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Lyena Chavez

Merrimack College, chavezl@merrimack.edu

Catherine Wong

Merrimack College, wongc@merrimack.edu

Elizabeth Sarkodie-Mensah

Merrimack College, sarkodiemene@merrimack.edu

Michaela Keating

Merrimack College, keatingm@merrimack.edu

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Collaborative Reference: McQuade Library's Research Center

Lyena Chavez, C.J. Wong, Elizabeth Sarkodie-Mensah, & Michaela Keating

A Collaborative, Learner-Centered Reference Services

Delivery Model That Meets 21st Century Students' Dynamic and Evolving Research Expectations and Needs


Abstract:
Although reference has gone high-tech, students seeking high-touch reference assistance still travel to a destination – whether it's a reference desk, a librarian's office, a reference room, or a center. Thus, libraries are challenged to design reference spaces in which librarians are visible to students and are well-positioned to partner with students to engage in active research, from quick "show and go" questions to more in-depth reference consultations. This poster discusses how and why McQuade Library at Merrimack College embraced a Research Center model that creates a positive reference user experience for students and places collaboration – both among librarians and with students – at its core. McQuade's Research Center facilitates a team of librarians successfully serving a variety of student learners in an appealing and comfortable environment. This poster describes how the Research Center is staffed, the types of research consultations happening within the center, and visually depicts the layout of the center. It also includes reference and usage statistics and student feedback proving that if you build it, students will come.



The Merrimack College Community

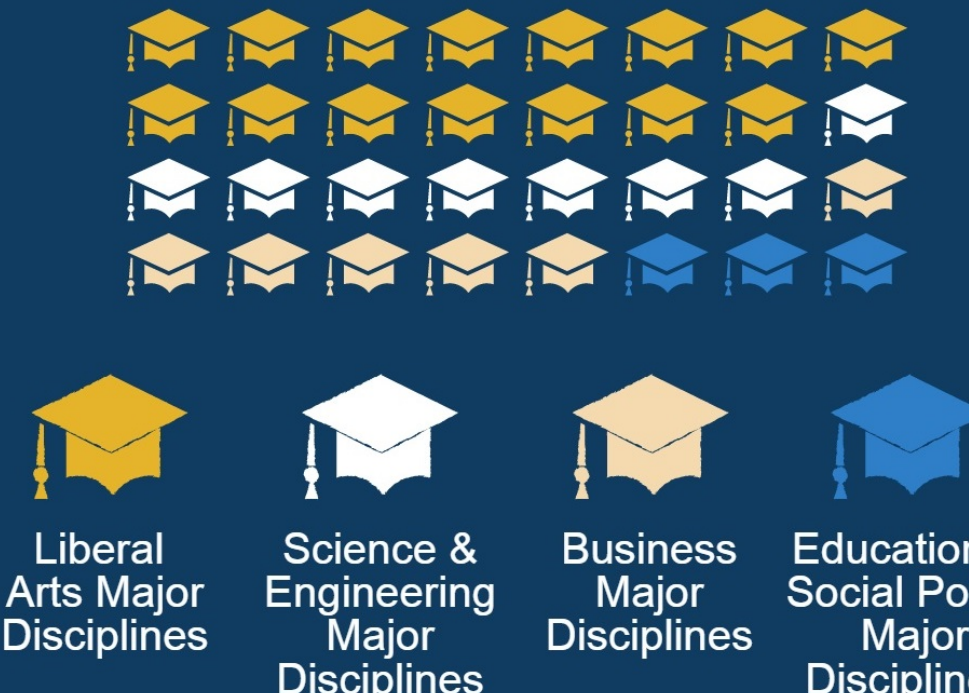
Founded in 1947, Merrimack College is an independent college in the Augustinian tradition whose mission is "to enlighten minds, engage hearts and empower lives."

Who are we helping?



Undergraduates comprise 91.5% of the student population

What are they researching?




Liberal Arts Major Disciplines, Science & Engineering Major Disciplines, Business Major Disciplines, Education & Social Policy Major Disciplines


Why a Research Center?

To improve the reference user experience for Merrimack Students by offering an appealing and comfortable environment

- Increase in the number of research consultations (Defined as >3 READ Scale, >5 minutes in duration)
- Emphasis on personalized, individualized approach to make reference services a signature program
 - Rapidly growing international, adult learners, Honors students, Compass (MC's Bridge Program) student populations
- Increase librarian visibility
- In line with other Centers (Math Center, Writing Center, Media Center) in Library Building

Lyena Chavez
Head of Instruction & Outreach
Humanities Liaison
978-837-5045
chavezl@merrimack.edu

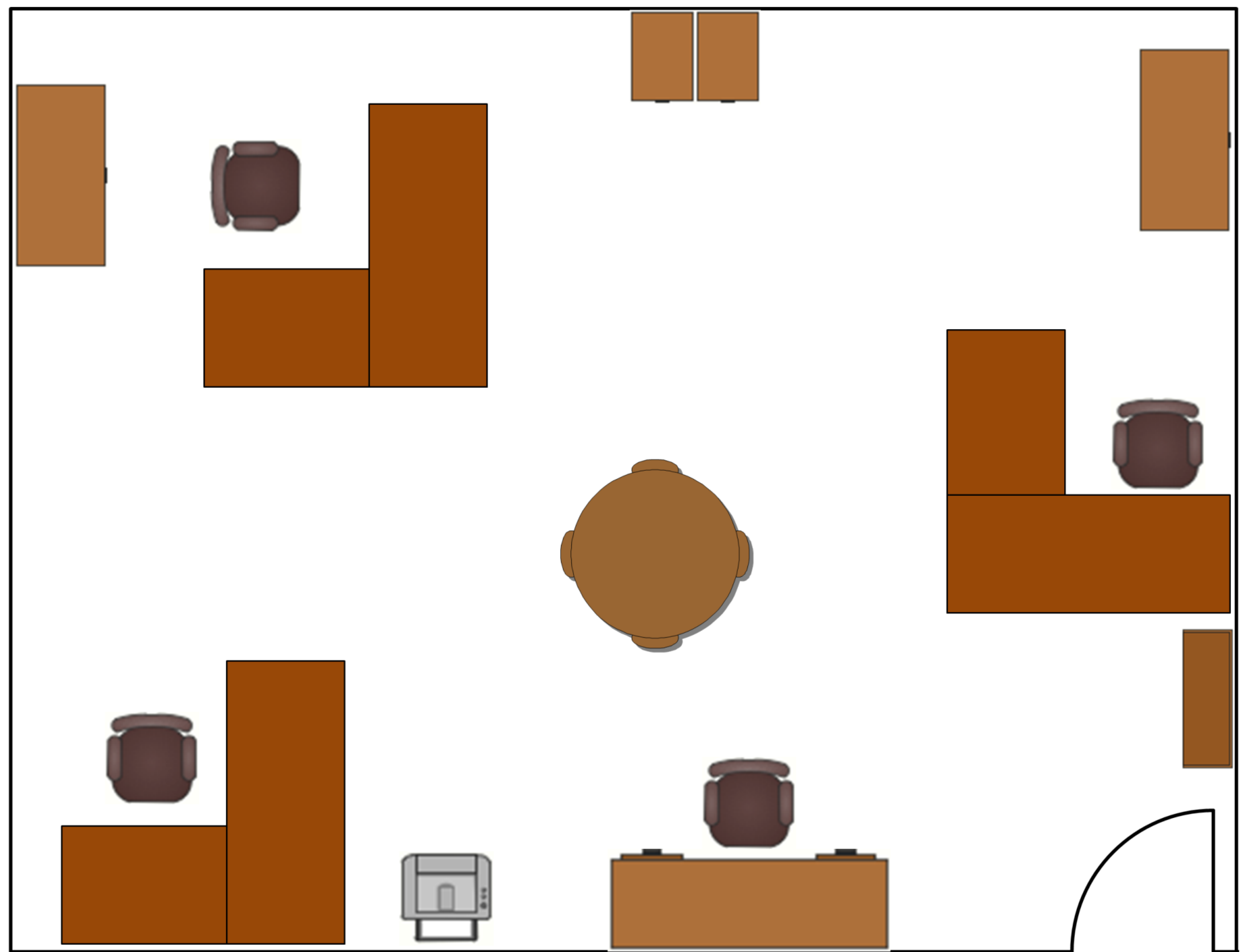


C. J. Wong
Instruction/Liaison Librarian
Science & Engineering
978-837-5350
wongcj@merrimack.edu

- Space for Student Learning**
Increases in student engagement
- Deeper, richer information literacy conversations and reflections
 - Active learning – students honing information literacy skills in DIY (Do It Yourself) mode
 - Relationship-building between librarians and students



"Thank you very much for help me get this book. I appreciate it. I am so glad that I can get so many support from our librarians. You are so supportive and efficient. I don't know how to express my feeling of gratitude. Many thanks from my heart. I love you all."
~International Student



McQuade's Research Center Has Become a Signature Space in Which Social Discourse and Collaborative Learning – Among Librarians and Students – Happen Daily.

- Space for Librarian Learning**
Librarians blending bricks and tricks
- Open office arrangement
 - Research Center serves as office space for librarians as well as consultation space for students
 - Flexible to accommodate emerging reference librarian roles (librarians as relationship-builders, guides, and partners)
 - Collaborative problem-solving among librarians is encouraged



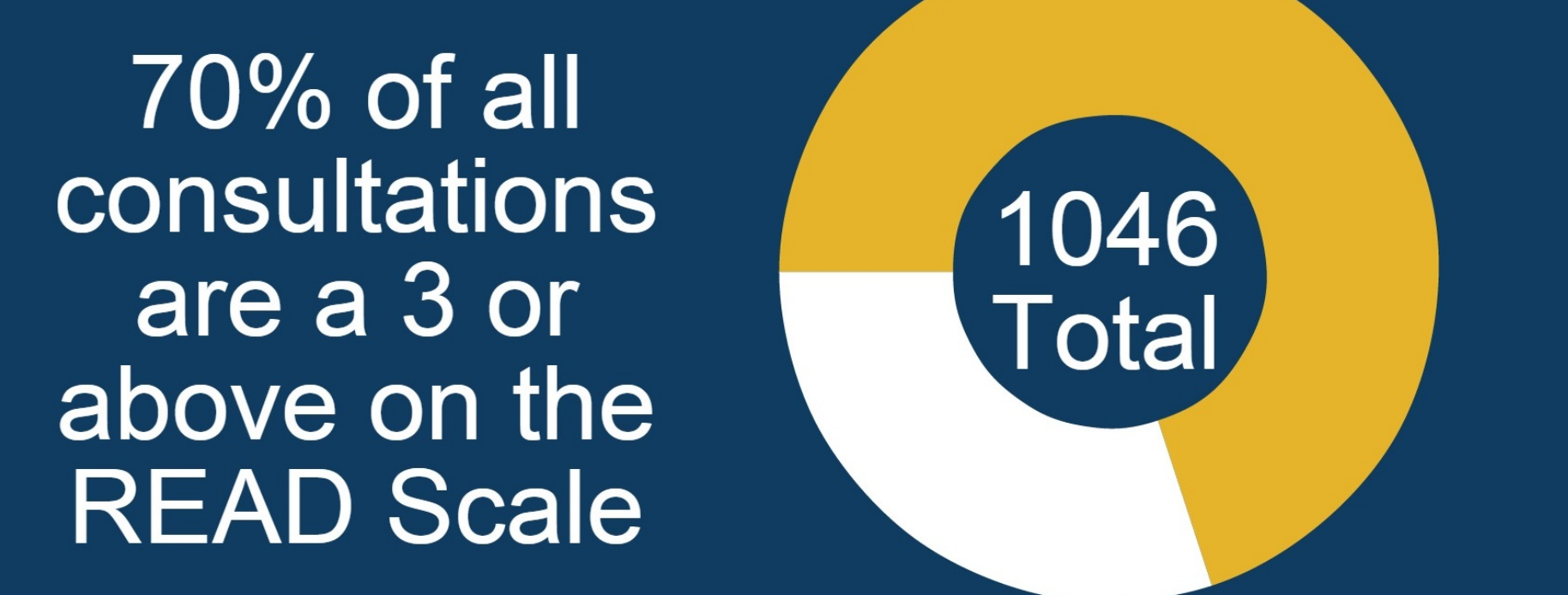

Self Service Office Supplies

"Thank you so much!!! You are so incredibly helpful :) I've been searching these on and off for weeks and I didn't find nearly as many useful articles. And the ones we printed hit it out of the park I'm already writing. God bless you, thank you!" ~Student




"I'm just reading [student]'s introduction now, and I wanted to tell you how terrific it is. You did an amazing job helping her to revise her study question and find the relevant articles. I really think it will make a difference to her this semester--and possibly her whole life. Thanks so much for your work with her and all my students!"
~Faculty member, Psychology Department


The Research Center By the Numbers

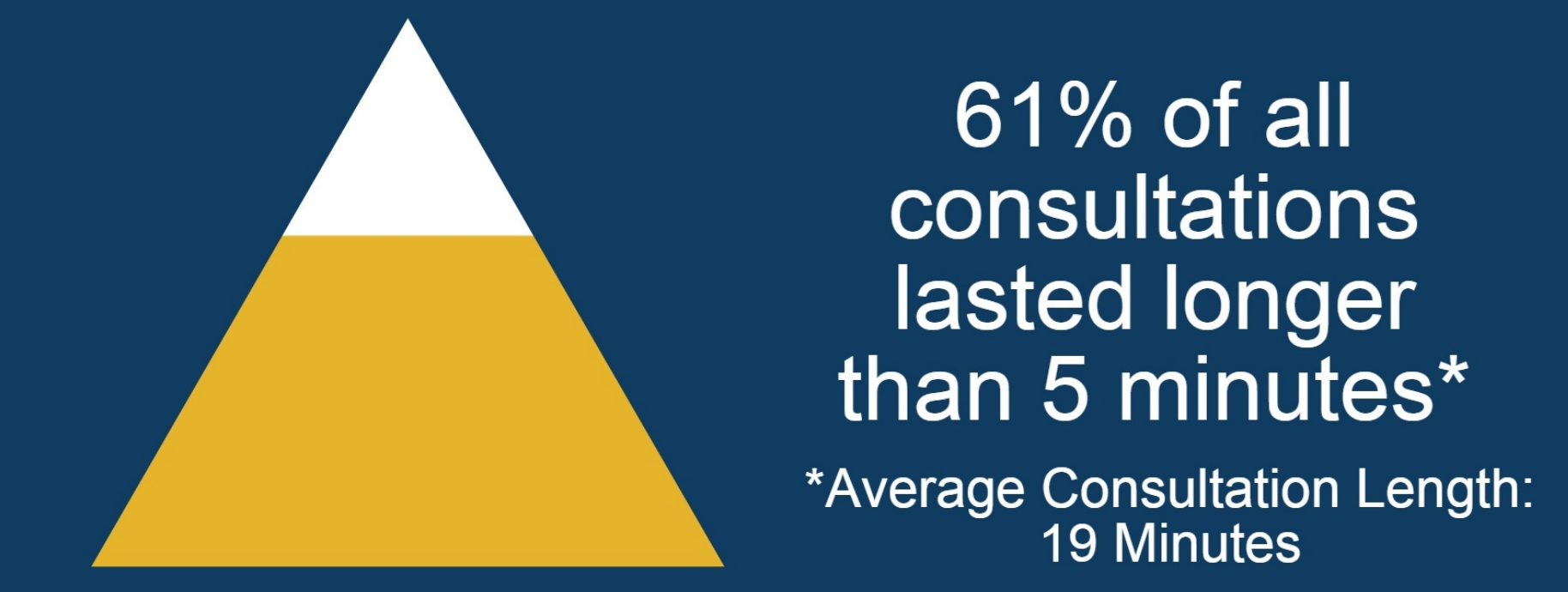

58 consultations of 5 or 6 on the READ Scale



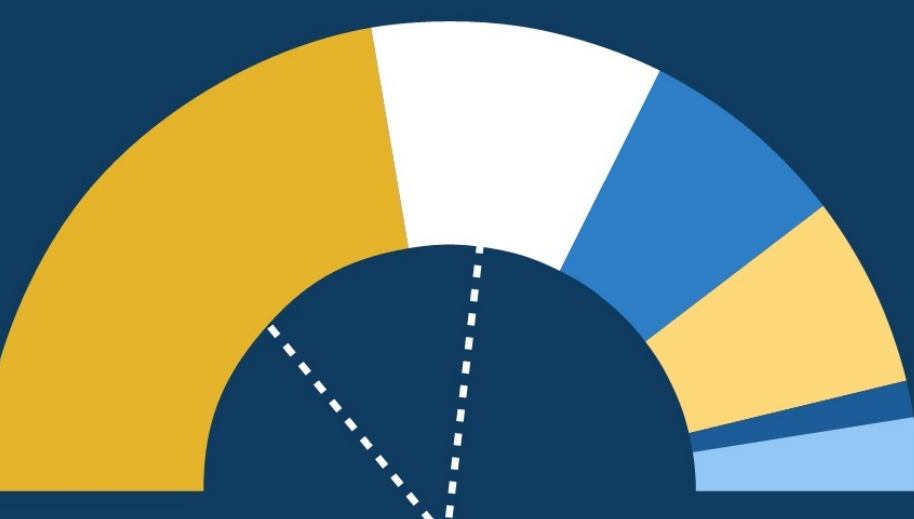
Librarians available 80 hours Per Week
McQuade Library is open 24 hours a day, 5 days a week



86 Research Appointments*
*30 Minute blocks scheduled 24-hours in advance


172 Information Literacy Instruction Sessions taught during the 2014-2015 academic year




65% of sessions were for first year writing, or 1000-level entry classes

Our active instruction program provides many opportunities to promote the Research Center, especially among first year students.

Acknowledgements
Pictures taken by Kevin Salemm, Director of Media Instructional Services.



Elizabeth Sarkodie-Mensah
Instruction/Liaison Librarian
Social Sciences and Humanities
978-837-5016
sarkodie@merrimack.edu



Michaela Keating
Instruction/Liaison Librarian
for Scholarly Communication
978-837-5267
keating@merrimack.edu