36/89) reported having “A Lot” of experience, while 74 percent (66/89) reported having “Some” to “A Lot” of experience (see Figure 2 below and Appendix A, Figure A-3). Some participants commented on where these experiences occurred, and this list included local, national, and international institutions. Fifty-seven percent (16/28) of the comments listed special collections and archives spaces at international institutions, and seventy-nine percent (22/28) of the comments listed other local and national institutions (see Appendix B, Figures B-2 and B-3). These data show that the prior experiences of the survey participants would allow them to make knowledgeable comparisons between the special collections and archives spaces at SLU and other institutions.

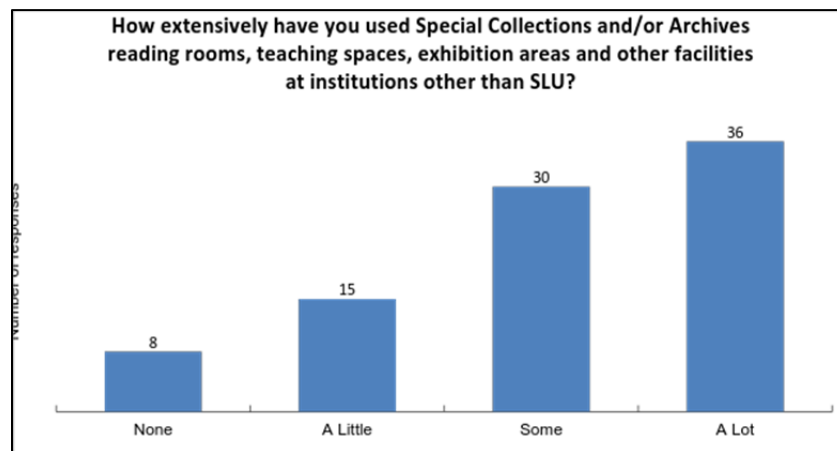


Figure 2

Question 3: SLU's facilities compared to those at other institutions

The majority of survey participants responded that the physical facilities at SLU for Special Collections and/or Archives are about the same as (45.00%) or worse than (26.25%) facilities at other institutions (see Appendix A, Figure A-5). Although 21 percent of respondents report that SLU's facilities are much better than other institutions, further comments indicate inadequacies in the reading rooms and teaching spaces, as well as the need for renovation, climate control, and additional spaces such as a conference room and lecture space. Multiple comments refer to the lack of space for researchers, staff, teaching, and exhibitions (see Appendix A, Figure A-6 for all comments):

- “The Rare Books room is a nice space, but small.”
- “When I took my class to see exhibits that the staff graciously arranged, the space interfered with scholars who were doing their research.”
- “The VRL [*sic*] reading room is very cramped, with no adequate spae [*sic*] for staff and scholars.”
- “There is not much sitting or standing room for my classes when they come to visit Special Collections, even though I have only about 19 students per class.”
- “I think it’s odd for staff who permanently work in the special collections at SLU to have to share their very limited space with all the researchers. As a researcher, I find the space uncomfortable b/c it’s tight and one gets easily distracted by others also working there.”

Question 4: How well do SLU's facilities meet users' current needs?

Survey question 4 asked the respondents to evaluate the physical facilities of the Vatican Film Library (VFL) on Level 1 and Room 307 shared by both Rare Books and Archives & Records Management. Participants were asked if the current facilities were “far short of my needs,” “short of my needs,” “meets my needs,” “exceeds my needs,” or “far exceeds my needs.” To analyze the data, the positive responses (exceeds my needs or far exceeds my needs) and the negative responses (far short of my needs and short of my needs) were grouped and then the percentages were compared as seen in the charts below (see Appendix A, Figures A-7 and A-8 for further data).

The data found in the charts show that the majority of responses were negative. The most positive response was only 44%, while the four most negative responses were all over 50%. These four were “dedicated space for teaching” and “exhibition and public programming space” for both the Vatican Film Library (VFL) and Room 307 shared by both Rare Books and Archives & Records Management. The data indicate that both spaces are not meeting the current needs of their users.

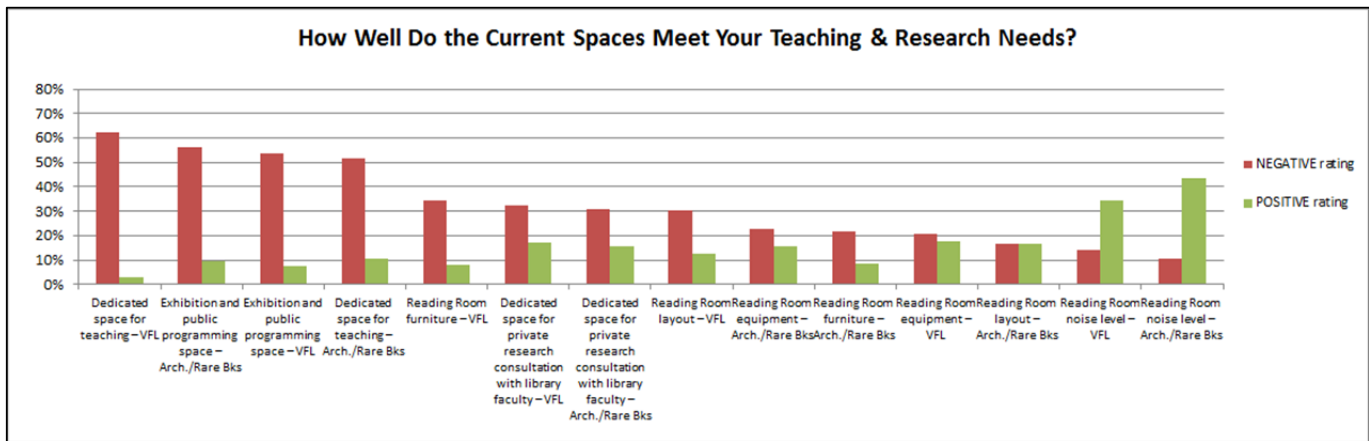


Figure 3

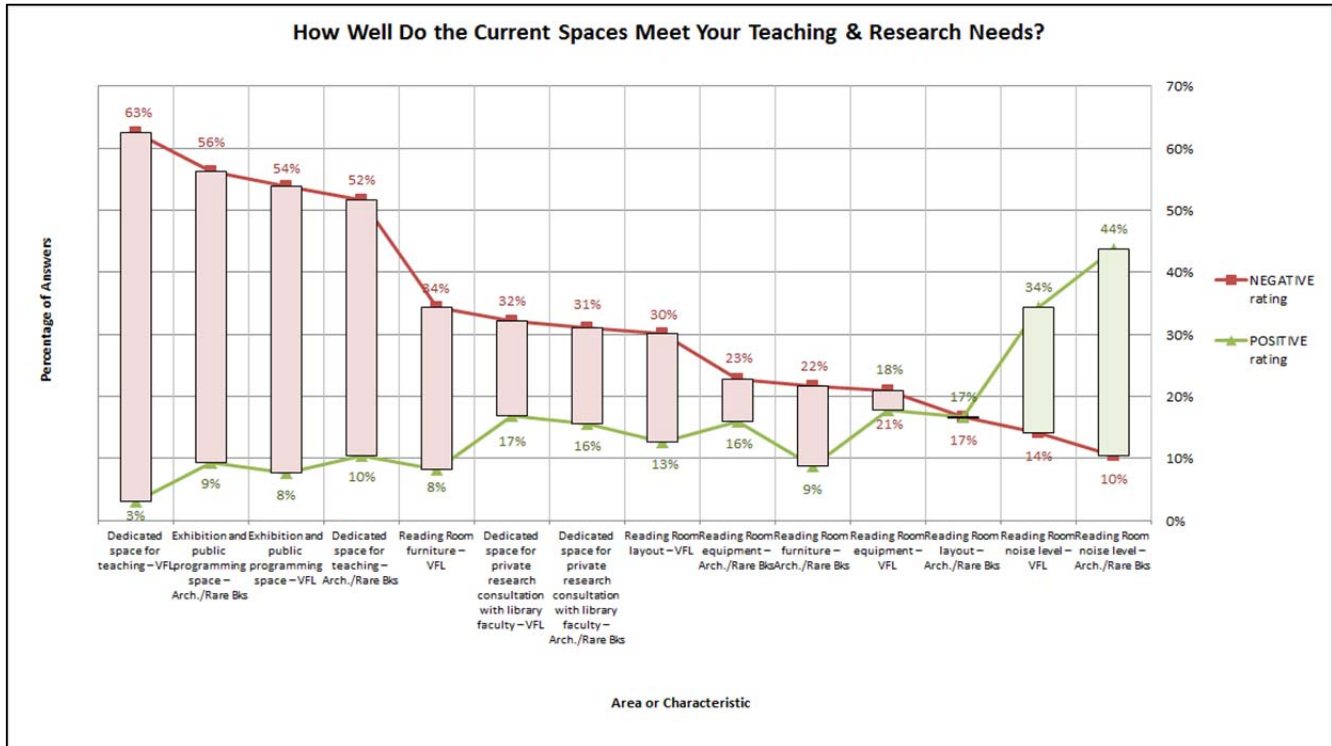


Figure 4

Question 5: How well do SLU's facilities meet users' ideal expectations?

Survey question 5 asked the respondents to evaluate the physical facilities of the Vatican Film Library (VFL) on Level 1 and Room 307 shared by both Rare Books and Archives & Records Management. Participants were asked to designate various specific aspects of the facilities in relation to their **ideal expectations** as either “very far from ideal,” “far from ideal,” “neither far from nor near ideal,” “near ideal,” or “very near ideal” (see Appendix A, Figures A-9 and A-10 for further data). To analyze the data, the responses were grouped as **positive** (near ideal or very near ideal), **negative** (very far from ideal and far from ideal) and **neutral** (neither far from nor near ideal). For the purposes of analysis, the “neutral” category was eliminated and the percentages of positive and negative responses were compared. The charts below show the comparison of positive and negative percentages for each aspect of the physical facilities about which participants were asked. The first chart shows the positive (green bar) and negative (red bar) for each aspect arranged with the aspect receiving the greatest negative response on the left and continuing in decreasing order to the right side of the chart. The second chart is arranged in the same way (negative percentages from greatest to least from left to right) but illustrates the **gap between positive and negative percentages** for each aspect.

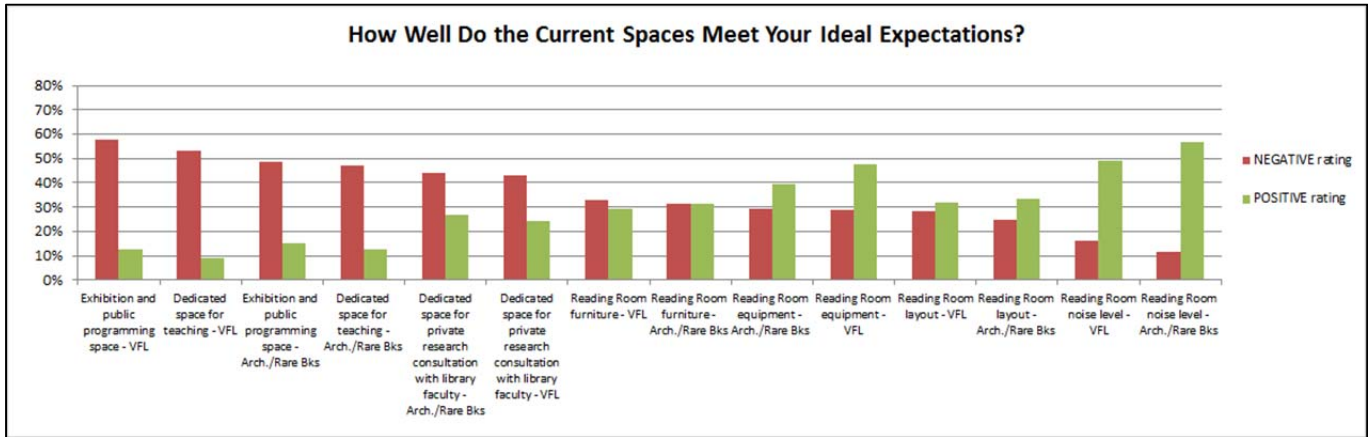


Figure 5

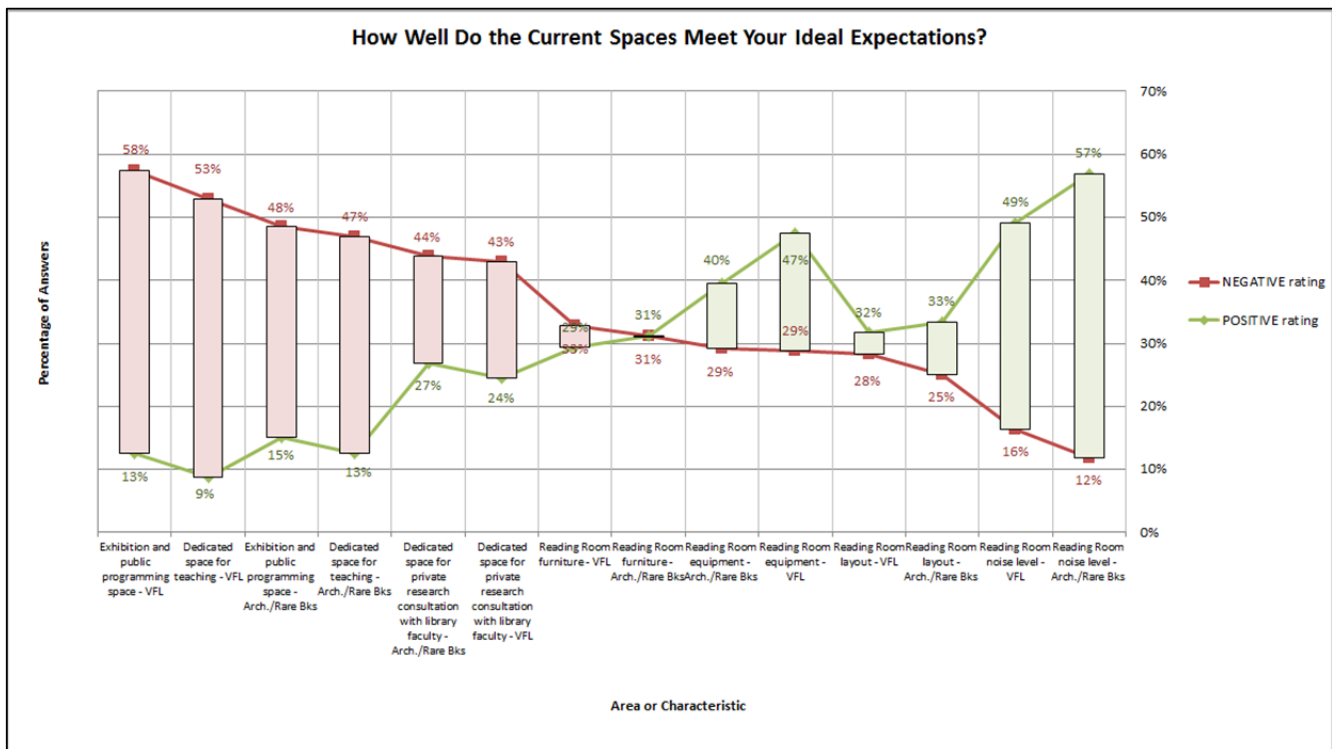


Figure 6

Several observations can be made based on these charts:

1. There is a high preponderance of negative responses for the first four items on the left in each chart, viz. **exhibition/public programming space** for both **VFL** and **ARB** as well as **dedicated space for teaching** for both **VFL** and **ARB**. Clearly, a significantly larger proportion of respondents see a gap between their ideal expectations and the current facilities than the proportion of respondents who view those facilities as closer to the ideal.

2. There is a preponderance of negative responses, although not as great, for the next two items (moving to the right), **dedicated space for private research consultation in both VFL and ARB**. The gap between positive and negative responses is smaller but still significant. The gap between ideals and realities exists for these items, too.
3. It should be noted that, even in those cases where the percentage of positive responses was greater than the percentage of negative responses (i.e. where the green bar is taller in the first chart or the gap between positive and negative is green in the second), **in only one case did the percentage of positive responses amount to a majority of the respondents** (reading room noise level ARB). In the other cases of positive responses exceeding negative responses, the positive responses were usually matched or otherwise close to the number of “neutral” responses (not shown in the charts).
4. For the other thirteen items shown in the charts, a **majority** of respondents **at best** regard the facilities of VFL and ARB as either less than or not having any relationship to their ideal expectations. In other words, even when positive responses outweighed negative responses, these never amounted to an absolute majority (with the one exception noted in #3 above).
5. Overall, these data suggest that the **users of these facilities view the physical facilities in VFL and ARB in negative terms** in comparison to their ideal expectations **with regard to teaching, public programming and private research consultation**. That negativity is apparent but not as great with regard to furniture, equipment and research environment.

Question 6: Further comments and/or suggestions regarding SLU facilities

Although multiple respondents commented on recent improvements in the facilities and physical spaces at SLU, and commended both the resources and the faculty/staff, many comments refer to the lack of space for researchers, library faculty/staff, teaching, public and exhibitions (see Appendix A, Figure A-11 for all comments and Appendix B, Figure B-7 for further analysis):

- “It would be nice to have special collections in one place.”
- “More space for reference materials would be helpful.”
- “There should be a small conference room for collaborative work and graduate teaching.”
- “There should be a small lecture hall for events that could be linked to Special Collections, and host Manuscripta.”
- “The teachings [*sic*] spaces work fine, but in terms of larger venues for presenting research or collection projects, a better space would make the collections more visible to patrons and showcase their importance to our research areas and projects more clearly to a wider audience.”
- “I would like more space for teaching, exhibitions and public programming at the VFL.”

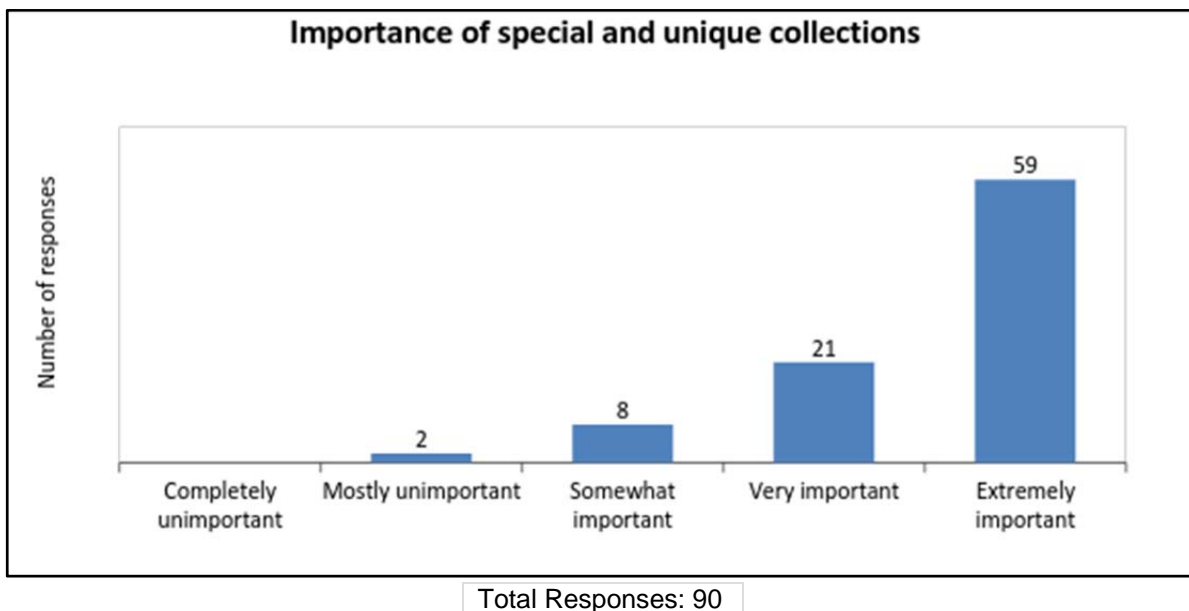
Recommended Actions

- Some researchers, faculty, and students come to SLU especially for Special Collections and Archives & Records Management resources. To support recruitment and retention, efforts should be made to enhance spaces for users, collections, and services.
- As demonstrated by many positive comments, the physical facilities need to be improved to match the expertise of the faculty and staff and the quality of the collections.
- The committee recommends consideration of the employment of a professional consultant to comprehensively and holistically assess the spaces and make plans based on those recommendations.

Appendix A: Survey Questions and Responses

A-1. Question 1:

How important are special and unique collections—e.g., rare books, manuscripts, archives, records, images, data and other primary source materials—to your teaching, learning or research?



A-2. Question 1a:

Comments (optional):

Text Responses (23 total)

I make some use of the collections in my teaching. I would hope to incorporate them into my research in the future, and I hope to make rare books/mss a bigger part of my teaching in the future.

The Ong collection is a unique resource that cannot be duplicated elsewhere.

Especially manuscript books and early printed editions.

I use them for research papers, and my own intellectual enrichment.

Necessary for my research

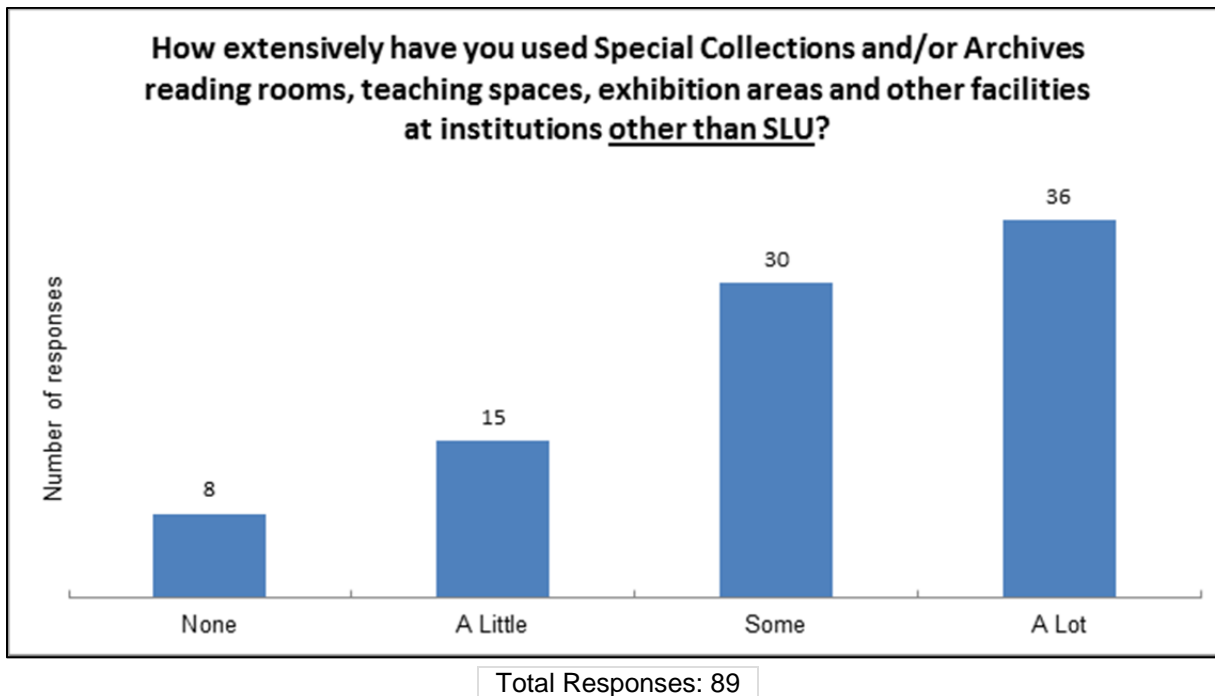
Anyone who teaches students how to work with manuscripts or how to edit texts, REQUIRES the VFL's holdings, esp. its rich collection of catalogs.

As a medieval historian, unpublished primary source material in the original manuscripts, or in films of those manuscripts, is central to my research and to the teaching of advanced students. The VFL has helped make some of that research possible.

<p>...and increasingly important as more and more works are digitized. It is a wonderful experience to hold an artifact like a book or manuscript and realize all of the hands that have been on it and in it to bring it down to us today.</p>
<p>The VFL and Rare Books collections are extremely valuable for my teaching and research.</p>
<p>They are vital to a research university.</p>
<p>I work on medieval manuscripts in my research and I cannot afford to go to Rome to see the manuscripts that I need.</p>
<p>The collection at the VFL is one of the most complete and important in the country for manuscript research.</p>
<p>Many of my texts that I study are not available in print form or are only available in early modern editions, so special collections are essential to my research and writing and are very helpful for my teaching as well.</p>
<p>The Vatican Film Library is one of the major reasons I came to Saint Louis University. It is the collection around which the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies was built. When I came to SLU in 1992, there were 21 faculty associated with the new Center--now there are more than 70. The Special Collections at Pius helped place SLU's Philosophy Department's medieval program as the top medieval Philosophy program in the world. Two other Departments' graduate programs, English and History, are rated in the top 100 because of the strength of Special Collections at SLU. These collections are critical to undergraduate research in History and the other humanities disciplines.</p>
<p>I am a history graduate student.</p>
<p>I rarely make use of the rare books / manuscripts collection. I teach Medieval and Renaissance literature, but I mostly teach literary analysis, and we rarely deal with the "archaeological" side of book fruition throughout the centuries.</p>
<p>I take my students to visit Special Collections at least once a semester. It is vital for them to have contact with rare primary materials in order to get an authentic view of the material culture of the period under study (the nineteenth century).</p>
<p>The resources in the rare books and manuscripts collections have served as the main sources of my research on multiple occasions.</p>
<p>primary sources are a critical component to my research as a historian. Having access to books, manuscripts, and microfilms is important, but digital access and support in scanning materials into digital form is also critical.</p>
<p>These collections are vital for our world-class library</p>
<p>I come to Saint Louis particularly to use the microfilm collection from the Vatican library, but also the early printed editions and manuscripts housed in Special Collections.</p>
<p>There were sources that I needed to reference for my dissertation, which were only available in special collections.</p>
<p>I have arranged for my classes to visit SLU's collection of medieval manuscripts. And recently I made heavy use of the holdings in the Vatican Film Library for research that was incorporated into my book.</p>

A-3. Question 2:

How extensively have you used Special Collections and/or Archives reading rooms, teaching spaces, exhibition areas and other facilities at institutions other than SLU?



A-4. Question 2a:

Comments (optional): Note: If you wish, include the name(s) of other institution(s) at which you have used these types of facilities.

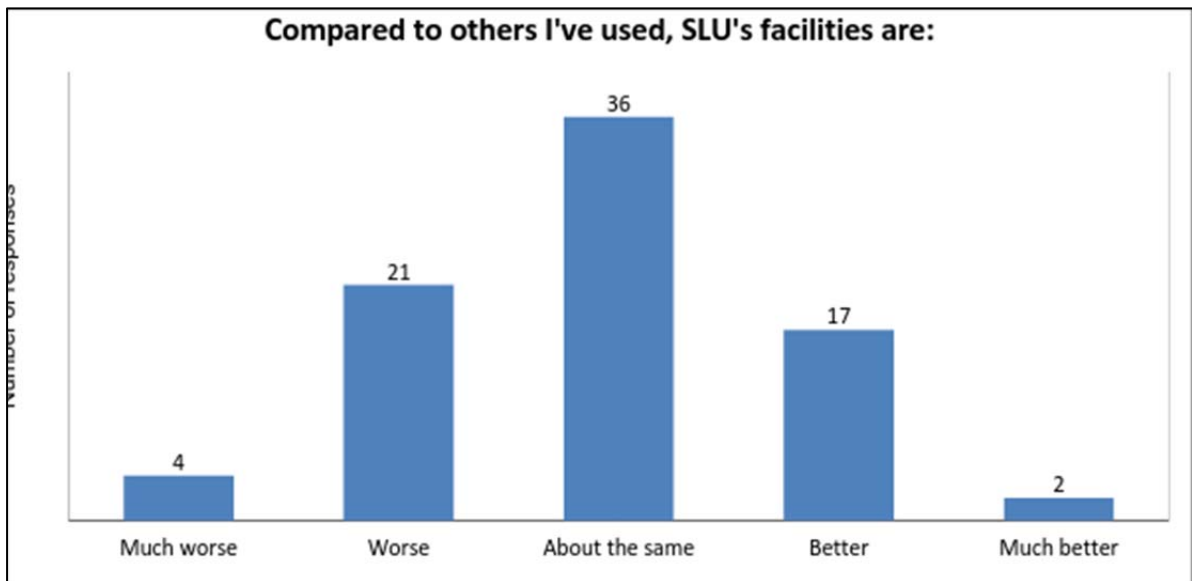
Text Responses (28 total)
Harvard, Yale, Washington U
Mostly Penn & Princeton. Occasionally I have used European repositories.
Mostly the Vatican Film library
Newberry Library, Chicago; Oriental Institute, University of Chicago; British Library;
Roman Archives of Jesuits; Secret Vatican Archives; Royal Library Brussels; Archives of the Jesuits in Vanves (France); Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana; National Library France; Lilly Library Bloomington Indiana; Matteo Ricci Institute San Francisco
1. Notre Dame's "Ambrosiana" room - 7th floor of Hesburgh Library, within their larger Medieval Holdings. 2. The IRHT in Paris. 3. The BAV (Vatican library) in Rome.

Duke University, Oxford University, Notre Dame University
University of Toronto, Bodleian Library Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and several other Oxford and Cambridge college libraries.
Merchantile library
Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris); Bibliothèque Mazarine (Paris); Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid); Cornell University; Villanova University; Johns Hopkins University; The Newberry Library; The New York Public Library
Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence Max Planck Institutes, Hamburg and Frankfurt Harvard University Academia degli Intronati, Siena University of California, Berkeley British Library, London
I use the manuscript collections at the University of Freiburg and the Badische Landesbibliothek in the summer when I am there, also the Zentralbibliothek and the Stadtarchiv in Zurich, and the Bavarian State Library, when I am in Germany. These collections have one-of-a kind manuscripts that are not available anywhere else. The Manuscripts at the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, where I gave a talk in the summer of 2013, are related to six manuscripts in the Vatican Film Library that I cannot get anywhere else except Rome. I make on average two special trips a year to St. Louis to consult these sources.
many many libraries in Euorpe, the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, the IRHT in Paris
CUL, Bodleian, British Library, Wellcome
Harvard, Toronto, Getty Institute, Newberry Library (Chicago), New York Academy of Medicine, Medieval INstitute (Notre Dame), Hill Monastic Manuscript Library
Missouri Historical Society, Jesuit Archives of the Central United States, Marquette University, Archdiocese of St. Louis Archives
I did some of it when I was teaching at Trinity College, Hartford, CT.
At my previous job at Washington State University, I would occasionally take graduate students to look at items in the University's Special Collections Division. I have also viewed rare books and archival materials at the Huntington Library, Harvard University Libraries, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, The New York Public Library, and UCLA.
Before attending SLU I was at the University of Toronto (making use of their main Robarts Library and the pontifical institute of medieval studies library) and at the University of London (Where I used the Institute for Historical Research and Senate House libraries as well as the British Library)
I have been the Jesuit archives of the Central United States, as well as the university archives of Loyola University in New Orleans and Regis University in Denver.
Saint Louis University is the only university I've attended which has such facilities.
like it---great place to view
Pierpont Morgan Library.
WUSTL, SLPL (Central Library)

The research I have done at SLU has been used in various articles and presentations at other institutions.
Libraries and archives in several countries. Princeton University, Harvard University, British Library, Oxford, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, etc.
I have mostly used special collections in European libraries, e.g. the British Library, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek.
Tulane University, Brown University (John Carter Brown), Harvard University, UNAM-Merida.

A-5. Question 3:

How well do the physical facilities (reading rooms, teaching spaces, exhibition areas and other facilities) for Special Collections and/or Archives at SLU compare to those at other institutions?



Total Responses: 80

A-6. Question 3a:

Comments (optional):

Text Responses (24 total)
Vatican Film library much improved since renovations, both it and the rare books room could use more reading space
Access was made easier thanks to archivists
The special collections should be climate controlled! I understand that this may be a problem with funding, but it seems a shame to expose such incredible pieces of history and literature to the elements.
1. The physical space of the VFL is attractive and useful. 2. However, the ms readers are antiquated and slow.
SLU has great resources, which need to be packaged better.
The Rare Books room is a nice space, but small. The VFL is rather gloomy.
Conditions vary considerably though all, with the exception of Siena (twenty years ago) were adequate. SLU is certainly very comfortable for the user, though at times it can be a bit crowded
The facilities are unimportant to me. What is important are the manuscripts.
The microfilm readers in the VFL are an embarrassment. The room is always dusty and the electric wiring looks like it's going to explode any minute. That collection is a TREASURE and you should be treating it better.
When I took my class to see exhibits that the staff graciously arranged, the space interfered with scholars who were doing their research. SLU needs secure exhibit spaces, better space for scholars using Special Collections (both in the St. Louis Room and the VFL), a conference room, and a small lecture hall (replacing the Knights Room). The VRL reading room is very cramped, with no adequate space for staff and scholars.
SLU's physical facilities are pretty good, but they need updating. For example, dedicated lights over tables.
Not enough space has been aloted for all special collections--they need more space.
The digital readers and scanners are very helpful and useful. The Vatican Film Library is also nice because of all the natural light; many special collections are kept in basement rooms or rooms with very little light.
What's done at SLU is done well, but typically other institutions have interdisciplinary centers that share space with the special collections that support them.
They are excellent!
There is not much sitting or standing room for my classes when they come to visit Special Collections, even though I have only about 19 students per class. In groups of this size, it is hard for them to get close enough to the items on display, given the setup of the room.
This is not a critique, I was just at world-class institutions before this. Overall physical facilities have improved greatly in the 5

years I've been here, especially in the VFL.
While in each facility the reading room doubles as a teaching space so that if a class is being given in the facility it can put a kink in the plans of a researcher, nevertheless other universities are limited to a couple small tables for their reading/research area, while SLU has several medium to large tables. It is not an enormous difference, but it is noticeable.
Lighting in VFL and 3rd floor is pretty awful, especially on those occasions when I took photos of materials it was very difficult to get adequate light without a glare.
I think it's odd for staff who permanently work in the special collections at SLU to have to share their very limited space with all the researchers. As a researcher, I find the space uncomfortable b/c it's tight and one gets easily distracted by others also working there. I think esp. in the VFL space should be improved for all those making use of it.
I mainly have experience at the VFL, which is a wonderful space.
A dedicated exhibition gallery space for special collections materials, would be a big improvement and a great service both to the collection and to visitors to the exhibitions.
Considering its importance, the facilities for the VFL seem rather cramped and a bit dilapidated. A renovation would better serve the many who use it.
Some things, such as the displays, are better. Others, such as the finding guides and limited microfilm readers are not as up to speed.

A-7. Question 4:

How well do the physical facilities in SLU Special Collections (Vatican Film Library, Rare Books) and/or Archives & Records Management meet your current needs for teaching, learning and research in regard to the following areas?

Question	1. Far short of my needs	2. Short of my needs	3. Meets my needs	4. Exceeds my needs	5. Far exceeds my needs	Total Responses	Mean
Reading Room noise level – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	1	8	33	15	7	64	3.30
Reading Room noise level – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	1	4	22	14	7	48	3.46
Reading Room layout – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	5	14	36	5	3	63	2.79

Reading Room layout – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	4	4	32	6	2	48	2.96
Reading Room furniture – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	4	17	35	4	1	61	2.69
Reading Room furniture – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	3	7	32	2	2	46	2.85
Reading Room equipment – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	5	8	38	9	2	62	2.92
Reading Room equipment – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	2	8	27	6	1	44	2.91
Dedicated space for teaching – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	11	9	11	0	1	32	2.09
Dedicated space for teaching – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	9	6	11	2	1	29	2.31
Exhibition and public programming space – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	10	11	15	3	0	39	2.28
Exhibition and public programming space – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	8	10	11	3	0	32	2.28
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	10	9	30	8	2	59	2.71
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty – Archives / Rare Books (Rm. 307)	7	7	24	5	2	45	2.73

Statistic	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Reading Room noise level Vatican Film Library (VFL)	1	5	3.3	0.78	0.89	64
Reading Room noise level - Archives / Rare	1	5	3.46	0.85	0.92	48

Books						
Reading Room layout - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.79	0.78	0.88	63
Reading Room layout - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.96	0.72	0.85	48
Reading Room furniture - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.69	0.58	0.76	61
Reading Room furniture - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.85	0.62	0.79	46
Reading Room equipment - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.92	0.73	0.86	62
Reading Room equipment - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.91	0.6	0.77	44
Dedicated space for teaching - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.09	0.99	1	32
Dedicated space for teaching - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.31	1.22	1.11	29
Exhibition and public programming space - Vatican Film Library	1	4	2.28	0.89	0.94	39
Exhibition and public programming space - Archives / Rare Books	1	4	2.28	0.92	0.96	32
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.71	1.04	1.02	59
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.73	1.02	1.01	45

A-8. Question 4a:

Comments (optional):

Text Responses (13 total)

I no longer am located in the STL area.

Is there space for private research/consultation?!
I have used only the VFL room 105, and never Room 307. Room 105 is quiet, well-lit, and pleasant, but the furniture and most of the readers are woefully outdated, and I find the stacks hard to access and negotiate. The newer pair of reader/scanners are excellent, though.
more space and more microfilm readers would be helpful. The staff is wonderfully generous with their time in helping the technologically challenged user navigate the system.
Everything needs upgrading to make the rich materials available to students and scholars.
It would be nice for the VFL to have more money to support its exhibitions with appropriate display cases and lighting.
I am not sure whether "far exceeds my needs" is meant to be the most positive mark - I would have clicked on that if I were sure of that. Anyway, all the facilities definitely and fully met my needs.
At times, the various individuals who come in and out of the library, the student classes, and the meetings of staff can be quite disruptive to research in the VFL. It is nice, however, to be in the same room as the associate librarian and be able to ask Susan L'Engle any question at any time.
I love bringing undergraduate and graduate classes to use the collections but regret that I disturb regular users whenever I do so. We have a huge international conference coming up at which we wish we could show the strengths of the collection in Medical History, but we cannot, because of lack of dedicated exhibition space.
It is difficult to conduct classes in the archives/ rare books reading room due to lack of adequate seating and inadequate standing room between the display tables.
The VFL especially needs to be larger, but since that is not really possible it needs to be rearranged to maximize space both for desks and presentations. The latter is sorely lacking. I did like what they did of bringing it out into the main lobby area of the first floor for the Louis IX exhibit. Rare books should be fully cataloged and put online and the facilities there need newer desk stands and weights.
The new layout of the VFL is much better than it was when the old readers were in place. The big tables are fine, but the chairs around them are awful and uncomfortable. One thing that could help frequent researchers would be a cubby area to store materials. I remember there used to be piles of books/papers/stuff all over the old layout for certain researchers and while that was a bit cluttered, the concept was nice.
I am particularly please that there are now more microfilm readers from which one can copy images (the older ones were wonderful for skimming through manuscripts, but hand transcription is laborious!)

A-9. Question 5:

How well do the physical facilities in SLU Special Collections (Vatican Film Library, Rare Books) and/or Archives & Records Management meet your ideal expectations for teaching, learning and research in regard to the following areas?

Question	1. Very far from ideal	2. Far from ideal	3. Neither far from nor near ideal	4. Near ideal	5. Very near ideal	Total Responses	Mean
Reading Room noise level – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	7	3	21	16	14	61	3.44
Reading Room noise level – Archives / Rare Books	4	2	16	19	10	51	3.57
Reading Room layout – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	8	9	24	15	4	60	2.97
Reading Room layout – Archives / Rare Books	4	8	20	12	4	48	3.08
Reading Room furniture – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	8	11	22	14	3	58	2.88
Reading Room furniture – Archives / Rare Books	5	10	18	12	3	48	2.96
Reading Room equipment – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	7	10	14	23	5	59	3.15
Reading Room equipment – Archives / Rare Books	6	8	15	15	4	48	3.06
Dedicated space for teaching – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	13	5	13	3	0	34	2.18
Dedicated space for teaching – Archives / Rare Books	9	6	13	4	0	32	2.38

Exhibition and public programming space – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	16	7	12	5	0	40	2.15
Exhibition and public programming space – Archives / Rare Books	13	3	12	5	0	33	2.27
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty – Vatican Film Library (Rm. 105)	8	13	16	10	2	49	2.69
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty – Archives / Rare Books	7	11	12	9	2	41	2.71

Statistic	Min Value	Max Value	Mean	Variance	Standard Deviation	Total Responses
Reading Room noise level Vatican Film Library (VFL)	1	5	3.44	1.52	1.23	61
Reading Room noise level - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	3.57	1.21	1.1	51
Reading Room layout - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.97	1.22	1.1	60
Reading Room layout - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	3.08	1.1	1.05	48
Reading Room furniture - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.88	1.2	1.09	58
Reading Room furniture - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.96	1.15	1.07	48
Reading Room equipment - Vatican Film Library	1	5	3.15	1.37	1.17	59
Reading Room equipment - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	3.06	1.34	1.16	48
Dedicated space for teaching - Vatican Film Library	1	4	2.18	1.12	1.06	34

Dedicated space for teaching - Archives / Rare Books	1	4	2.38	1.08	1.04	32
Exhibition and public programming space - Vatican Film Library	1	4	2.15	1.21	1.1	40
Exhibition and public programming space - Archives / Rare Books	1	4	2.27	1.33	1.15	33
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty - Vatican Film Library	1	5	2.69	1.22	1.1	49
Dedicated space for private research consultation with library faculty - Archives / Rare Books	1	5	2.71	1.31	1.15	41

A-10. Question 5a:

Comments (optional):

Text Responses (10 total)
More private study carrels would be great as would more power outlets in the Vatican Film Library reading spaces
A small class met in room 307 while I was reading in the library; they had adequate space and did not disturb my work. A librarian offered me other accommodation but it was not necessary
The library is somewhat cramped but the resource is so valuable one does not care.
See earlier comments.
I would not hesitate on clicking "ideal" instead of "very near ideal" here. I came to Rare Books only once, and thus may put my mark here as well - there was not enough time to notice equipment or noise level (I think there is zero level, though), but just enough for a consultation and finding room for private research.
The new desks and computers and scanners in the VFL are good, but the large tables and chairs at them (especially the chairs) could be improved greatly.
I would like more space for teaching, exhibitions and public programming at the VFL, it is now a great place for research although that space could be better optimized. Rare books has enough space for everything it does, but it is hard to find what they have since it is not fully inventoried.
The ideal layout of the research space would include higher ceilings and more artwork: e.g. the Pere Marquette Gallery in DuBourg Hall.

Seems fine to me!
I have always enjoyed my experiences at the Vatican film library and at archives/rare books. The staff are extremely knowledgeable, courteous and helpful.

A-11. Question 6:

Please feel free to enter any other comments or suggestions regarding the physical facilities in SLU Special Collections (Vatican Film Library and/or Rare Books) and/or Archives & Records Management.

Text Responses (24 total, incl. one blank)
The equipment has been improved in recent years.
The people at SLU Special Collections make up for material shortcomings or inconveniences: their creative ways of remedying material inconveniences are what makes research trips all the more valuable and successful
*Does this survey address the actual holdings of the VFL? That is very important, b/c a number of catalogues have not been purchased, which is why I need to use other libraries to do my research.
Both facilities, beyond updated furniture that one does not fear of breaking by sitting on it, could benefit from additional ways to digitally capture information such as scanning .
I am excited to hear the SLU is thinking of renovating or improving the VFL and archives, but if a choice needs to be made, the most important consideration for me is the preservation and digitization of the VFL films, and eventually, one hopes, their replacement with newer color films.
It would be nice to have special collections in one place.
More space for reference materials would be helpful.
The staff in the VFL and the St. Louis Room go above and beyond the call of duty to assist scholars. I think the atmospheric controls prohibit bringing materials from other libraries for exhibits. There should be a small conference room for collaborative work and graduate teaching. There should be a small lecture hall for events that could be linked to Special Collections, and host Manuscripta. Although the Pere Marquette room is lovely, is it not equipped for audio-visual presentations. Bringing in such technology is cumbersome, and the acoustics are not good.
A great resource for the SLU community and visitors
Everything was at its best!
The special collections at Pius always seemed a VERY important aspect of the library to me. I have used on numerous occasions, to my great profit, and the microfilms were vital to my Ovid research.

I believe that both the Film Library and the Rare Books are (or at least will be) in need of more space in the next few years. The teachings spaces work fine, but in terms of larger venues for presenting research or collection projects, a better space would make the collections more visible to patrons and showcase their importance to our research areas and projects more clearly to a wider audience.

The 3rd floor Archives and Rare Books Reading Room needs to be relocated to a much larger space with more room for classes and exhibits.

Librarians were lovely and incredibly helpful.

It is vital for the university to invest more the acquisition and conservation of rare books and archival sources.

A wonderful resource; very glad to have been introduced to it by Dr. Marler!

the working space and teaching space in both could be somewhat better. But both places are fine in staff and facilities.

have used the facility 3-4- times viewing old book---treasures--so important as things seem to be slipping away

Grateful to use it as an alumnus and a Library Associate

I mostly work in the VFL and they have great staff but they need much better work spaces than they currently have. It starts with decent and enough desk space for them, some privacy to do their work. Also much better work space for researchers is needed and also some lockers where one could leave laptop and books if one has to step outside. Having to haul everything back and fourth during the day is cumbersome. It would also be great if the VFL and rare books were open longer in the day and partially over the weekend.







Please see prior comments.

Friends visiting from Ivy League institutions to use the VFL have commented on what a functional and beautiful space it is.

The VFL is a real treasure, and its facilities should reflect that. In addition, the fact that scholars come from all over to use it should spur SLU to consider the impression that is made by the facilities.

A-12. Question 7:

Please indicate your status:

Answer		Response	%
SLU student (undergraduate)		4	5%
SLU student (graduate)		18	23%
SLU faculty		26	34%
SLU Admin/Staff		0	0%
SLU Alumnus/Alumna		2	3%
Non-SLU-affiliated researcher/visitor		27	35%
Total		77	100%

Appendix B: Data Analysis

B-1. Question 2 Analysis:

Likert Scale Responses		
Responses	#	%
None	8	8.99%
A Little	15	16.85%
Some	30	33.71%
A Lot	36	40.45%
Total	89	100.00%

B-2. Question 2 Analysis:

Comments					
Total Comments = 28					
	Local	National	International	SLU	Other
Number of Times Institution Type was Mentioned	8	41	46	3	2
Number of Comments that Mentioned Institution Type	5	17	16	3	2

B-3. Question 2a Analysis:

Comments					
Total Comments = 28	Institution Type Mentioned				
	Local	National	International	SLU	Other
Harvard, Yale, Washington U	1	2			
Mostly Penn & Princeton. Occasionally I have used European repositories.		2	1		
Mostly the Vatican Film library				1	
Newberry Library, Chicago; Oriental Institute, University of Chicago; British Library;		2	1		
Roman Archives of Jesuits; Secret Vatican Archives; Royal Library Brussels; Archives of the Jesuits in Vanves (France); Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana; National Library France; Lilly Library Bloomington Indiana; Matteo Ricci Institute San Francisco		2	6		
1. Notre Dame's "Ambrosiana" room - 7th floor of Hesburgh Library, within their larger Medieval Holdings. 2. The IRHT in Paris. 3. The BAV (Vatican library) in Rome.		1	2		
Duke University, Oxford University, Notre Dame University		2	1		
University of Toronto, Bodleian Library Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and several other Oxford and Cambridge college libraries.			3		

Merchantile library	1				
Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris); Bibliothèque Mazarine (Paris); Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid); Cornell University; Villanova University; Johns Hopkins University; The Newberry Library; The New York Public Library		5	3		
Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence Max Planck Institutes, Hamburg and Frankfurt Harvard University Academia degli Intronati, Siena University of California, Berkeley British Library, London		2	5		
I use the manuscript collections at the University of Freiburg and the Badische Landesbibliothek in the summer when I am there, also the Zentralbibliothek and the Stadtarchiv in Zurich, and the Bavarian State Library, when I am in Germany. These collections have one-of-a kind manuscripts that are not available anywhere else. The Manuscripts at the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich, where I gave a talk in the summer of 2013, are related to six manuscripts in the Vatican Film Library that I cannot get anywhere else except Rome. I make on average two special trips a year to St. Louis to consult these sources.			5		
many many libraries in Europe, the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, the IRHT in Paris		1	1		
CUL, Bodleian, British Library, Wellcome			3	1	
Harvard, Toronto, Getty Institute, Newberry Library (Chicago), New York Academy of Medicine, Medieval Institute (Notre Dame), Hill Monastic Manuscript Library		6	1		
Missouri Historical Society, Jesuit Archives of the Central United States, Marquette University, Archdiocese of St. Louis Archives	3	1			
I did some of it when I was teaching at Trinity College, Hartford, CT.		1			
At my previous job at Washington State University, I would occasionally take graduate students to look at items in the University's Special Collections Division. I have also viewed rare books and archival materials at the Huntington Library, Harvard University Libraries, The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, The New York Public Library, and UCLA.		5			
Before attending SLU I was at the University of Toronto (making use of their main Robarts Library and the pontifical institute of medieval studies library) and at the University of London (Where I used the Institute for Historical Research and Senate House libraries as well as the British Library)			5		
I have been the Jesuit archives of the Central United States, as well as the university archives of Loyola University in New Orleans and Regis University in Denver.	1	3			
Saint Louis University is the only university I've attended which has such facilities.				1	
like it---great place to view					1
Pierpont Morgan Library.		1			
WUSTL, SLPL (Central Library)	2				
The research I have done at SLU has been used in various articles and presentations at other institutions.					1
Libraries and archives in several countries. Princeton University, Harvard University, British Library, Oxford, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, etc.		2	5		
I have mostly used special collections in European libraries, e.g. the British Library, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek.			3		
Tulane University, Brown University (John Carter Brown), Harvard University, UNAM-		3	1		

Merida.					
Total Number of Times Institution Type was Mentioned	8	41	46	3	2

B-4. Question 3 Analysis:

Likert Scale		
	#	%
Much worse	4	5.0000%
Worse	21	26.2500%
About the same	36	45.0000%
Better	17	21.2500%
Much better	2	2.5000%
Total	80	100.0000%

B-5. Question 3 Analysis:

Ranking of comment repetition:	
Positive – VFL physical space	5
VFL gloomy, dusty, inadequate electrical wiring and lighting	4
Inadequate space for researchers	4
Need better film readers	3
Excellent resources but inadequate facilities to house them	3
Classes interrupt researchers and staff	3
Classes need more space	2
Need dedicated and secure exhibit spaces	2
Inadequate space for staff	2
Renovation needed	2
Better lighting needed for VFL and 307	1
More reading space needed for rare books	1
Positive access – thanks to archivists	1
Climate control needed	1
Positive – Rare Books is a nice space	1
Positive – Comfortable	1
Need conference room	1
Need small lecture space	1

Positive – VFL natural light	1
Positive – Exhibits	1

B-6. Question 3 Analysis:

Coding by facility type:	
Reading rooms	
VFL gloomy, dusty, inadequate electrical wiring and lighting	4
Inadequate space for researchers	4
Need better film readers	3
Better lighting needed for VFL and 307	1
More reading space needed for rare books	1
Positive – VFL natural light	1
Teaching spaces	
Classes interrupt researchers and staff	3
Classes need more space	2
Exhibition areas	
Need dedicated and secure exhibit spaces	2
Positive – Exhibits	1
General comments on physical facilities/space(s)	
Positive – VFL physical space	5
Excellent resources but inadequate facilities to house them	3
Renovation needed	2
Inadequate space for staff	2
Climate control needed	1
Need conference room	1
Need small lecture space	1
Positive – Rare Books is a nice space	1
Positive – Comfortable	1
General comments, unrelated to physical facilities/space(s)	
Positive access – thanks to archivists	1

B-7. Question 6 Analysis:

Coding by facility type:	
Reading rooms	
Need more work space for researchers	2
Relocate Archives and Rare Books Reading Room to larger space (for classes and exhibits)	1
Positive - Equipment has improved	1
Positive - Furniture has improved	1
Need ways to digitally capture information (e.g., scanning) - in both VFL and Archives	1
Need lockers	1
Need more space for reference material	1
Teaching spaces	
Positive - Teaching space is fine	1
Need more teaching space	1
Need conference room for collaborative work and teaching	1
General comments on physical facilities/space(s)	
Need lecture hall/venue for presentations and other events	2
Need better facilities for staff	2
Need better facilities (non-specific)	1
Locate special collections in one place	1
Need better climate control to host exhibits from other libraries	1
Positive - Functional and beautiful space	1
General comments, unrelated to physical facilities/space(s)	
Positive - An important resource	5
Positive - Quality Special Collections staff	5
Inadequate holdings (i.e., catalogues) requiring use of other libraries	1
Need longer hours, both during week and weekends	1
Need preservation and digitization of VFL films-and eventual replacement with color films	1
Need more support for acquisition and conservation of rare books and archival sources	1