

Using Undergraduates to Improve the Library

Monena Hall

Rashad Assir

Virginia Tech Libraries

Blacksburg, VA



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blacksburg_VA_Summer_2008.jpg

Virginia Tech



<http://www.mba.vt.edu/admissions/interact/on-campus/>

<http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/photo-galleries/2011/071411-gowallatour/tour-gallery.html>



Newman Library

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Newman_Library_Virginia_Tech.JPG



Peer Roving Assistants(PRA)

Purpose

Point of need service

Space observation

Interviews

**get a better understanding of what students are doing and how we can improve services!

What Does a PRA do?

- Offer Assistance around the library
 - Printing, scanning, copying
 - Finding books
 - In library “way finding”
- Record Observations
 - Quantitative and Qualitative
 - Pictures
 - Interviews

Why Undergrads?

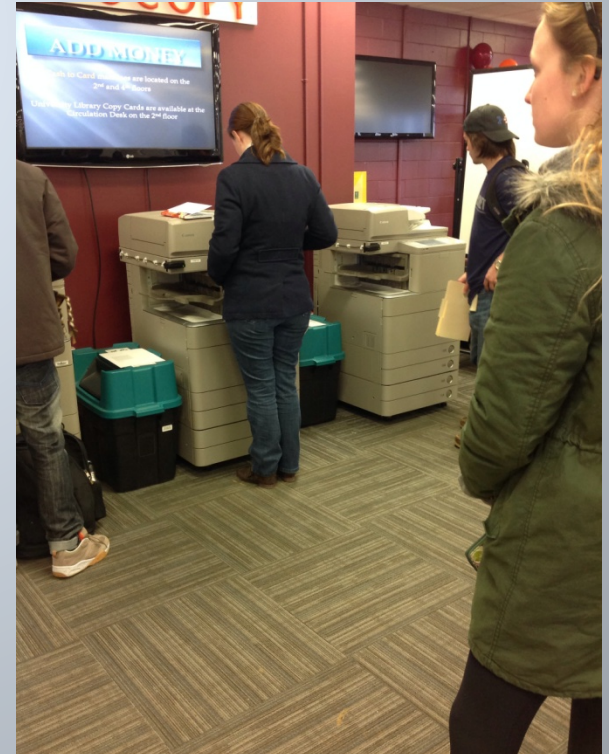
1. Familiar faces
2. Ready supply
3. Easy to train
4. Gives them on-the-job experience
5. They can/will work hours we would rather not

Collection

Observation form includes:

- Group study vs. individual
- Power usage
- Use of furniture
- Use of student resources (whiteboards, public computers, study rooms)
- Additional Observations (i.e. noise level, general atmosphere, what are they doing?)





Observation Form

Please use this form for observation data. Not every field needs to be filled out, but use those fields that are most appropriate.

* Required

Observation Location *

Total number of seats in area?

Total number of seats occupied at the start of observation? *

Number of people studying individually? *

Number of groups working together in pairs? *

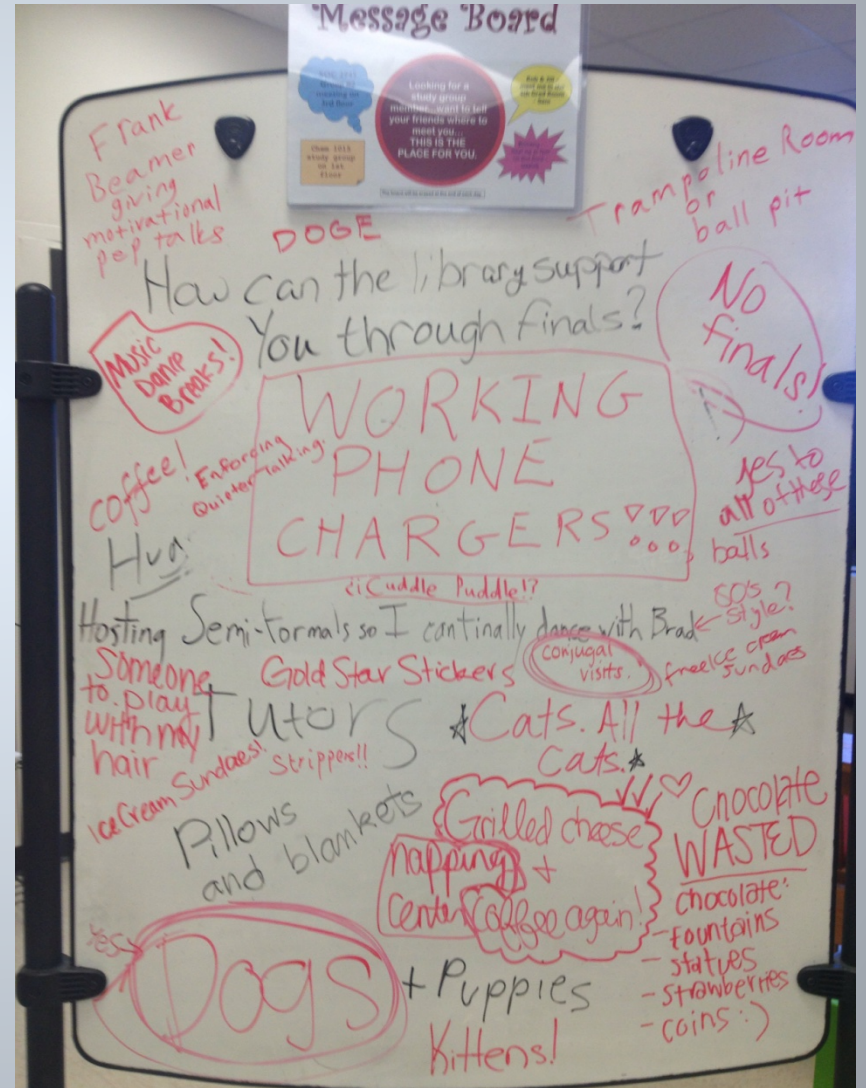
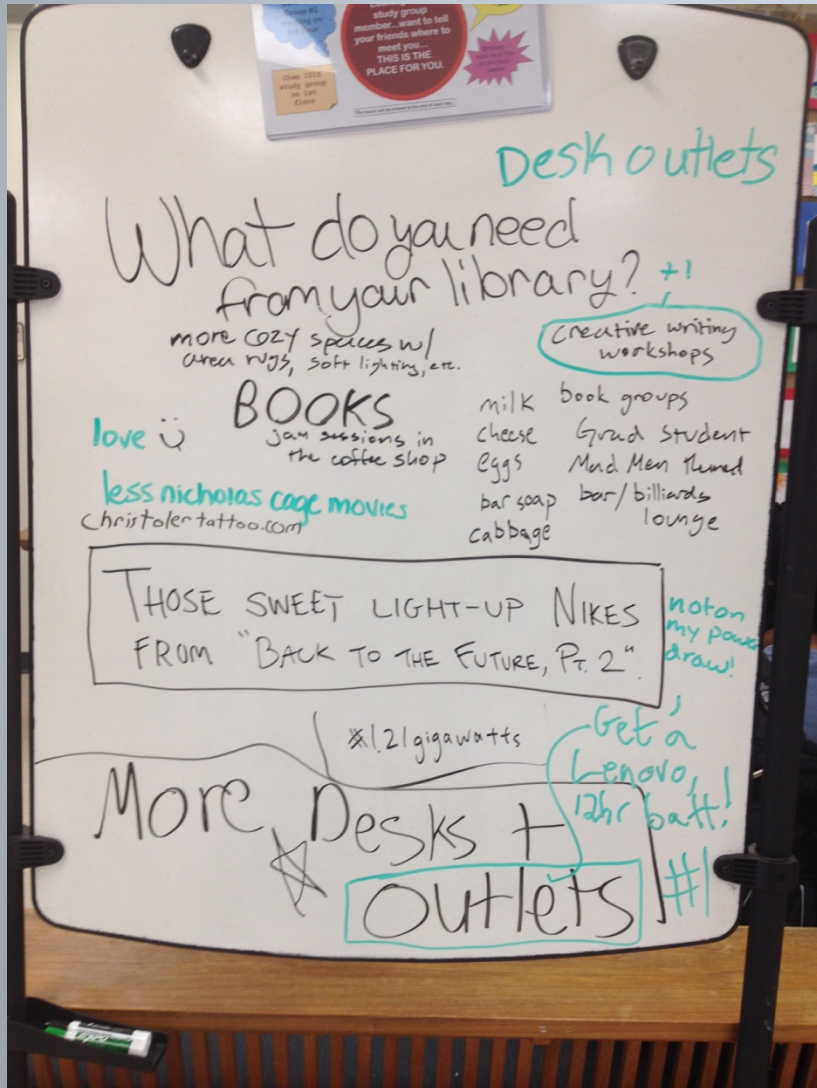
Number of groups working together consisting of 3-6 people? *

Number of groups larger than 6?

Interview Template

- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1vYPCspT-Uo-ilP5SKx7K5FUQrWS7-2Z7u0A-vUu3A7U/viewform?c=0&w=1>

Whiteboard Initiative



Whiteboard Initiative

BOOKS

Looking for a study group member... want to tell your friends where to meet you... THIS IS THE PLACE FOR YOU.

yes! → **MOR FREE PRINTING** Agreed!

What do you need from your library? Totally Agree

Put out Newspapers Sooner, Not A Day or two later
Do you mean *Collegiate Times*? WSJ, FT, NYT, Wash Post?? Please??
We only get the *CT* & *Roanoke Times Daily* the rest are delivered by mail

More outlets → Seriously, power strips aren't that expensive!
↓ YES!!! → Definitely

Cloudy w/a chance of Meatballs DVD
you guys are awesome! Thanko for all you do!

▷ Vending machines → 4th floor where printing used to be

• be able to rent DVDs for more than 5 days + more than 3 at a time

MY LAB GROUP MADE ME


Why do you study in the library?

WHAT IS STUDY? *mmm*

It has cozy seats
donde esta la biblioteca #Yolo swag j'aime la bibliotheque. to meet hot chicks

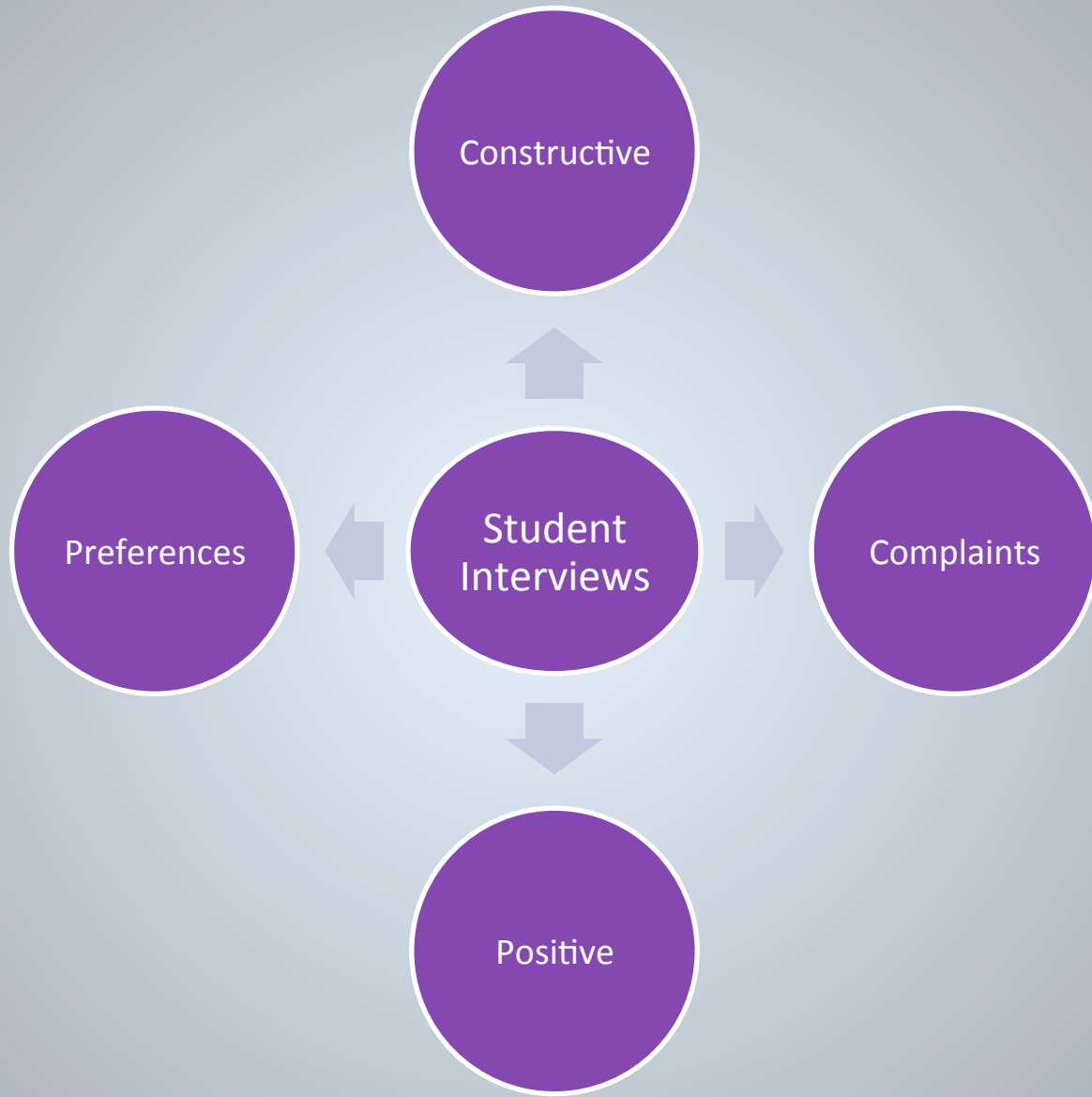
easy access to computers
printer paper
My room is messy

... books?
The view's good, if you know what I mean...
Je m'aime *par* etudier.

for dogs and candy
and tattoos 

Hot Pink Do da Study.

I can be alone, but not by myself



Interview Quotes

Constructive Feedback

“More outlets on the quiet floors”

“More space in general”

“Faster internet during peak usage”

“Better seating”

“Nicer aesthetics like a mural or nicer ceiling material “

“More green spaces in the library”

“Longer weekend hours during exam weeks”

“Better parking”

“More free coffee”

“More outlets”

“More conference rooms”

“More windows and greenery”

“Better furniture on the fourth floor”

Problems with collection

- Division of Space
- Ambiguities in the observation form
- What do we want to know?
- The stacks keep moving! Now what?
- Where did all that furniture go?
- I have 4 tests and a paper due tomorrow!
There's no way I can work!

Solutions

- Regular Meetings/Communication
- Library Maps
- Cutting down on ambiguous language in the forms
- Being flexible – both me and my students

Cutting Out Ambiguities

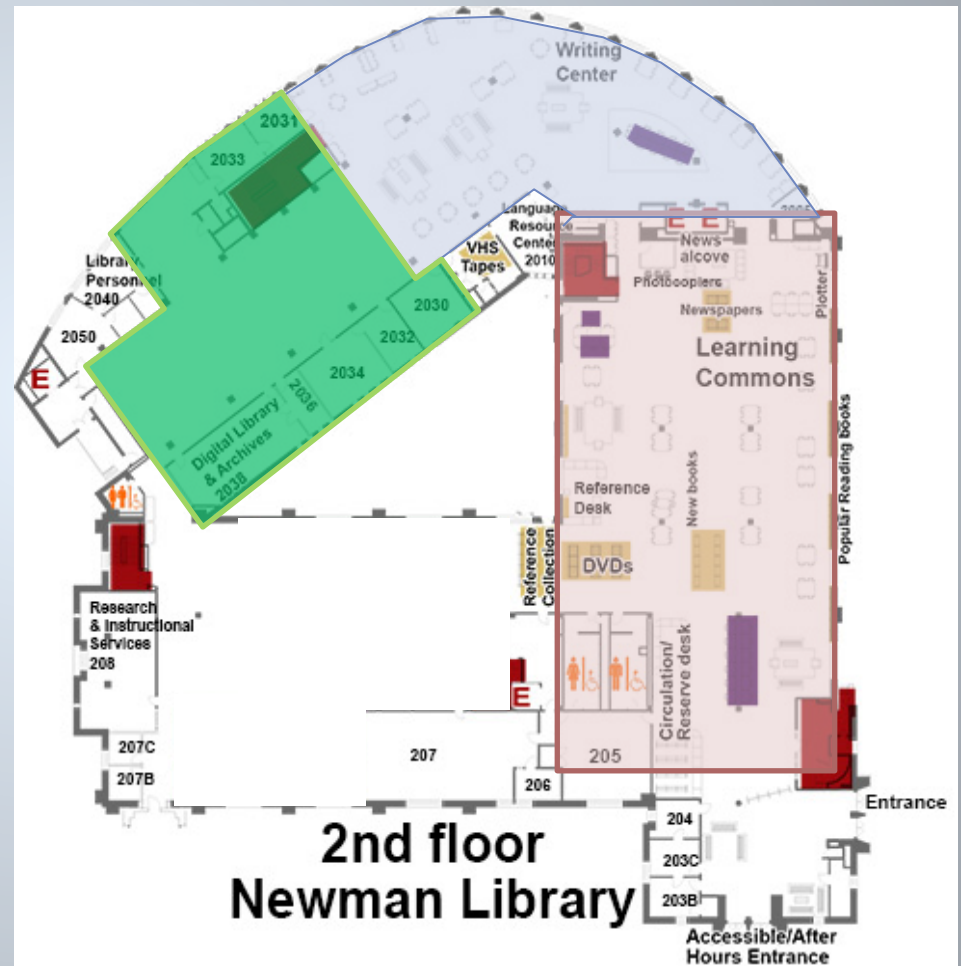
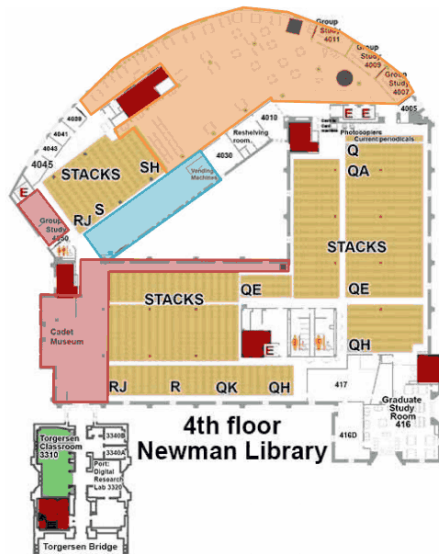
Instead of answering:

“How many students are currently in the observation area?”

We now answer:

“How many seats are currently occupied in the observation area?”

Library Maps

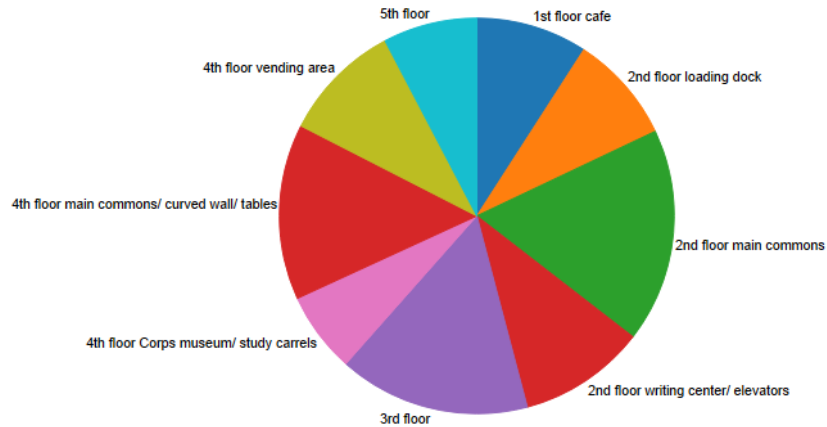


Storage of Data



Occupancy Distribution

Sheet 1



Avg. Ending Count

412.21

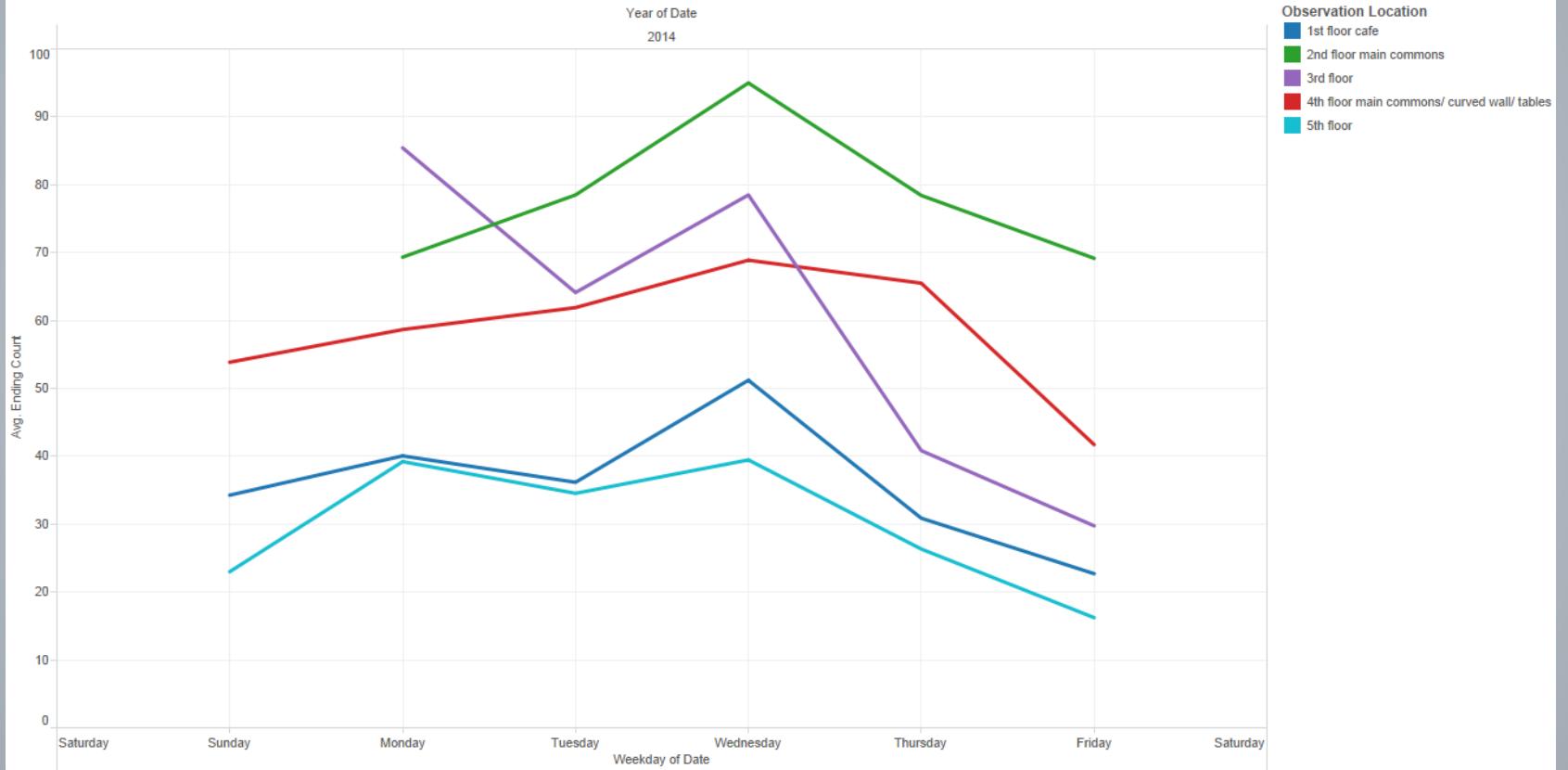
Observation Location

- 1st floor cafe
- 2nd floor loading dock
- 2nd floor main commons
- 2nd floor writing center/ elevators
- 3rd floor
- 4th floor Corps museum/ study carrels
- 4th floor main commons/ curved wall/ tables
- 4th floor vending area
- 5th floor

Observation Location. Color shows details about Observation Location. Size shows average of Ending Count. The marks are labeled by Observation Location. The data is filtered on Observation Location (group) and Date Weekday. The Observation Location (group) filter keeps 7 of 11 members. The Date Weekday filter ranges from Sunday to Saturday. The view is filtered on Observation Location, which keeps 9 of 16 members.

Occupancy vs. Day of Week

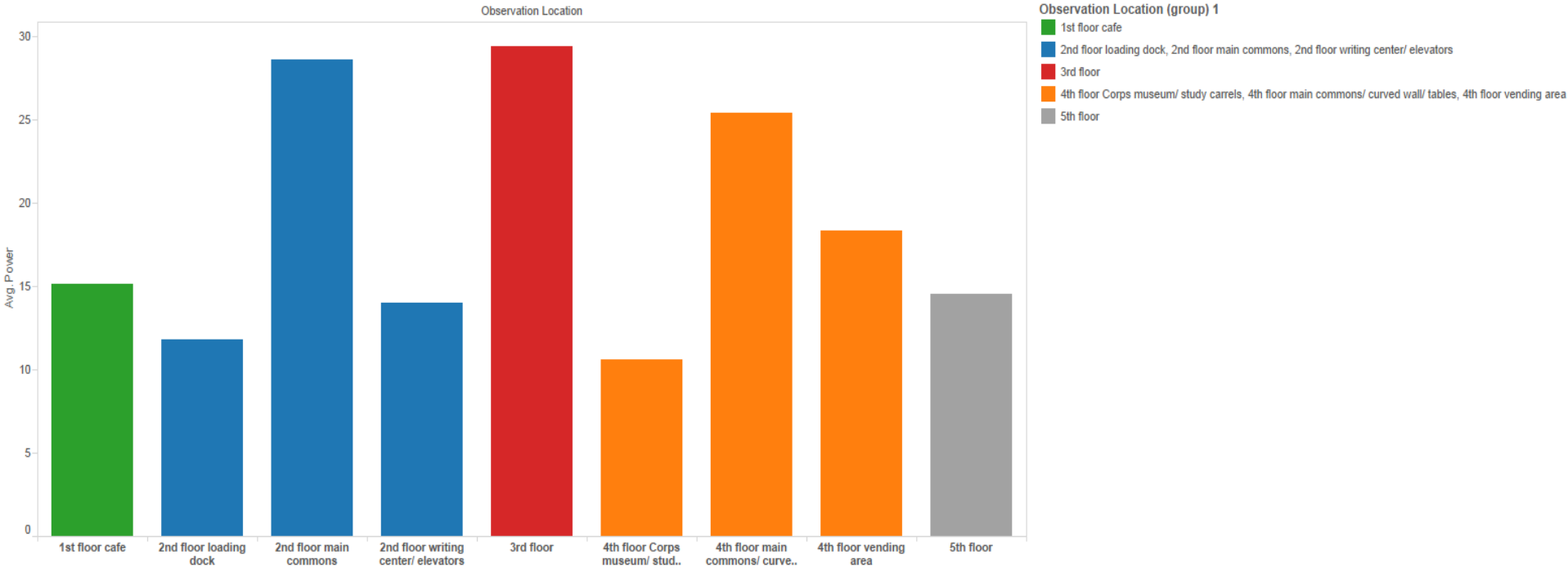
Sheet 2



The trend of average of Ending Count for Date Weekday broken down by Date Year. Color shows details about Observation Location. The data is filtered on Date Year, Date Month and Date Day. The Date Year filter keeps 2014. The Date Month filter keeps March and April. The Date Day filter keeps multiple members. The view is filtered on Observation Location and Date Weekday. The Observation Location filter keeps 8 of 16 members. The Date Weekday filter ranges from Sunday to Saturday.

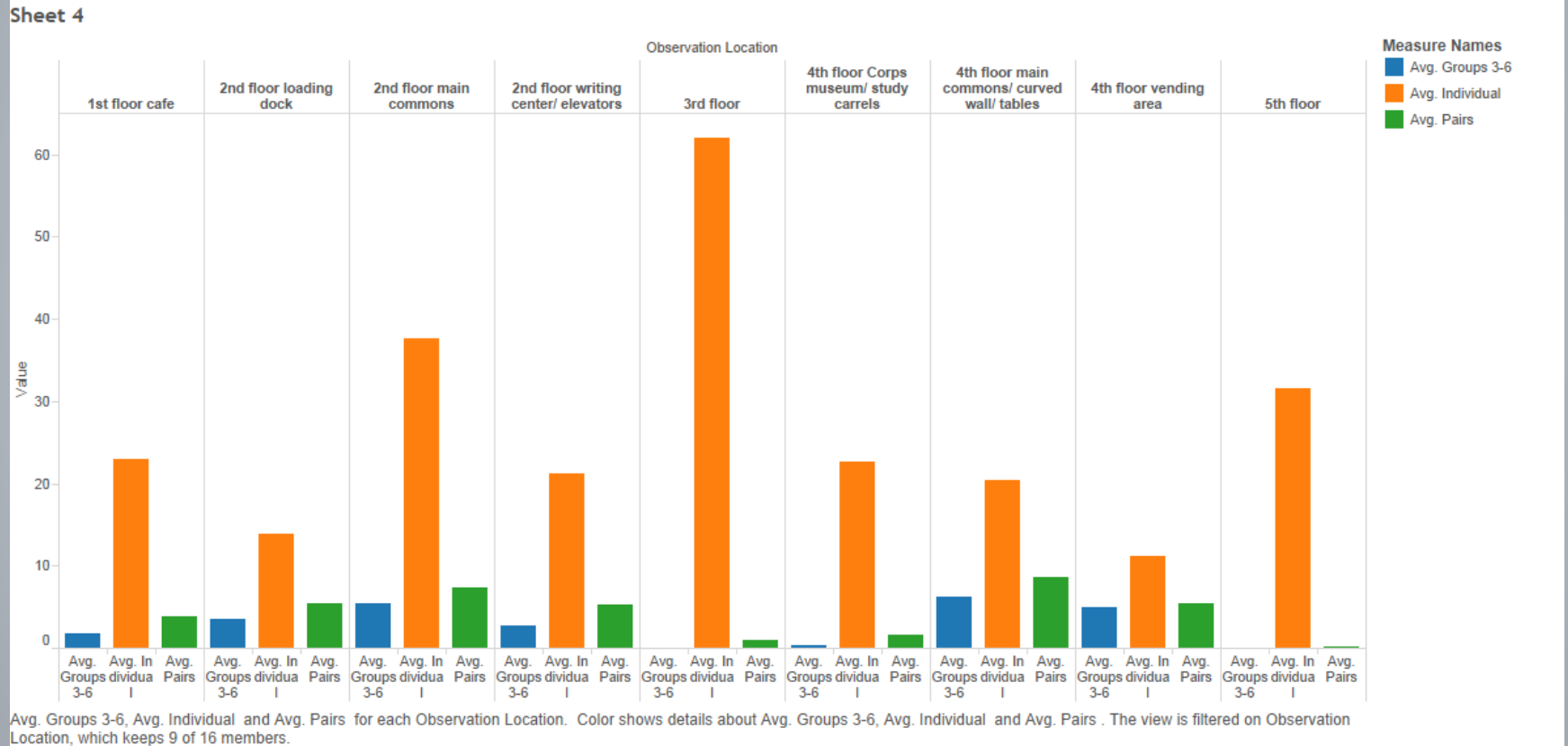
Power Usage

Sheet 3



Average of Power for each Observation Location. Color shows details about Observation Location (group) 1. The view is filtered on Observation Location, which keeps 9 of 16 members.

Individual vs. Group/Pair Study



Drawing Conclusions

- Finding trends
 - Noise level preference
 - Group study vs. individual preference
 - Effectiveness of student resources
- Adapting to technological advancement
 - Availability to power
 - Offering loan equipment (chargers, ipads, etc)

Action

- Bringing in the big players –
- Vending machines
- ATM
- Power cords
- Phone chargers

Future for PRA

More data → More action

Library in flux → more closely connected to
other integral departments

Determine additional questions and research
areas

Conclusion

Best way to improve the library?

Ask students → act on their responses

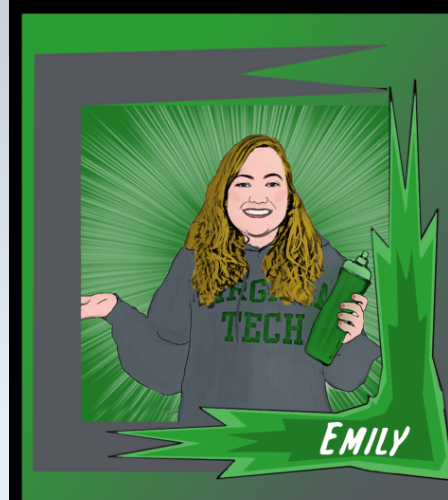
Best Student workers Ever!



ADAM

ADAM "THE CRUSHER"

MAJOR: Office Management
YEAR: 2014
SPECIAL POWER: "The Diving Elbow Drop"
MISSION: Nixon always wins
WEAKNESS: Woodward and Bernstein
EMAIL: pra.vtlib@gmail.com



EMILY

EMILY "THE ENTERTAINER"

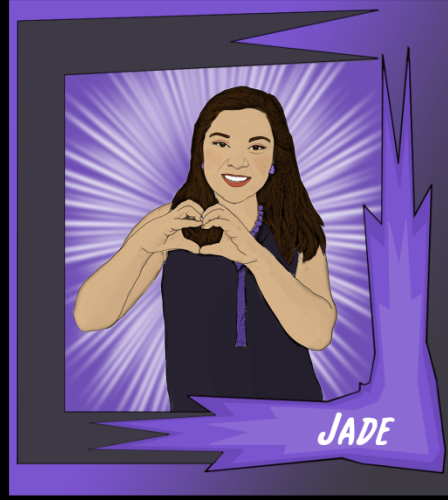
MAJOR: English
YEAR: Junior
SPECIAL POWER: Telling great jokes
MISSION: To survive the semester
WEAKNESS: Sour Patch Kids
EMAIL: pra.vtlib@gmail.com



JULIA

JULIA "THE NINJA"

MAJOR: English - Creative Writing
YEAR: Senior
SPECIAL POWER: Summoning the minions from their stories
MISSION: Collect ALL the data
WEAKNESS: Mornings
EMAIL: pra.vtlib@gmail.com



JADE

JADE "THE WOMBAT"

MAJOR: International Studies
YEAR: Junior
SPECIAL POWER: Naming 50 States
MISSION: Travel the world
WEAKNESS: Chai Lattes
EMAIL: pra.vtlib@gmail.com

Thank you!



MONENA

MONENA "PRA MASTERMIND"

MAJOR: Art History, Library science
Urban & Regional Planning

YEAR: 20th grade (Don't ask)

SPECIAL POWER: "Inability to sneak up on people"

MISSION: To make at least one person a day smile

WEAKNESS: Chocolate and Mint

EMAIL: monenah@vt.edu



RASHAD

"RANGE ROVER" RASHAD

MAJOR: Industrial & Systems Engineering

YEAR: Sophomore

SPECIAL POWER: Teleportation through the library

MISSION: To learn the library's call numbers

WEAKNESS: Decaf Coffee

EMAIL: pra.vtlib@gmail.com