

2010/2011 PROGRAM EVALUATION (PEP) SURVEY

FINAL REPORT

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AND ARCHIVAL STUDIES STUDENT ASSOCIATION (LASSA)

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INTRODUCTION

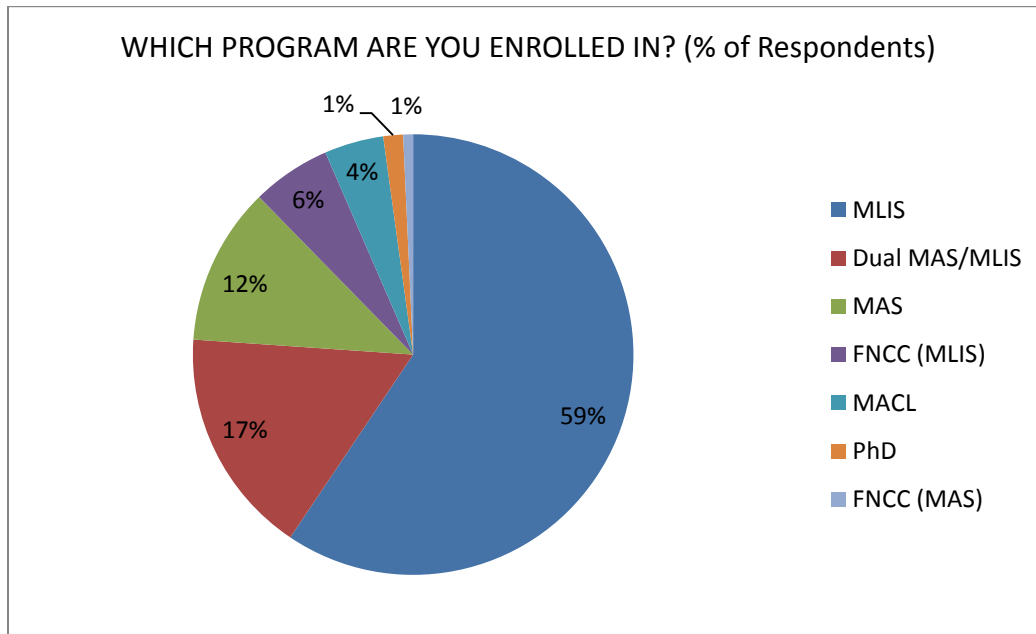
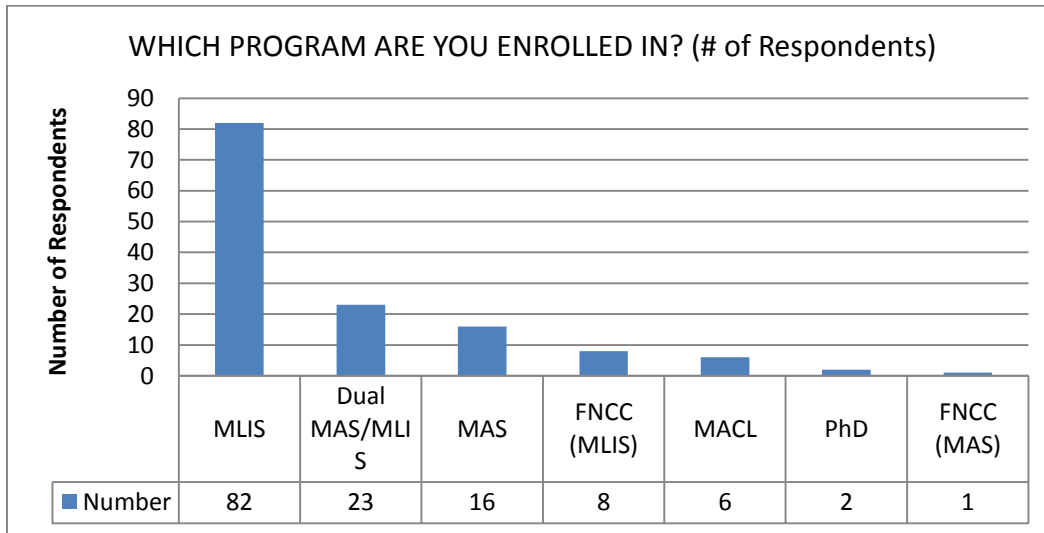
The 2010/ 2011 Program Evaluation Project (PEP) survey received a total of 138 responses, which represents 50% of the approximately 275 students currently enrolled at the School of Library, Archives and Information Studies (SLAIS). Only the first question was mandatory and response rates for each question are included in the results.

The results of the survey are summarized below, including a selection of representative qualitative responses. A detailed report of all qualitative responses is available for download as a separate document on the LASSA website. Qualitative answers were redacted if they contained information that could be used to identify an individual in a purgative way; when this was necessary the answers still counted towards the quantitative summary of the findings but are not included in either the summary or the full report.

RESULTS

1. WHICH PROGRAM ARE YOU ENROLLED IN?

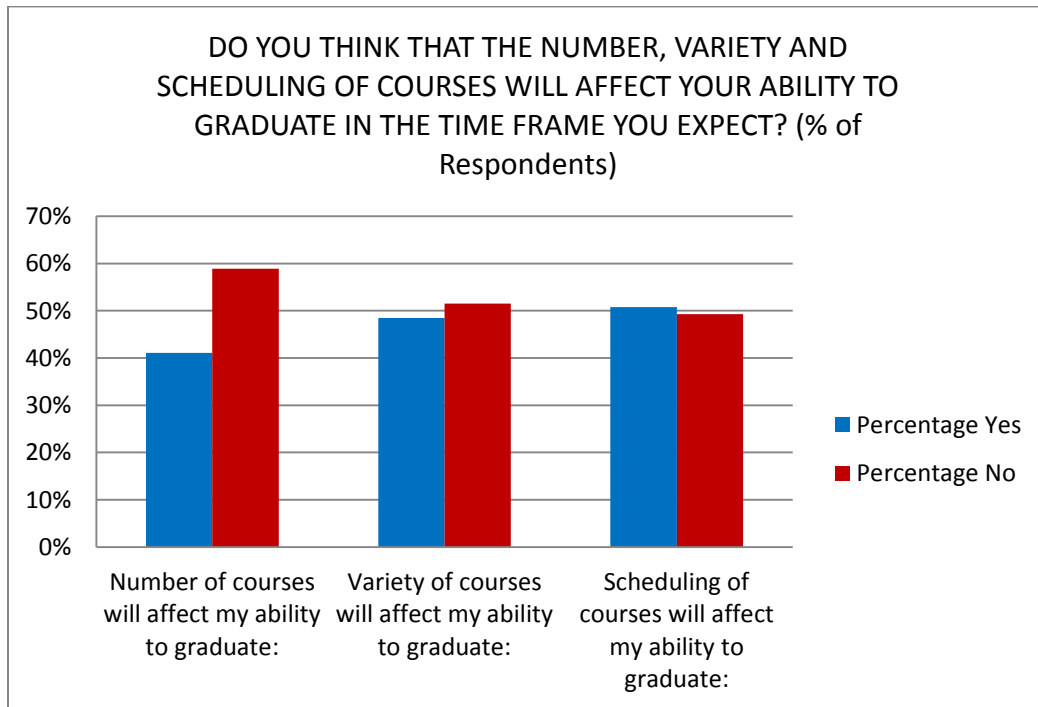
This question was mandatory and all 138 participants entered responses. 59% of respondents indicated that they were enrolled in the MLIS program, 17% in the dual MAS/MLIS program, 12% in the MAS program, 6% in the FNCC (MLIS) program, 4% in the MACL program, and 1% in each of the PhD programs and FNCC (MAS) programs.



2. DO YOU THINK THAT THE NUMBER, VARIETY AND SCHEDULING OF COURSES WILL AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO GRADUATE IN THE TIME FRAME YOU EXPECT?

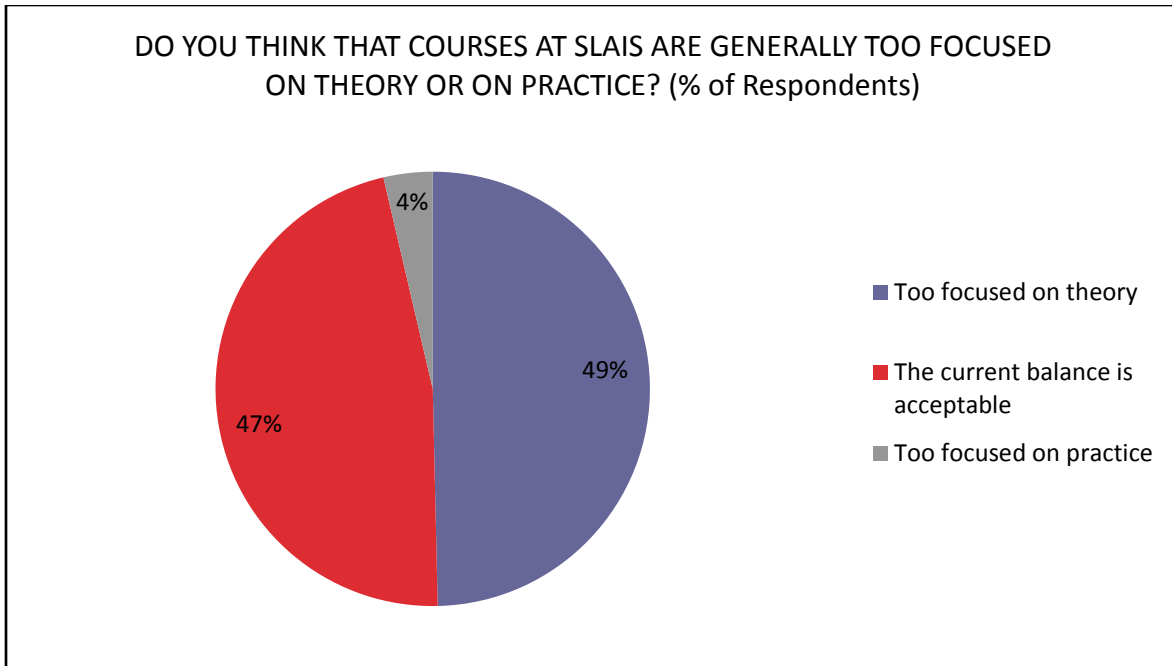
Between 129 and 132 participants entered responses to these questions (93-96% of all respondents). 51% of respondents indicated that the scheduling of courses would affect their ability to graduate in the time frame they expected. 41% indicated that the total number of available courses would affect their ability to graduate in the time frame they expected. 48% indicated that the variety of available courses would affect their ability to graduate in the time frame they expected.

This question was problematic because the format and question were not entirely clear and this question should be revised or replaced in future PEP surveys.



3. DO YOU THINK THAT COURSES AT SLAIS ARE GENERALLY TOO FOCUSED ON THEORY OR ON PRACTICE?

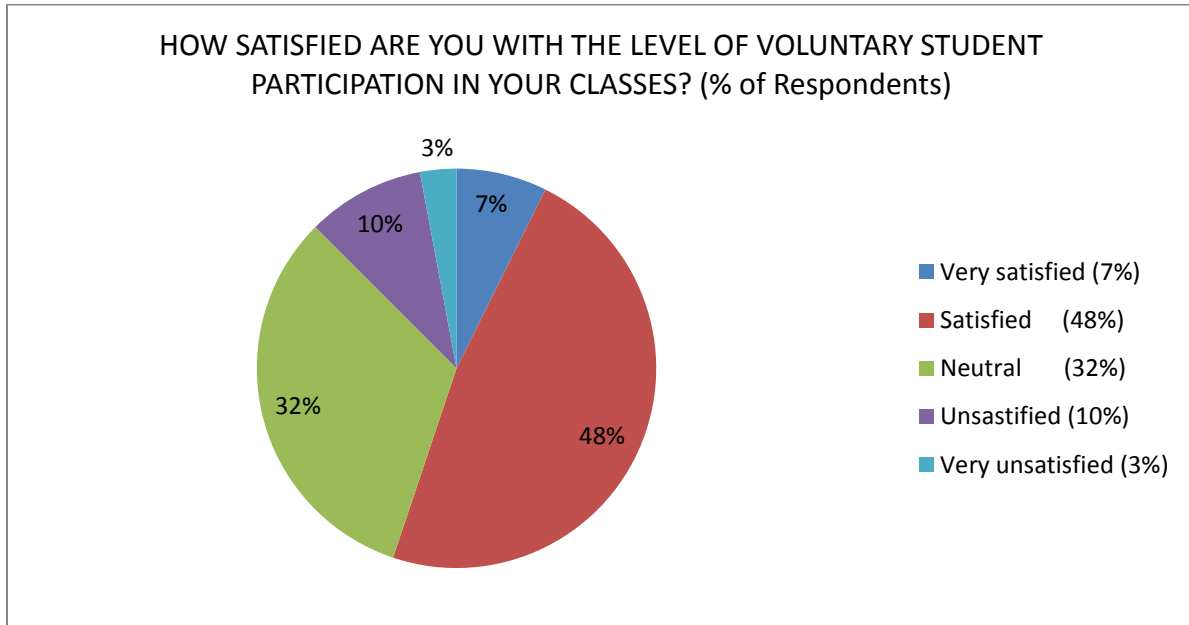
137 participants responded to this question (99% of all respondents). 50% indicated that they felt courses were too focused on theory, 47% indicated that they found the balance of theory and practice to be acceptable and 4% indicated that they found courses to be too focused on practice.



4. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE LEVEL OF VOLUNTARY STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN YOUR CLASSES?

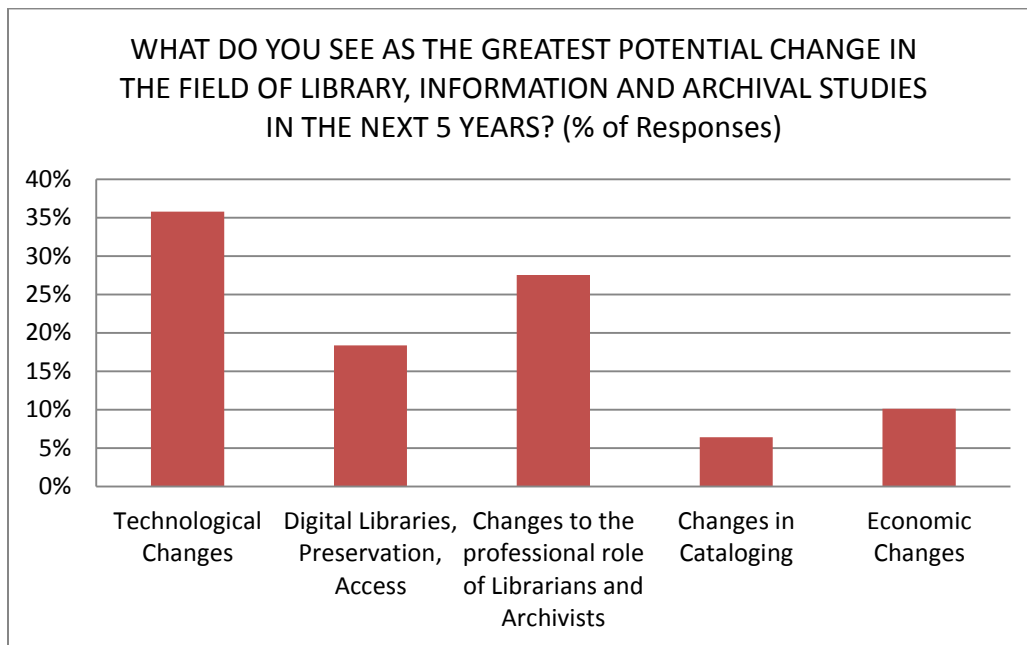
136 participants responded to this question (99% of all respondents). 55% of participants indicated that they were either “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” with the level of voluntary student participation in classes, 32% indicated that they were “neutral” and 13% indicated that they were either “Unsatisfied” or “Very unsatisfied” with the level of voluntary student participation in classes.

In future PEP surveys this question should include a definition of “voluntary student participation.”



5. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST POTENTIAL CHANGE IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVAL STUDIES IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS?

109 participants responded to this question (79% of all respondents). Responses were coded to find common themes. The most frequent themes related to the increased role of technology, changes in the viability and scope of the professional position of MLIS/MAS graduates, the emergence of digital collections, preservation and access, and changes due to economic pressures.



REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

There are two challenges that I see in play that I expect to continue. I am very worried about the effect that economic difficulties will continue to bring to the profession and I think it might be helpful to have a class that addressed fund raising more fully. I also think that keeping on top on technological changes will continue to be challenging.

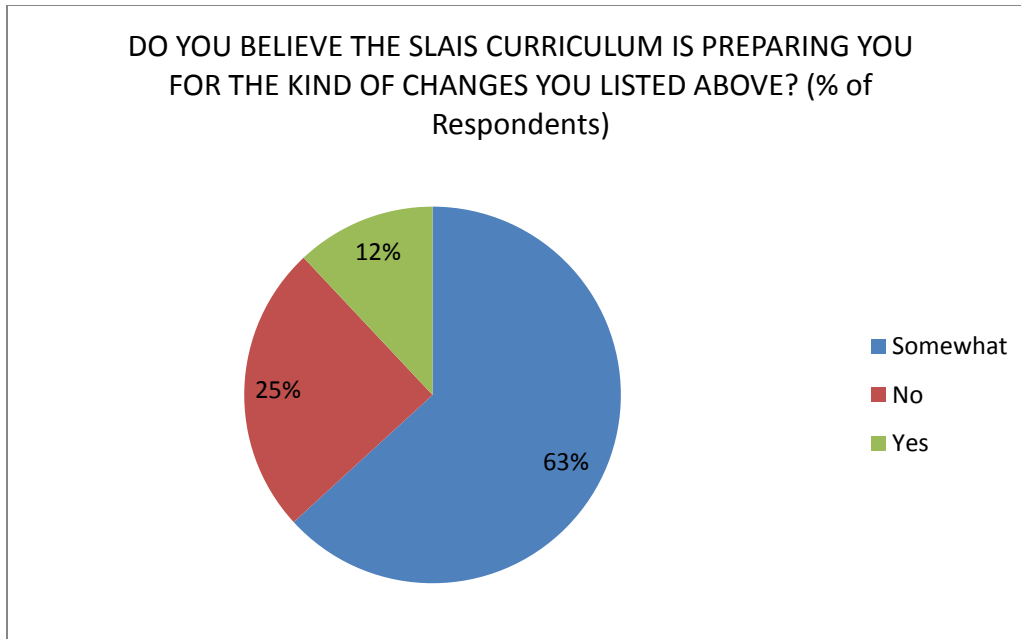
Technologically driven changes to the ways in which patrons use library and archival resources, and concomitant budgetary constraints that will force libraries and archives to accomplish more with less. (On second thought, these are continuations of ongoing changes, rather than new/potential changes as such.)

Digital preservation, collection management and development in the digital era, marketing and funding of library and archival programs, service distribution in the digital era, digitization projects.

Technology. The role of the librarian vs. other library staff.

6. DO YOU BELIEVE THE SLAIS CURRICULUM IS PREPARING YOU FOR THE KIND OF CHANGES YOU LISTED ABOVE?

125 participants responded to this question (91% of all respondents). 63% indicated that SLAIS was “somewhat” preparing them, 25% indicated that SLAIS was not preparing them and 12% indicated that SLAIS was preparing them for the kinds of changes they believed were currently occurring in the profession.



7. WHAT CHANGES TO THE CURRICULUM OR TO THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE DO YOU THINK WOULD HELP PREPARE YOU FOR THE CHANGES YOU LISTED ABOVE?

97 participants responded to this question (70% of all respondents). Responses were coded to find common themes. The most common themes include: increased technology-related courses (23%), increased practical courses (20%) and increased opportunities for professional experience (6%). Other types of changes included: computer science and records management courses, and opportunities to take more interdisciplinary courses and to specialize in specific areas.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

More classes that combine technical principles/theories and practical technical skills (so that when the technology changes, a strong foundation to learn the next system/technology remains).

1. Opportunity to develop technical skills through coursework (while this isn't nonexistent at SLAIS currently, it's really difficult to develop skills unless you came into the program with a certain level of expertise) 2. greater focus on practice as opposed to theory 3. more

opportunities (or, dare I say it, requirements) for professional experiences and professional work built into the program

More practical; less theory. Less about the history of the internet (if I hear about the Memex one more time I'll scream), I don't see that as very useful to future info professionals. I'd like to see tech classes that really focused on teaching us the sort of skills asked for in job postings.

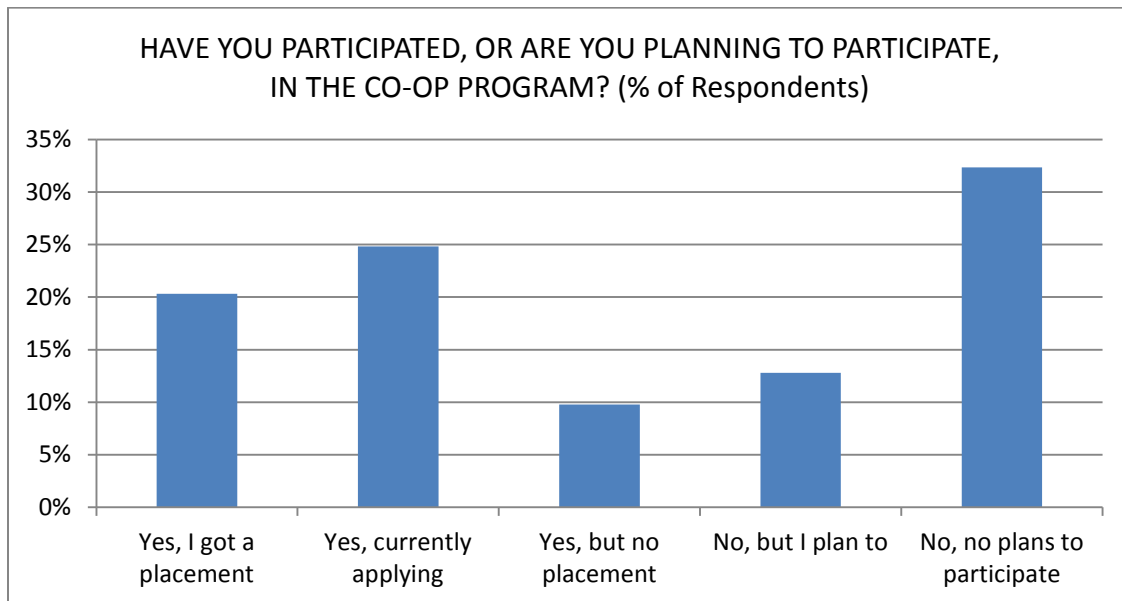
Allowance for more professional experience and internships for credit.

More knowledge management, records management, and IT courses.

8. HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED, OR ARE YOU PLANNING TO PARTICIPATE, IN THE CO-OP PROGRAM?

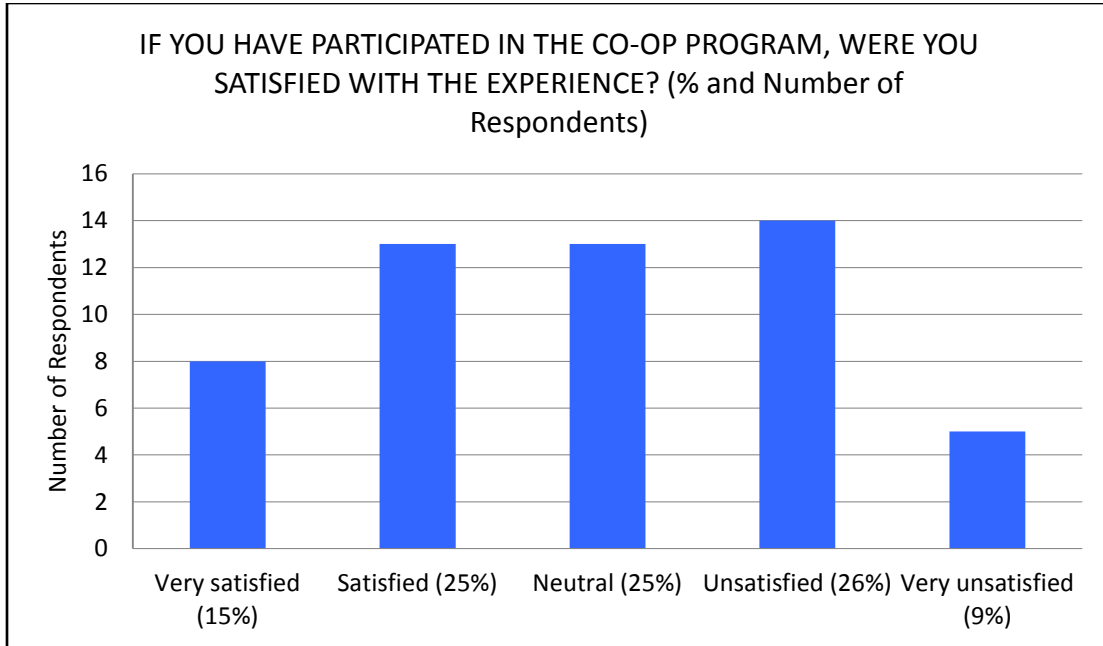
133 participants responded to this question (96% of all respondents). 20% indicated that they were participating in co-op and had got a placement, 25% indicated that they were participating and were currently applying for a placement, and 10% indicated that they were participating but had not received a placement. 13% indicated that they planned on participating in the future and 32% indicated that they were not participating and were not planning on doing so in the future.

This question was flawed as it conflated registration with success in getting a placement in co-op. This question should be replaced in the next PEP survey.



9. IF YOU HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE CO-OP PROGRAM, WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE EXPERIENCE?

53 participants responded to this question (38% of all respondents) 40% indicated that they were “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” with their co-op experience, 13% indicated that they were neutral towards their co-op experience and 36% were either “Unsatisfied” or “Very Unsatisfied” with their co-op experience.



10. PLEASE SHARE ANY ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR CO-OP EXPERIENCES BELOW.

62 participants responded to this question (45% of all respondents). Many participants indicated a desire for more transparent and accurate information about the co-op program by indicating that they did not trust the information about the number and type of positions available; this was especially true among participants who indicated that they were international students. Others respondents were positive about the opportunities for the professional experience that the co-op provides.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

For those of us who decided to attend the school because of the opportunity to do co-op and the courses offered, both have been greatly disappointing. It seems that Co-op has been marketed as an opportunity that all can participate in, but the jobs are rare and often found by the students independently of the program itself. I can find my own job and not pay them to not find me one.

It's one of the best things about my time at SLAIS - the work experience has been so valuable. For example - it's one thing to learn about the reference interview in class, but you learn so much more while doing it (and learning from your mistakes) in a real life work situation.

The co-op program offered the opportunity for professional development through workshops and one-on-one time with the coordinator which was valuable. I felt that regardless of whether or not I got a placement, my money was well spent. Too many students look at co-op as a guarantee for a job (which would be nice), but co-op simply offers unique job pool in which to compete. It is challenging, however, for many MAS students to take advantage of co-op terms other than the summer semester with the generally limited course offerings on the MAS side (you miss one course, and you have to wait an entire year to take it again). There should also be more flexibility for students doing course work and co-op (i.e. don't limit students to one course only).

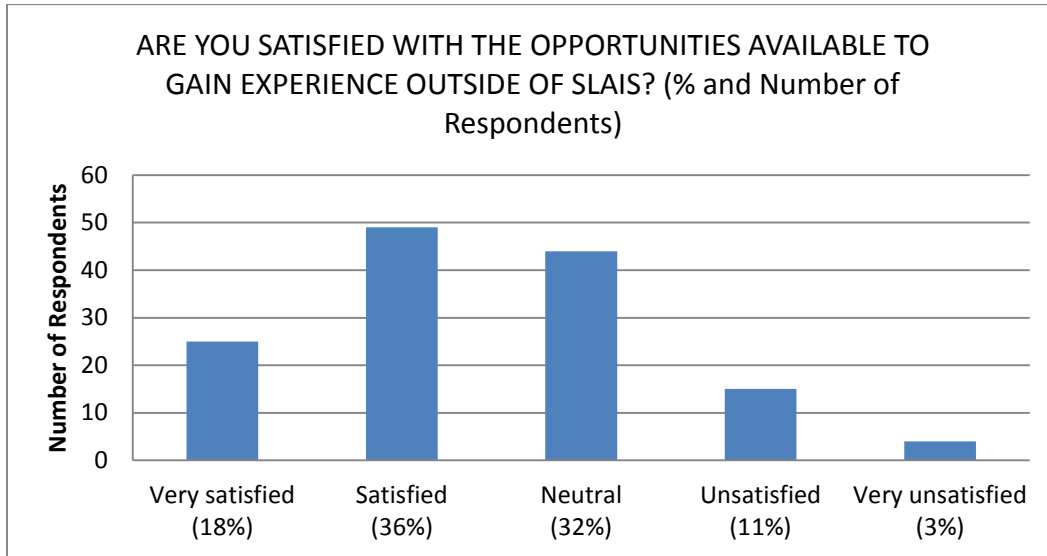
Did three co-op terms and glad I participated. Co-op provides opportunities that would be very hard to obtain straight out of school with no experience.

There were not nearly as many placements advertised as what I'd been told there would be. I know of several students who arranged their own co-ops, which I imagine counted toward the statistics that the Co-op office shared. Many of the placements I did see required Canadian citizenship or seemed too clerical to be worthwhile. Many placements were not posted until just before the start of the term, or even into the term, and many have already made commitments (other jobs, courses, leases, etc.)

I would have loved to do co-op, and I am signed up for it, but it will most likely not happen, because I will have too many credits by the time that I have a semester in which I could work. Another thing that really disappointed me is that, while we were warned that most jobs would be unavailable to international students, nothing was said about the fact that all government/special library jobs are Canadian citizens only. I would not have signed up had I known this. According to some friends of mine from Political Science, they are not even allowed to specify that for entry level jobs...

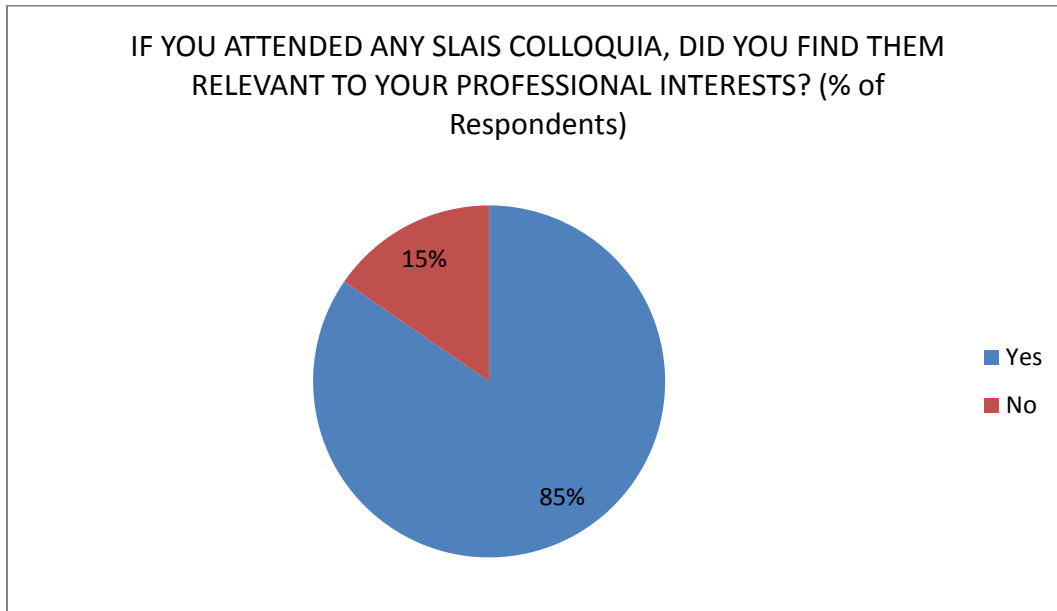
11. ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO GAIN EXPERIENCE OUTSIDE OF SLAIS? FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH A PRACTICUM, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, WORK STUDY, GAA, OR GRA?

137 participants responded to this question (99% of all respondents). 54% indicated that they were either "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied," 32% indicated that they were "Neutral" and 14% indicated that they were "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied" with the opportunities available to them to gain experience outside of SLAIS.



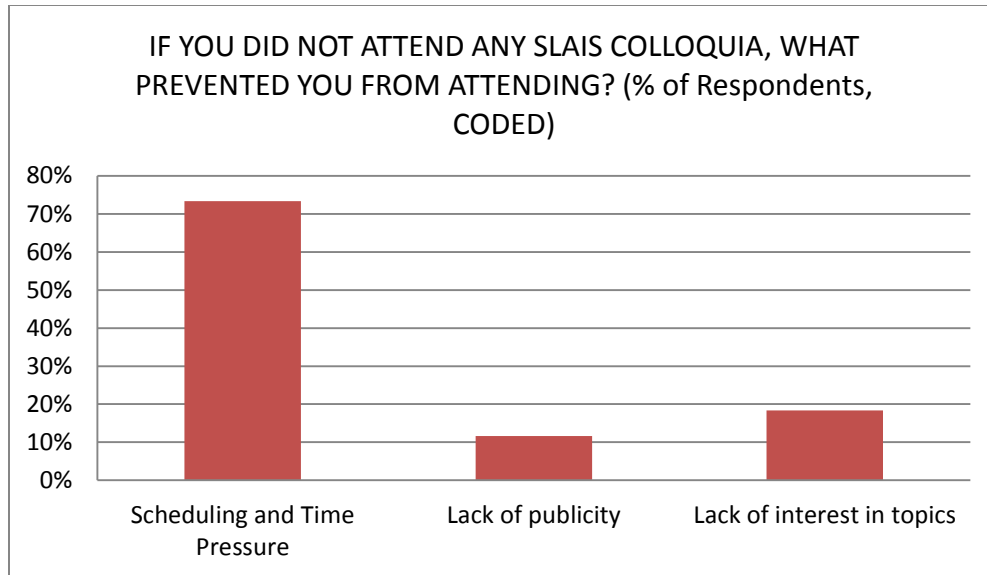
12. IF YOU ATTENDED ANY SLAIS COLLOQUIA, DID YOU FIND THEM RELEVANT TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS?

91 participants responded to this question (66% of all respondents). 85% found the colloquia relevant and 15% did not find them relevant to their professional interests.



13. IF YOU DID NOT ATTEND ANY SLAIS COLLOQUIA, WHAT PREVENTED YOU FROM ATTENDING?

60 participants responded to this question (43% of all respondents). Responses were coded to find common themes. Common themes included scheduling conflicts and time pressures, a lack of interest in topics and lack of adequate promotion of events.



REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

Scheduling and the heavy workload.

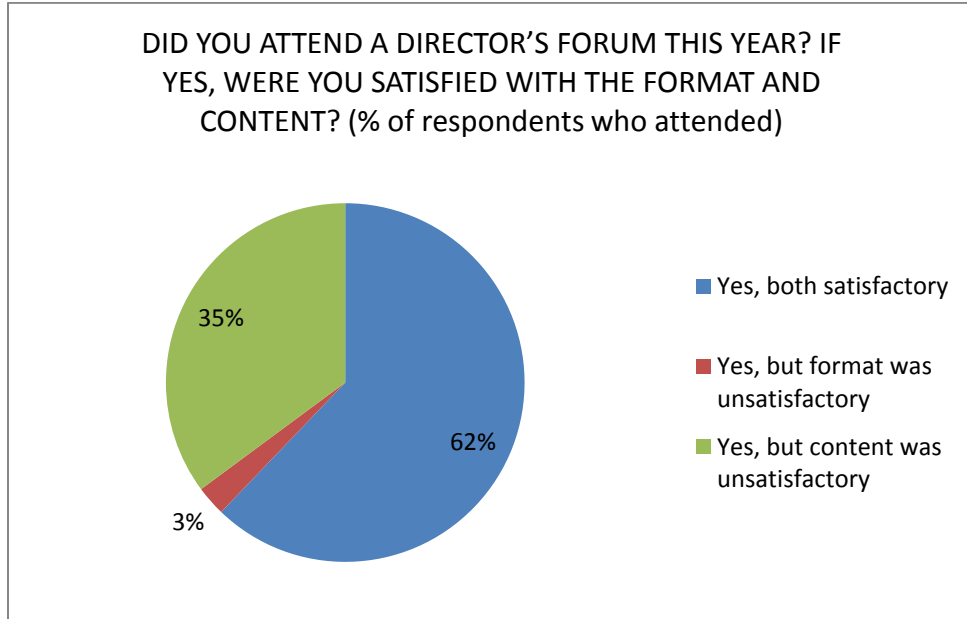
Too busy; lack of a calendar that gives us a "dashboard" of all SLAIS events rather than a kabillion emails.

I've missed a few because of scheduling clashes, but generally I miss them because I feel that they focus too much on the academic side, and not on anything really applicable to my future career hopes.

There should be more advertising of lectures. More flyering, and more visibility on the SLAIS homepage.

14. DID YOU ATTEND A DIRECTOR’S FORUM THIS YEAR? IF YES, WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE FORMAT AND CONTENT?

134 participants responded to this question (97% of all respondents). The second director’s forum occurred during the period that the PEP survey was running, so results conflate the two forums and may not include responses from those that attended the second forum. The majority of respondents (67%) did not attend a director’s forum and 5% answered “Other.” Of the 28% who did attend a director’s forum, 62% found the content and format satisfactory, 35% found the content unsatisfactory and 3% found the format unsatisfactory.



15. IF YOU ATTENDED A LASSA NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION THIS YEAR, PLEASE SHARE ANY SUGGESTIONS YOU HAVE FOR IMPROVING THESE ORIENTATIONS IN THE FUTURE.

44 participants responded to this question (32% of all respondents). The most common comments referred to wanting better quality information, more involvement by existing students, a larger space and higher-quality campus tours.

Because there are two annual orientations answers conflate both orientations. In the future a question at the beginning of the survey eliciting the date respondents began the program could be used to help differentiate between different orientations.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

It was the best of all the orientations that I experienced as a January cohort student. I can't think of any way to improve them, except possibly finding a less crowded space.

More of a social event for students to get to know their cohort/classmates.

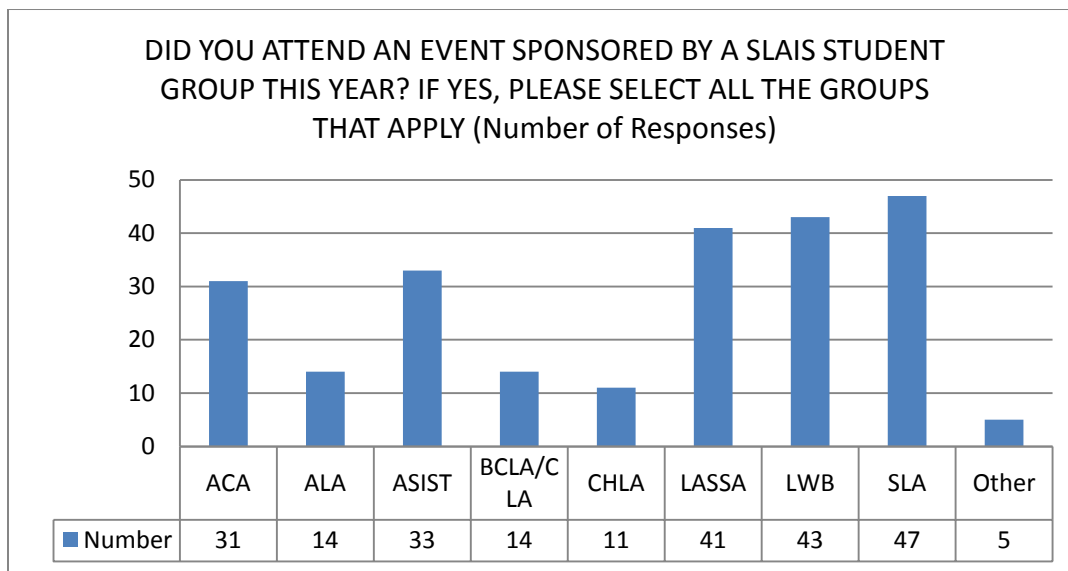
Having opportunities to talk with current students is good - but everyone stood in a clump at one end and it felt like they were more interested in their friends than in chatting with the new cohort. This is also true of the clubs - I had no idea what ASIS&T stood for.

I don't know about suggestions, but there was definitely information overload, at least in terms of the student groups. It seemed like everyone was interested in having us as members, but I didn't know why I should be interested in joining them.

16. DID YOU ATTEND AN EVENT SPONSORED BY A SLAIS STUDENT GROUP THIS YEAR? IF YES, PLEASE SELECT ALL THE GROUPS THAT APPLY.

106 participants responded to this question (77% of all respondents) indicating that they attended at least one event sponsored by a student group. 239 total responses were received, meaning that on average each of the 106 respondents attended events sponsored by two student groups. The breakdown of which group's events students attended is included below.

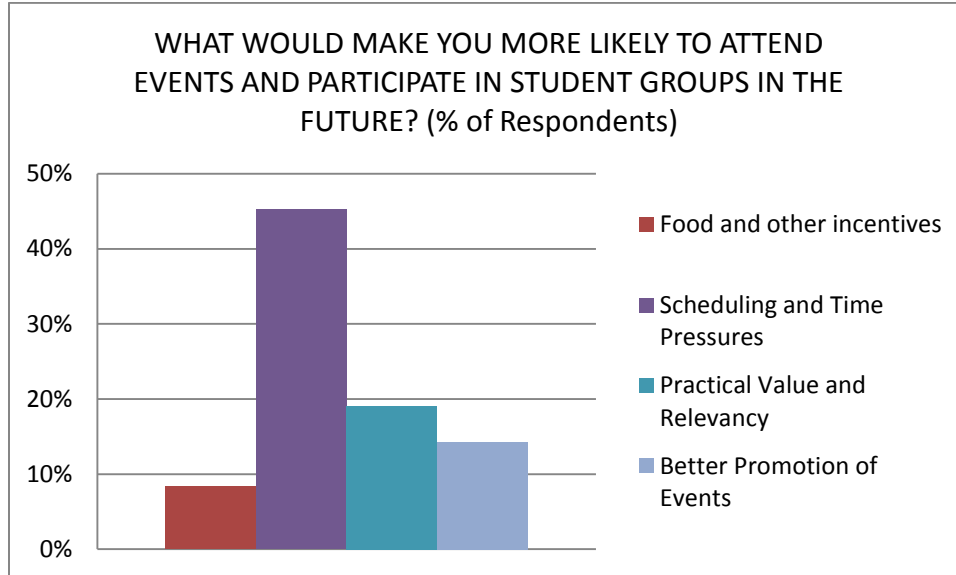
"Other" responses included YAACS (Young Adults and Children's Services), Research Rescue, and the Doctoral Student Association. These groups should be included in any equivalent question used in the next PEP survey.



- ACA (Association of Canadian Archivists)
- ALA (American Library Association)
- ASIST (American Society for Information Science & Technology)
- LASSA (Library and Archival Studies Student Association)
- BCLA/CLA (British Columbia Library Association/Canadian Library Association)
- LWB (Librarians Without Borders)
- CHLA (Canadian Health Libraries Association)
- SLA (Special Library Association)

17. WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU MORE LIKELY TO ATTEND EVENTS AND PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT GROUPS IN THE FUTURE?

84 participants responded to this question (61% of all respondents). Responses were coded to find common themes. The most common themes related to scheduling and time pressures (45% of respondents), the need for groups to be more relevant and provide opportunities to gain practical experience (26% of respondents) and increased promotion of events (14% of respondents). Other responses included more free food and other incentives, more social and fun activities, and the need for clubs to be more open to new members.



REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

Nothing - I think the student groups do an excellent job of advertising and offering a variety of events. It's just about timing for me.

If they were better organized and run. After being involved in running meetings both in the professional world and in student politics, I would say that the student groups have a lot to learn. I have considered playing a greater part, but when I have little time left in my day and I experience the attitudes of self-entitlement and self-righteousness being so prevalent, it leaves me with little incentive to be involved.

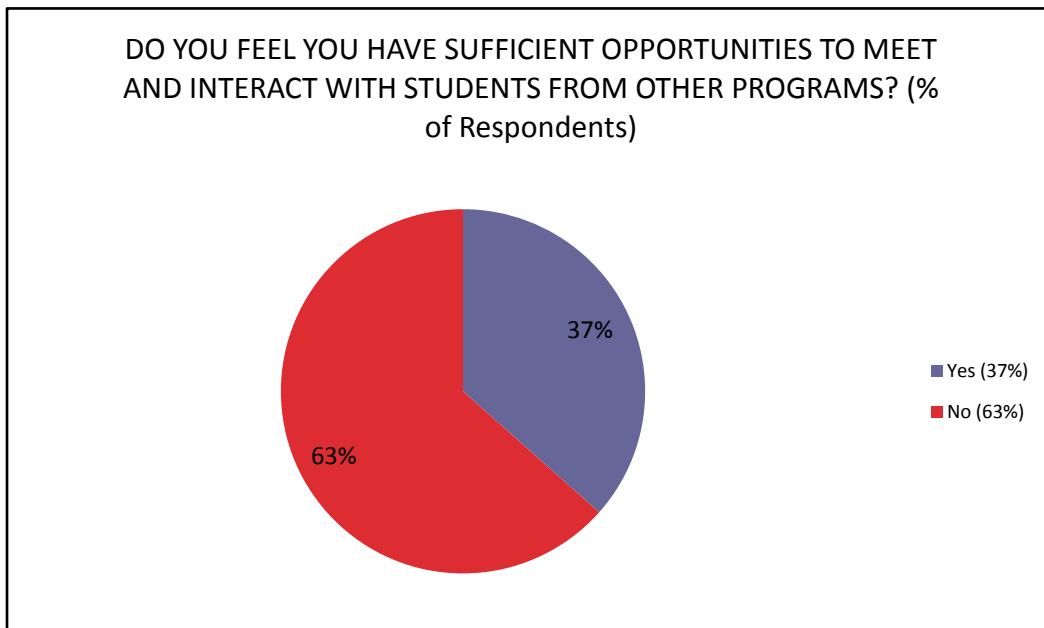
A student calendar that was prominently displayed on the SLAIS and LASSA website and consistently used by students, while also being consistently checked by faculty before they schedule events. Maybe even a joint calendar.

A clearer articulation of the value for me as a student.

If we're being honest, free food..

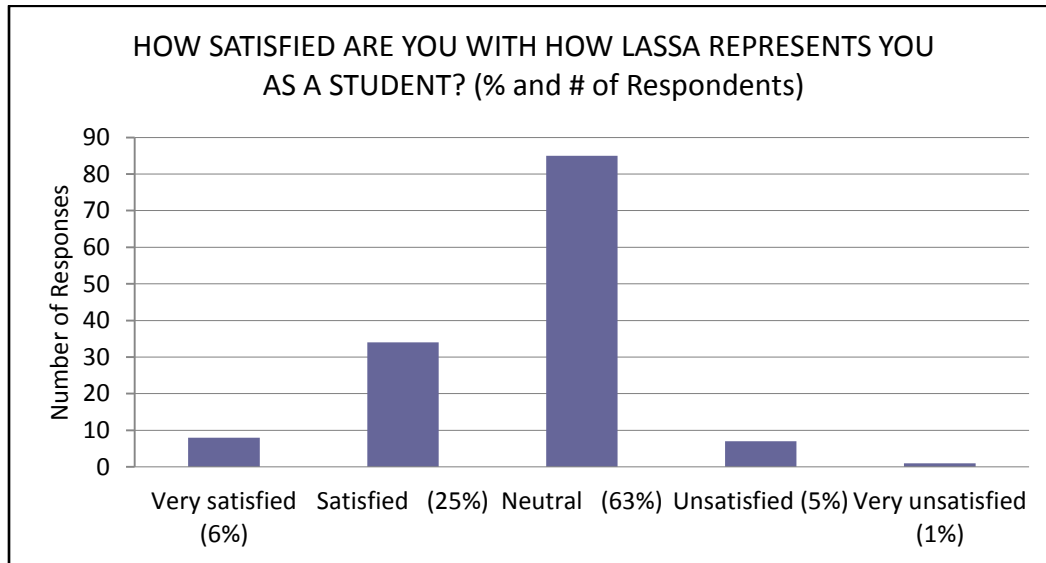
18. DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET AND INTERACT WITH STUDENTS FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?

134 participants responded to this question (97% of all respondents). 63% indicated that they did not feel as if there were enough opportunities to meet and interact with students from other programs and 37% indicated that they did feel there were enough opportunities.



19. HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH HOW LASSA REPRESENTS YOU AS A STUDENT?

135 participants responded to this question (98% of all respondents). 63% were “neutral,” 31% were “Very satisfied” or “Satisfied” and 8% were “Unsatisfied” or “Very unsatisfied” with LASSA’s representation of them as students.



20. WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR HOW LASSA CAN BETTER REPRESENT YOU AS A STUDENT?

49 participants responded to this question (36% of all respondents). Responses were coded to find common themes. The most common themes included not understanding LASSA’s role within SLAIS, a lack of communication about LASSA’s activities and the need for LASSA to be more involved in addressing issues such as registration and class size. Other common responses included the need for more social events and the lack of ethnic and disciplinary diversity within the executive.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

I feel very represented because I go to meetings. I feel that we do not represent most students, because most students do not attend meetings. Perhaps giving students some incentive to attend would make them more popular.

LASSA seems very non-integrated into the student lifestyle. Letting students know how LASSA is different from other clubs right from day one is important. Otherwise, you're just another club.

Not familiar enough to answer.

I don't think the fault is LASSA's. I think there is a general attitude of apathy from the student body and I don't know how to generate excitement and interest in SLAIS issues.

LASSA has done a good job this year rebuilding itself and needs to continue this momentum by reaching out to students more. Standing members and first year reps need to actually introduce themselves and make themselves available and an effort has to be made to be more relevant to student's lives. Students also need to be more involved and actually come out to meetings and events.

I'm not even sure what LASSA does, so I can't really gauge why they may or may not be doing to represent me. Plus, it has always been my experience that student groups really just serve a social function, as they never seem to have any real influence on policy. I can already tell, from this year's nominations that, in terms of race, LASSA definitely doesn't represent me. I guess, in that regards, they probably fail to represent me in any meaningful way, given the lack of diversity.

21. LASSA'S BUDGET IS FUNDED FROM YOUR STUDENT FEES. WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES OR PROGRAMS WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SEEING LASSA ORGANIZE?

65 participants responded to this question (47% of all respondents). The most common responses involved the need for more social events, hosting workshops and providing opportunities for professional development.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

More fun, group events to promote community building amongst students from the various cohorts.

Workshops and other experience-enhancing programs that will help increase students' opportunities in the workplace.

Career/job fair or a formal meet-and-greet event with librarians across all types of libraries.

I would like to see LASSA work harder at making SLAIS more positive. There is a lot of negativity towards our school and our program and I feel that being so negative only hurts us all. There's things that every program doesn't do well, but I think SLAIS does do a lot of things well and that should be celebrated rather than holding sessions on what is wrong with SLAIS.

Don't particularly care what LASSA does or does not do.

Workshops are good. I've been loving the tech workshops like cool tools day and the DB/Textworks workshops. These are so valuable and I often feel like I learn more concrete information than in my courses :o

22. PLEASE GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS ON ANY OTHER ASPECT OF SLAIS THAT YOU FEEL WAS NOT COVERED IN THIS SURVEY.

51 participants responded to this question (37% of all respondents).

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

We need to spend less time 'balancing' between practitioner and theoretician interests. It would be to everyone's benefit if our teaching were strong in both areas.

It would be nice if people took more pride in their program and were a bit more loyal to the program. That doesn't mean that they can't highlight issues, but even the tone of this survey is negative and I feel that it is the wrong way to approach things. Why not ask what you like best about SLAIS? Wouldn't that be useful?

Administrative issues are the primary thing that is having a negative impact on SLAIS' relationship with their students. The treatment students receive makes it appear that once we are in the program we are inconveniences and nothing more. If the school has to change/cancel a class the response/reaction from the faculty/staff should be more than "oh well, just stay another term". That is not an acceptable response; in fact it illustrates the lack of respect the students are treated with while at the same time being expected to treat all faculty/staff with the utmost respect.

More SLAIS parties. There is a not-so-subtle division between each of the cohorts that seems hard to overcome. It'd be nice to have more non-academic social events (without the cynical pretence of "networking" involved).

In part, I decided to come to SLAIS because it was a smaller program. I was looking for smaller class sizes, without fewer course offerings. However, it seems as though with every intake, the incoming class grows larger and larger. If it continues to grow in this manner (without hiring more professors or increasing the number and variety of classes offered), SLAIS runs the risk of seeming more like a cash cow than a graduate department.

Someone needs to acknowledge the fact that students who fall into certain minority groups (e.g. based on race, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) do not always feel welcome in some professor's classrooms at SLAIS.

23. PLEASE GIVE US YOUR THOUGHTS ON THIS SURVEY AND HOW IT CAN BE IMPROVED IN THE FUTURE.

35 participants responded to this question (25% of all respondents). Common responses included the need for a better methodology, clearer questions, less page breaks, and a broader scope that addresses the concerns of students from all programs offered at SLAIS.

REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSES

I would like to see the related questions all on the same page. If there is a multiple choice with a follow up question for elaboration, they should be together.

More controlled questions as opposed to open ended questions; a lack of focus on the archival program and the library program exclusively;

This is a good survey. Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts.

Your questions are VERY biased!! I was tempted to stop after the first few questions because of how badly put together it is.

MACLers are not represented or applicable to answer for some of the questions.

Good survey. I am very glad that you are doing it and have no suggestions.

Perhaps questions about the general environment at SLAIS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2011/2012 PEP SURVEY

- Implement a mechanism that allows students to provide ongoing feedback, such as a web-based comment form of the LASSA website.
- Create a definition of the scope of the PEP survey that can be used to help plan and organize future surveys.
- Promote the role of Standing Members as a means to elicit student feedback and bring concerns forward to LASSA and the administration throughout the school year.
- Recruit an MAS or Dual student to serve as coordinator of PEP to improve the validity of the questions and the interpretation of the responses.
- Involve MLIS, MAS, Dual, MAEL, FNCC, and PhD representatives in the development of questions.
- Include a question about the date respondents started in the program.
- Conduct more detailed analysis using program and start date variables.
- Refine questions to give them a more neutral tone.
- Include more focused, controlled questions.
- Consult with the faculty to improve the methodology of the survey.
- Use page breaks less extensively.
- Look into mechanisms that would allow questions to be skipped if the respondent indicated in a previous question that the question was not relevant.