Executive Summary
The library’s annual goal for fiscal year 2010 is, “to improve the research and teaching experience of faculty and graduate students by creating positive associations with the library. The library may generate such associations by improving the usability of resources, services, and spaces and providing superior customer service.” One of the outcomes related to the goal is: “Graduate students have the opportunity to provide input on the designation of dedicated space for graduate students in the library.” To inform this outcome, the library pledged to conduct focus groups with graduate students to gather feedback about dedicated library space. Subjects also were asked a few questions about mobile technologies to provide information to the library’s web redesign project team, and a few questions on behalf of the Technical Services Department.

The library conducted 2 focus groups with graduate students in February 2010. Part 1 of this report consists of summary responses for each question, along with some individual responses and quotations from subjects. Part 2 contains conclusions and recommendations based on findings.

Overall, graduate students would like a quieter library and would appreciate library space that is for graduate student use only.

Part 1

1. Please tell me your program of study and about how many days a week you visit the library.

Summary: Subjects mostly are enrolled in Master's degree programs, and they visit the library an average of 3-4 days per week.

Individual Responses:
- Master's candidate, Human Resources Management, every day
- PhD candidate, English (Creative Writing: Poetry), 3-5 days per week
- Master's candidate, Professional Counseling (College of Education), 2 days per week
- Master's candidate, English, 4 days per week
- Master's candidate, Philosophy, 4 days per week
- PhD candidate, Public Policy, less than 1 day per week
- Master's candidate, Computer Science, 5 days per week
2. **Tell me about how you currently use space within the library.**

**Summary:** Subjects come to the library for quiet study, specifically on LN5; to use a group study room; and to use the computers.

**Additional Comments:**

- Even with 5 floors, it’s difficult to find a quiet place to sit and read.
- I have a computer at home and there are computer labs around campus, but I like to use the library computers so I can get research help from librarians while I’m here.
- I have a problem with people listening to music with headphones. Even when they wear headphones, the music is too loud.
- The reference books should be on the 3rd floor where it’s quieter.
- “If we’re a Research I institution, why don’t we have graduate carrels?”
- I have to use the Emory Library because it’s quiet.
- The group study room online reservation system is great.
- Shouldn’t the entire library be quiet?
- There is a problem with people eating, cell phones, noise, etc., but how would you enforce these things?
- Safety is an issue. If I have to study at night, I go to Georgia Tech’s library.
- I left my belongings in the LS5 Quiet Study Room, and my wallet was stolen.

3. **Use this piece of paper to design the ideal library space. What would it be like? What would it include? You can draw and/or list features.**

**Summary:** In general, students described quiet spaces for graduate students only. One group liked the idea of restricting the space by requiring PantherCard swipe. In asking for quiet space for research, one subject wrote that, “The analogy is one of building a music conservatory with all the latest equipment and practice spaces, then allowing non-musicians to come in, bang on the drums, and blast their radios.”

**Other Features Mentioned:**

- Safe and secure (2)
- Computers designated for printing only (2)
- A quiet, no-cell-phones area with computers—like LN5 but with computers (2)
- More windows
- Some group study rooms and some smaller rooms for individuals
- Areas exclusively for particular reasons, like computer use or study areas
- Move reference collection to a quiet/silent area
- A space for graduate students with glass double doors that has small glass enclosed rooms along perimeter with tables and chairs for groups of 3-5 students with fast internet connection; couches in the center; tables on side and front of couches for books and paperwork; individual workspaces with cubicle-like soundproof walls, but that aren’t completely enclosed—like office cubicles.
• Individual study rooms, each with a door. Four lockers in each room for graduate student use only. The room would include a desk with power outlets, a chair, recycling bin, trash can, and coat hook. Some of the rooms would have computers.
• Open 24 hours Sunday – Thursday (at least the main floors open for studying).
• Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including public holidays
• Food and noise allowed only on the 1st and 2nd floors of North. All other floors would be quiet.
• More individual carrels with wider desk areas
• Enlarge some of the group study rooms to better accommodate 6-7 people with all of their gear
• More outlets for laptops, etc.
• Queue system for using the computers, similar to what Georgia Tech has, so that those who have been waiting the longest are next in line to get a computer
• Clean restrooms and water fountains

4. **Do you own a mobile device, like a handheld or smartphone? If so, what do you use?**

**Summary:** Two subjects use a smartphone—Droid and Blackberry. One uses an iPod Touch that has some Internet capabilities.

5. **What kinds of research tasks would you like to be able to do from your mobile device?**

**Summary:** Subjects agreed that they are unlikely to do any research-related tasks from their mobile devices, because they want a bigger screen. Mobile screens are too small for extended work.

6. **In the past, the library had lockers in which you could store research materials so you could have them checked out to you, but leave them in the library. We eliminated them during the renovation. Tell me about whether you have a need for storage space like this in the library.**

**Summary:** Six of eight subjects agreed that they would use lockers if the library provided them. One subject said he might use a locker. Comments included that lockers are essential for a commuter campus; would be handy when students want to take a break and not pack up all of their belongings; that ideally the lockers would be secure enough to store a laptop; and that the library could implement day and semester lockers like the Student Rec Center. The dissenting opinion came from a student who responded that she used mostly journals and wouldn’t need a locker.

7. **The library buys a lot of materials just in case you need them. If the library starts buying items when you need them, what is a reasonable timeframe between your request and the library providing the items?**
Summary: The first group agreed on 2 weeks. The second group agreed on 1 week.

8. When you want to find out whether the library owns something you need, what do you do?

Summary: Most subjects start at the library’s home page. From there, the tool they use depends on what they’re looking for (“If I need books, I use GIL.”) One subject uses Ask A Librarian. One subject said he starts at Google Scholar if he’s looking for articles.

9. What do you think is a good way for the library to solicit ongoing feedback from graduate students?

Summary: Subjects thought surveying graduate students using a survey like SurveyMonkey would be best. The link to the survey should be emailed to grad students, and the email message should contain a short statement about the content of the survey. They also thought an online graduate-student-only forum would be a good idea.

There was not time to ask this question during the second focus group on February 5.

Part 2

Conclusions

- Graduate students are unhappy with the level of noise in the library.
- Graduate students want library space that is restricted to graduate students only. The space should be quiet and conducive to individual research, reading, and study.
- Graduate students are unlikely to do any research from their mobile devices, because the screens are too small.
- Graduate students would use storage lockers if the library provided them.
- Graduate students are willing to wait no more than 2 weeks for items purchased for them on demand.

Recommendations

- Investigate the feasibility of creating quiet space in the library that is restricted to GSU graduate students.
- Avoid putting many resources into “mobilizing” research tools, as graduate students are unlikely to use their mobile devices for research activities.
- Investigate the feasibility of adding storage lockers for graduate student use.
• When investigating the feasibility of on-demand purchase of items for graduate students, consider a one- to two-week turnaround between time of request and time of delivery to the student.

• Begin using a survey tool (like Zoomerang) to administer brief, focused surveys to graduate students as a method of soliciting regular feedback.