
Distant but Equal: Leveling the Playing Field through Increased Library Presence for Online and Distance Education Students

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Research Questions

1. What does the online landscape look like at Virginia Tech?
2. Who are the partners on campus engaging with online students?
3. How do online and distance students use library resources?
4. How can the library better support students and faculty in the online learning environment.

Discovering our Online Learning Environment

- ❖ Virginia Tech: Public land-grant research university in Blacksburg, VA
 - Approximately 32,600 total students and about 2000 fully online students
- ❖ No single office of online/distance education, and no library faculty dedicated to it until we were hired
- ❖ Needs assessment undertaken as a way to learn about current state of online learning and develop new programs
 - 42 interviews with campus stakeholders
 - Faculty (n=185) and student (n=461) surveys
 - Visits to extended campus locations

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Site visits

Our findings

1. Number of students enrolled in online courses at VT has more than doubled in the last 10 years (based on institutional data)
2. Students in online courses interact with the library as if they were distance students, even if they are on-campus
3. A majority of students and faculty had a positive opinion of the library's online resources, but nearly as many had no opinion or had never used these resources
4. For online courses in general, a majority of students wanted more interaction in their courses, and faculty also wanted more engagement in general

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Research Themes

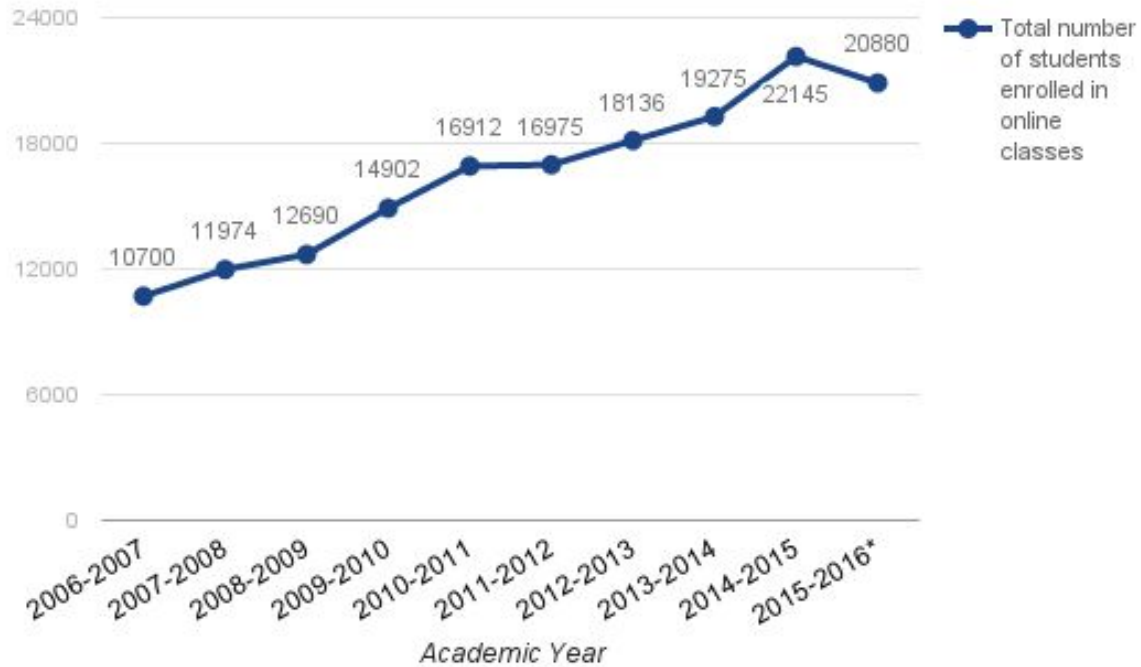
Student Themes

1. Extended campus students engagement/ synchronous instruction
2. Students not being required to use the library /not using library resources

Faculty Themes

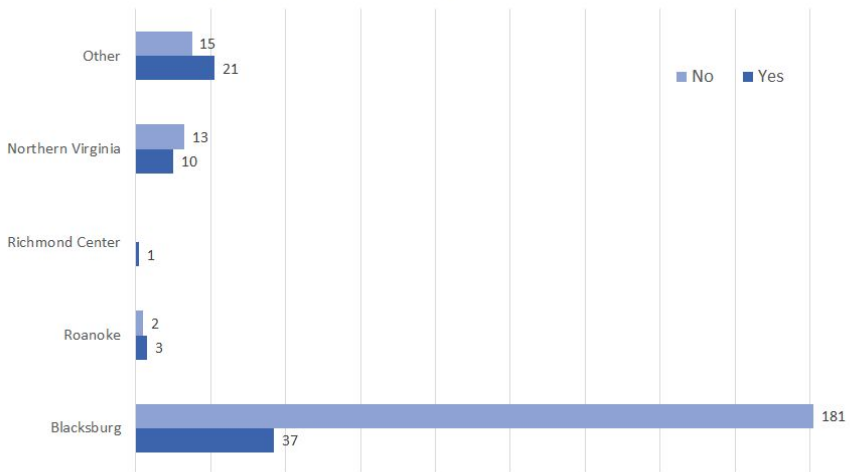
1. Faculty not requiring students to use the library / lack of readily available library materials that could be easily pulled into classes
2. Libraries need to do more outreach to faculty and students

Total number of students enrolled in online classes



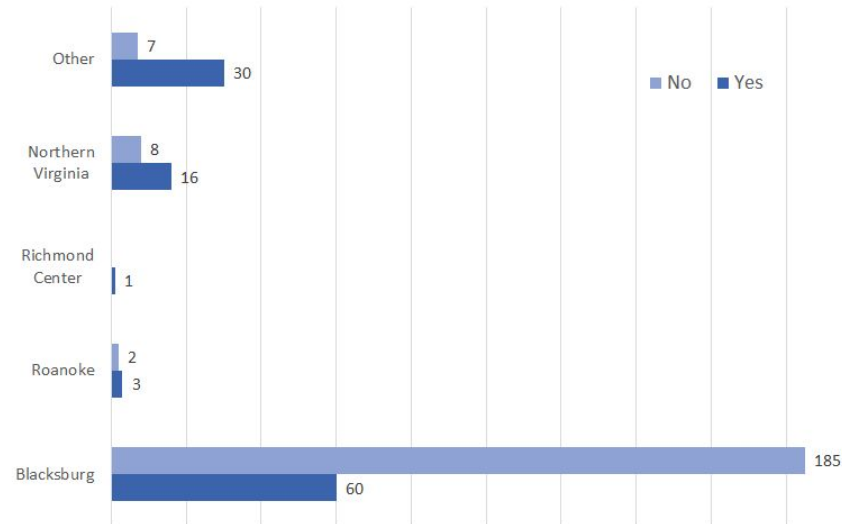
Student Library Use in Online Courses

Library Resources Required by Instructor for Online Classes



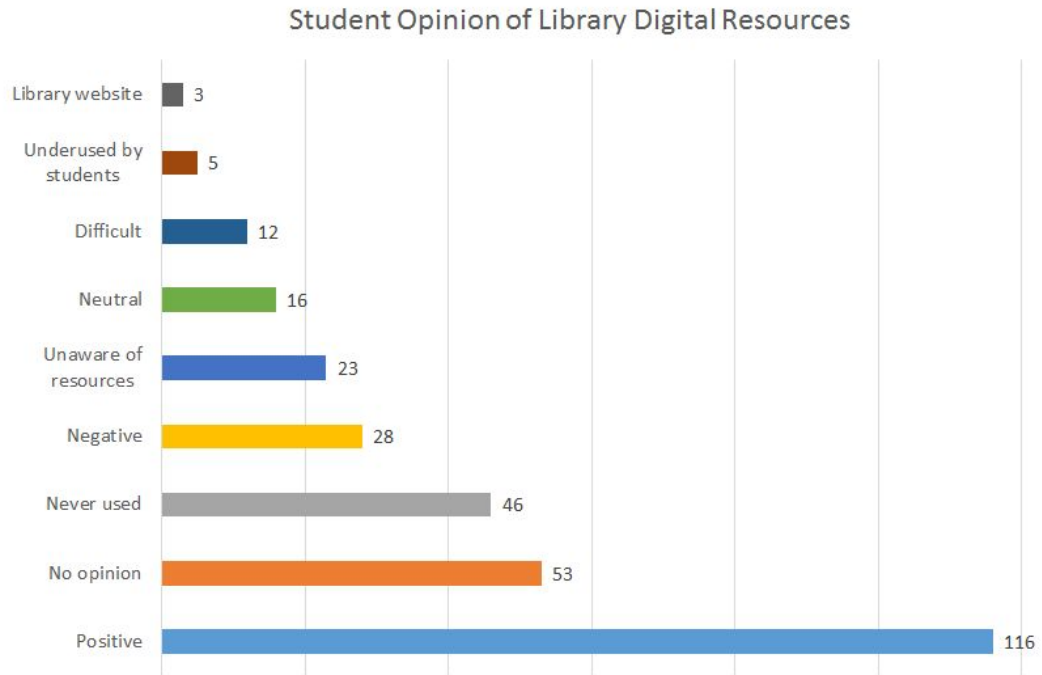
Total responses = 283

Library Resource Usage for Online Classes by Campus - Students



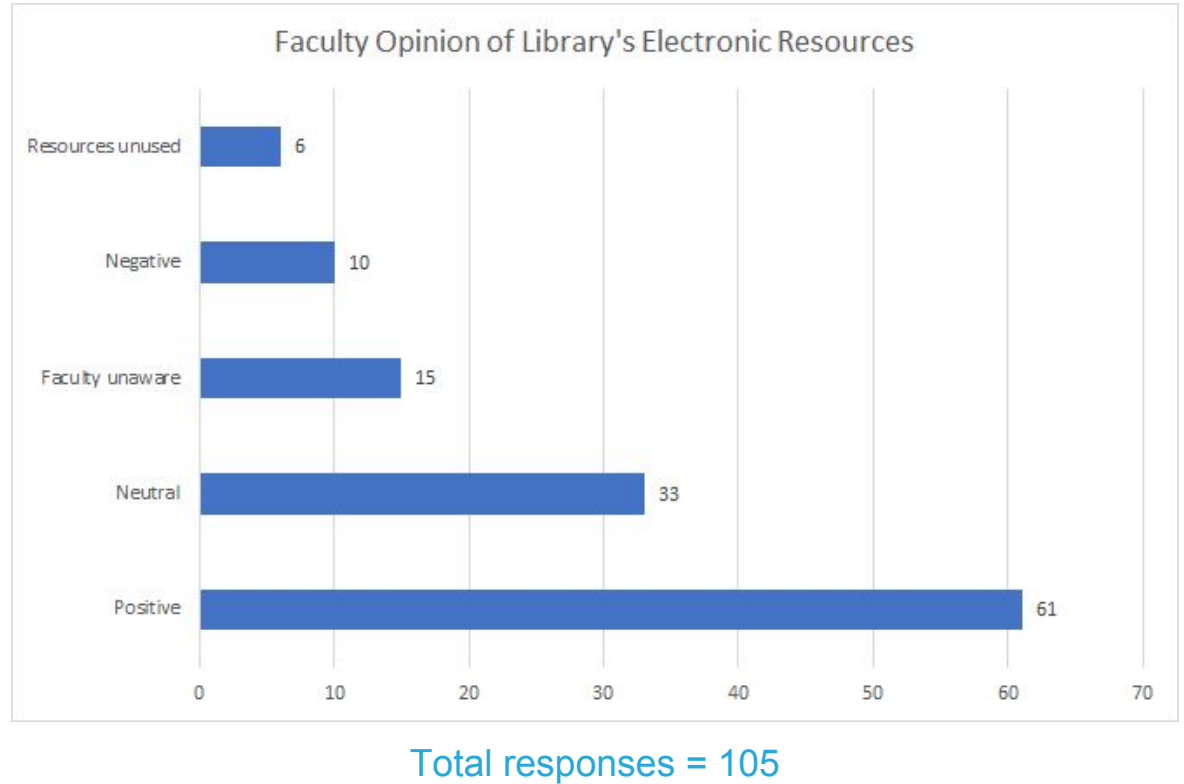
Total responses = 312

What do students think of the library's electronic resources?

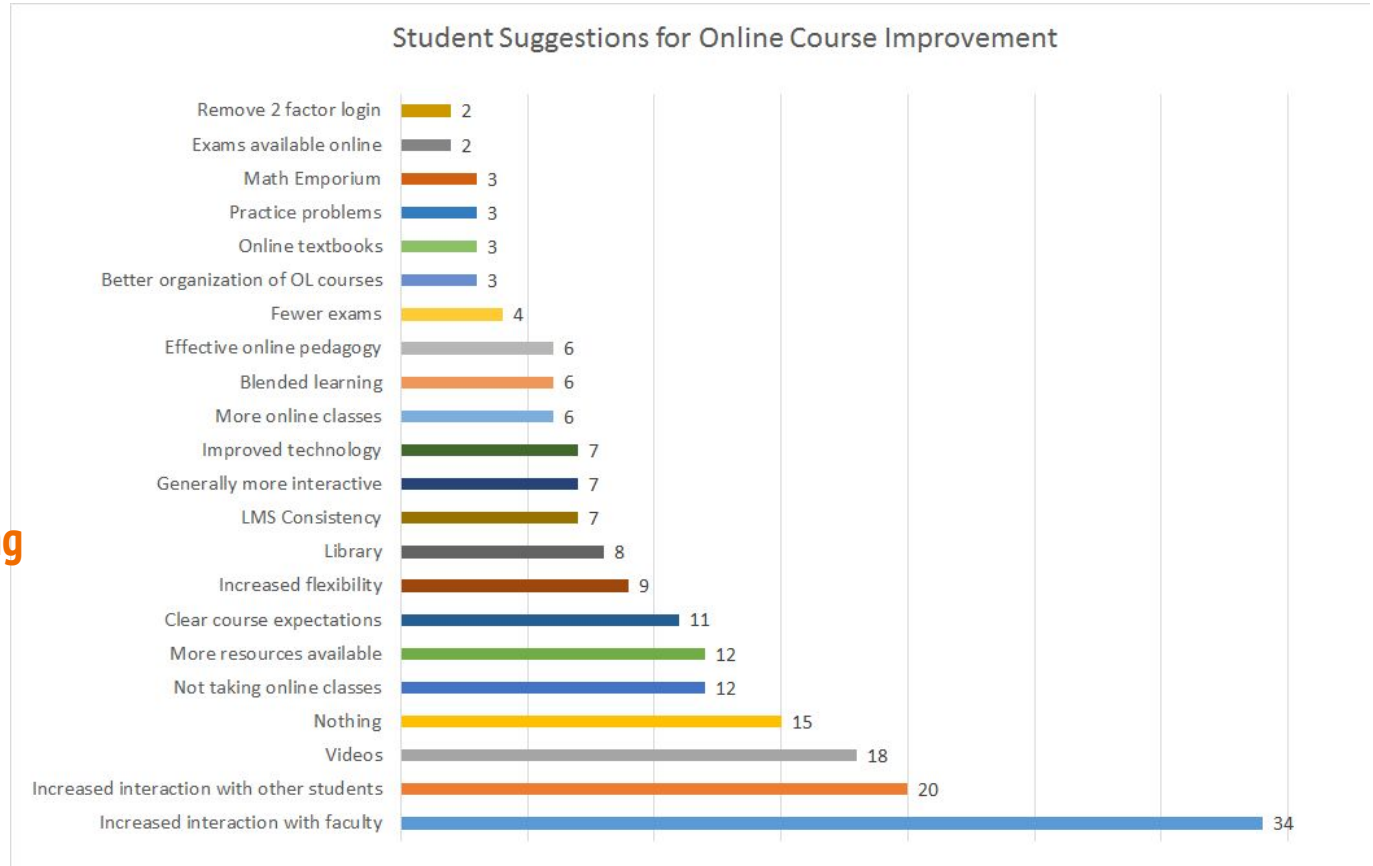


Total responses = 273

What do faculty think of the library's electronic resources?

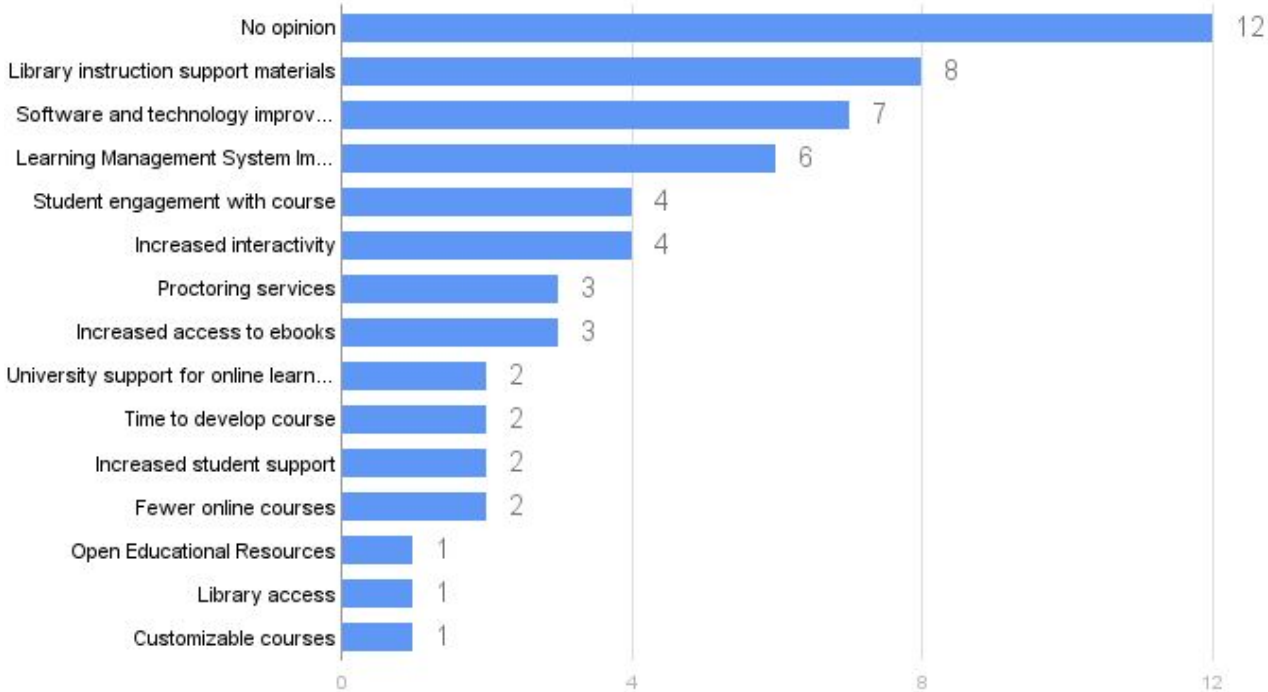


Student suggestions for improving online learning experience



Total responses = 171

Faculty Suggestions for Increased Online Teaching Satisfaction



Faculty suggestions for improvement in online teaching experience

Total responses = 52

Program Development

Programs in Development

1. Learning Design Studio / Learning Object Creation
2. Odyssey Learning Platform
3. Outreach to extended campuses through liaison work

Questions?