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# Is Everything All Right At Night? Measuring User Response to Overnight Library Services

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# Is Everything All Right At Night?

## Measuring User Response to Overnight Library Services

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### Introduction

A multiple methods study was conducted over three academic terms during the 2015 academic/fiscal year at Santa Clara University Library to assess the impact and value of overnight library hours. A survey was conducted after midnight during times the Library was open 24 hours, five days a week (24/5), the last two weeks of the quarter. The survey was further informed by patron counts conducted hourly by library floor and which noted library activity types.

Six key Research Questions (RQ) were posed:

- RQ1: What are students doing in the library after midnight, and what type of seating /space is preferred in overnight hours? (Figures 1 and 3)
- RQ2: How many students make use of overnight hours? What is the pattern of use?(Figure 2)
- RQ3: What services do students use after midnight? (Figure 4)
- RQ4: Where else do students study after midnight? (Figure 5)
- RQ5: Do students associate 24/5 library access with academic success? Do their self-reported grade point averages confirm their opinion? (Figures 7 and 8)
- RQ6: What does "success" look like in overnight hours? How will we know if we've achieved it? (Conclusions)

### Methodologies: Survey and Activity Counts

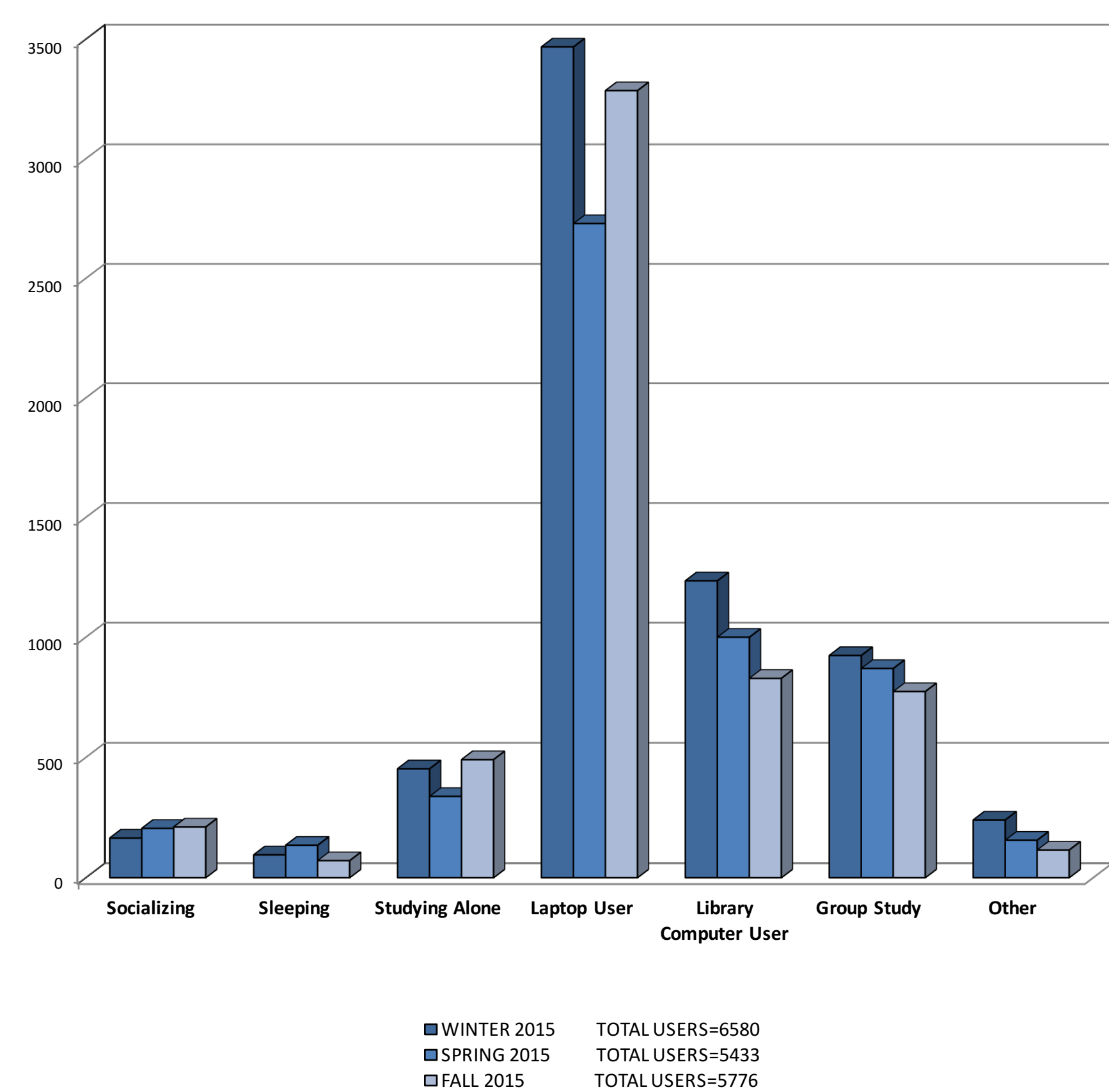
#### Survey of Users after Midnight

- A survey was conducted at SCU three times over the three primary quarters of fiscal year 2015.
- Paper surveys consisting of 16 questions on one double-sided page were distributed after midnight during the two weeks that the Library was open for the 24/5 schedule.
- The survey featured five demographic questions and 11 questions about overnight use, needs, and purpose. The full survey is found in Chrzastowski and Nutefall (2016).

#### Hourly Patron Counts

- Student assistant workers counted the number of users and their library activity.
- Activity categories: socializing, studying alone, laptop user, library PC user, group study, sleeping, and other.
- An iPad was used to record results, and the hourly counts were automatically sent to a Google spreadsheet where they cumulated. Results are shown in Figures 1 and 3.

Figure 1 (RQ1). Total Patron Activity (Hourly count, midnight-7 a.m. / 10 days per quarter). Total count for three quarters of FY15 was 17,302 between midnight and 7 a.m.



### Results

Figure 2 (RQ2). Heat map showing patron counts by hour during the two weeks each quarter of FY15 when the library is open 24/5. The darkest red depicts the highest counts, fading to green and then light blue, which depicts the lowest counts. This visualization shows not only how use varies by hour and day of the week, but also by quarters. The highest sustained counts occur during fall quarter. The heat map can also show where counts were missed (a light blue "0" among a sea of red).

Patron Counts During 24-Hour Openings (Includes Only Days Open for 24 Hours)																								
	7:30 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	12:30 p.m.	1:30 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	4:30 p.m.	5:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	7:30 p.m.	8:30 p.m.	9:30 p.m.	10:30 p.m.	11:30 p.m.	12:30 a.m.	1:30 a.m.	2:30 a.m.	3:30 a.m.	4:30 a.m.	5:30 a.m.	6:30 a.m.
11/30/14	0	0	38	81	110	197	236	290	304	302	280	302	301	288	0	234	162	83	52	17	15	13	9	9
12/1/14	10	51	116	247	295	348	335	440	456	400	448	470	415	325	240	156	69	40	26	26	26	26	26	26
12/2/14	38	53	146	224	355	363	368	409	474	517	518	400	407	415	486	483	387	204	130	61	25	13	8	8
12/3/14	20	53	124	114	264	370	385	417	507	514	498	478	478	551	586	579	419	0	0	87	55	30	20	20
12/4/14	40	72	150	211	391	364	371	440	485	518	444	425	423	466	524	516	431	371	230	108	64	45	34	34
12/7/14	0	0	117	276	443	473	0	491	538	536	524	519	520	470	523	517	337	308	199	0	0	0	0	0
12/8/14	23	79	209	428	598	578	544	547	587	482	516	421	471	528	554	569	443	365	196	146	99	56	27	27
12/9/14	61	87	180	444	492	511	447	512	536	572	551	560	586	588	554	433	366	263	184	96	85	49	35	35
12/10/14	50	123	180	209	254	533	445	470	463	473	502	350	322	373	387	370	320	173	153	92	62	47	47	47
12/11/14	48	108	120	143	304	293	305	294	318	336	303	293	304	288	260	219	164	133	82	63	54	40	43	43
3/8/15	0	0	31	112	157	256	0	341	329	342	430	412	396	502	506	409	233	145	76	60	31	17	15	15
3/9/15	27	35	84	196	248	263	303	338	441	456	528	528	538	682	686	486	359	293	152	74	46	31	22	22
3/10/15	38	51	106	205	278	330	313	328	275	349	328	292	292	324	541	497	445	326	192	60	59	26	12	12
3/11/15	22	40	89	140	200	271	289	380	452	481	209	198	462	478	508	457	412	365	291	114	95	54	16	16
3/12/15	30	40	101	174	264	285	362	404	406	396	446	442	470	478	546	528	427	285	220	94	64	43	24	24
3/13/15	22	57	124	145	199	296	301	298	198	176	210	209	176	163	156	92	0	0	109	57	51	24	24	24
3/16/15	61	101	148	383	511	511	511	502	573	571	557	472	527	610	641	647	641	450	181	113	45	0	31	31
3/17/15	40	122	168	377	495	584	457	468	199	199	399	402	410	462	389	309	207	131	100	57	33	24	24	24
3/18/15	33	79	147	280	425	412	373	603	602	552	488	427	472	482	505	458	372	265	128	108	62	42	32	32
3/19/15	41	67	131	306	414	449	376	378	417	370	287	0	320	357	366	339	260	199	130	50	45	39	14	14
5/31/15	30	89	205	0	0	271	0	320	464	464	399	392	373	507	522	364	263	148	95	62	44	23	14	14
6/1/15	19	42	48	221	260	225	266	454	462	473	356	396	494	491	496	465	378	228	132	71	36	18	9	9
6/2/15	14	51	116	192	256	196	203	381	410	416	368	347	402	519	586	442	276	191	106	76	44	25	20	20
6/3/15	22	68	126	217	268	291	296	438	455	485	500	506	453	473	453	464	279	220	136	72	44	28	16	16
6/4/15	22	54	143	214	267	343	407	188	230	195	331	310	289	368	374	344	233	179	174	84	60	34	25	25
6/7/15	0	0	102	252	409	426	475	468	561	564	481	493	494	601	609	496	415	295	186	130	87	53	29	29
6/8/15	67	80	129	407	487	448	453	549	642	656	606	446	415	485	468	473	420	295	199	96	68	48	35	35
6/9/15	48	129	207	357	567	551	467	293	291	255	478	392	430	507	558	562	550	257	250	124	82	62	33	33
6/10/15	63	105	131	323	440	415	159	426	464	471	415	278	262	281	228	293	220	184	122	100	61	57	40	40
6/11/15	49	88	131	205	306	314	193	239	246	244	207	102	54	51	50	65	37	34	20	11	8	9	4	4

Figure 3 (RQ1). Survey responses to "What are your favorite types of Library Space? Please choose your top three." (n = 615) Note the survey was administered after midnight, so these responses purportedly reflect users' preferences during that time of day.

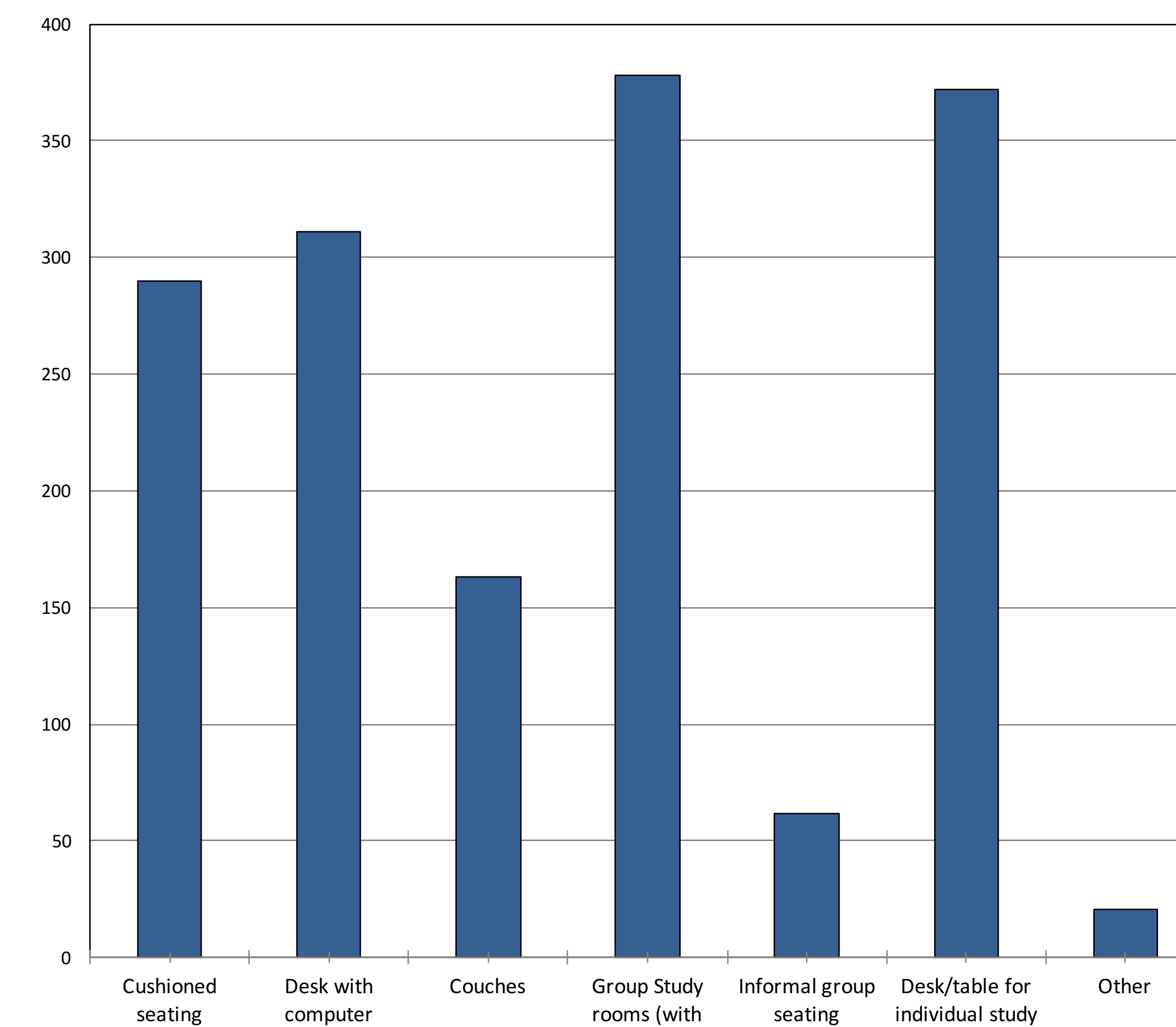


Figure 4 (RQ3). Survey responses to "What services do you use in the Learning Commons/Library between midnight and 7 a.m.?" Check all that apply." (n = 616).

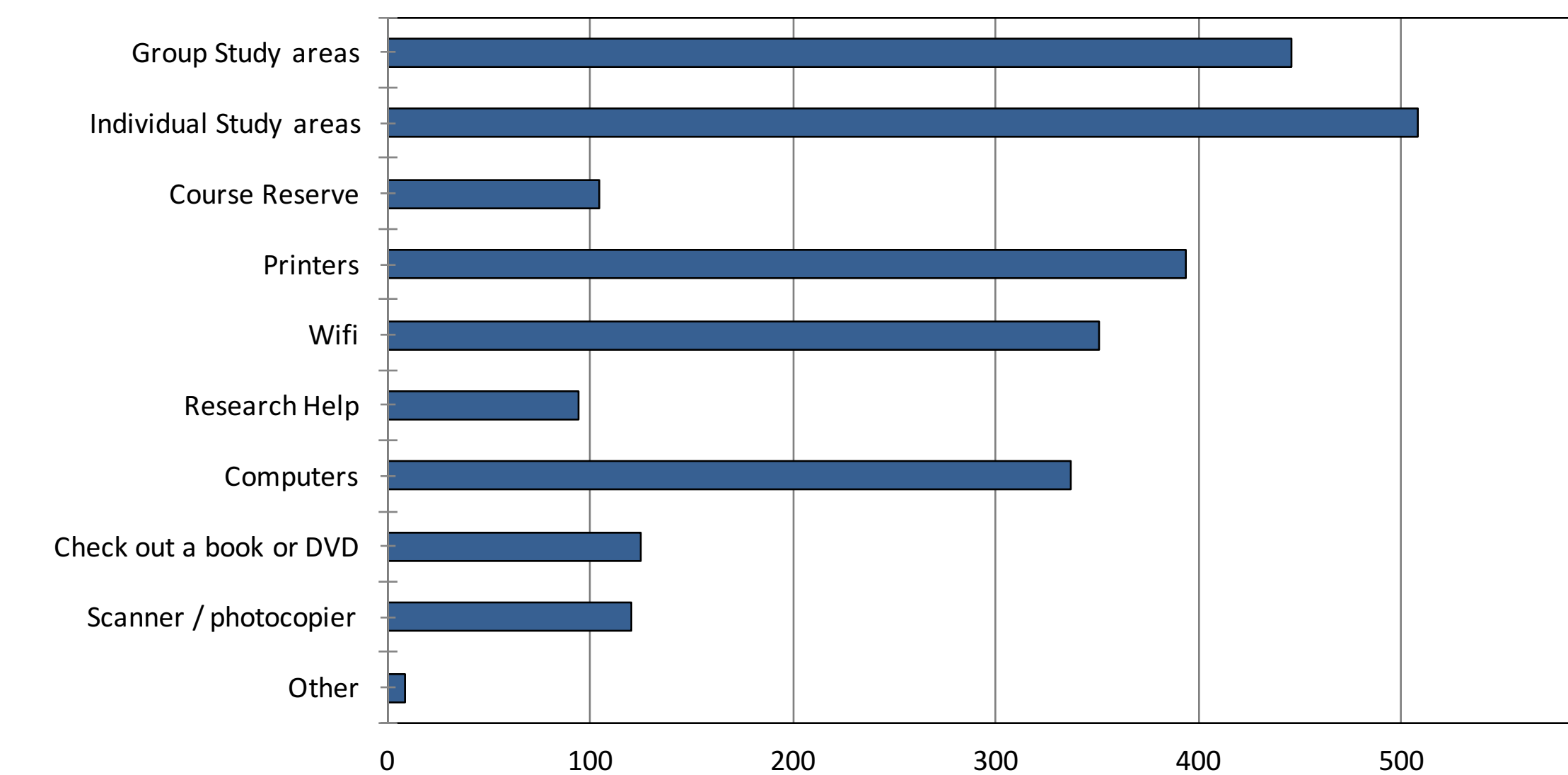
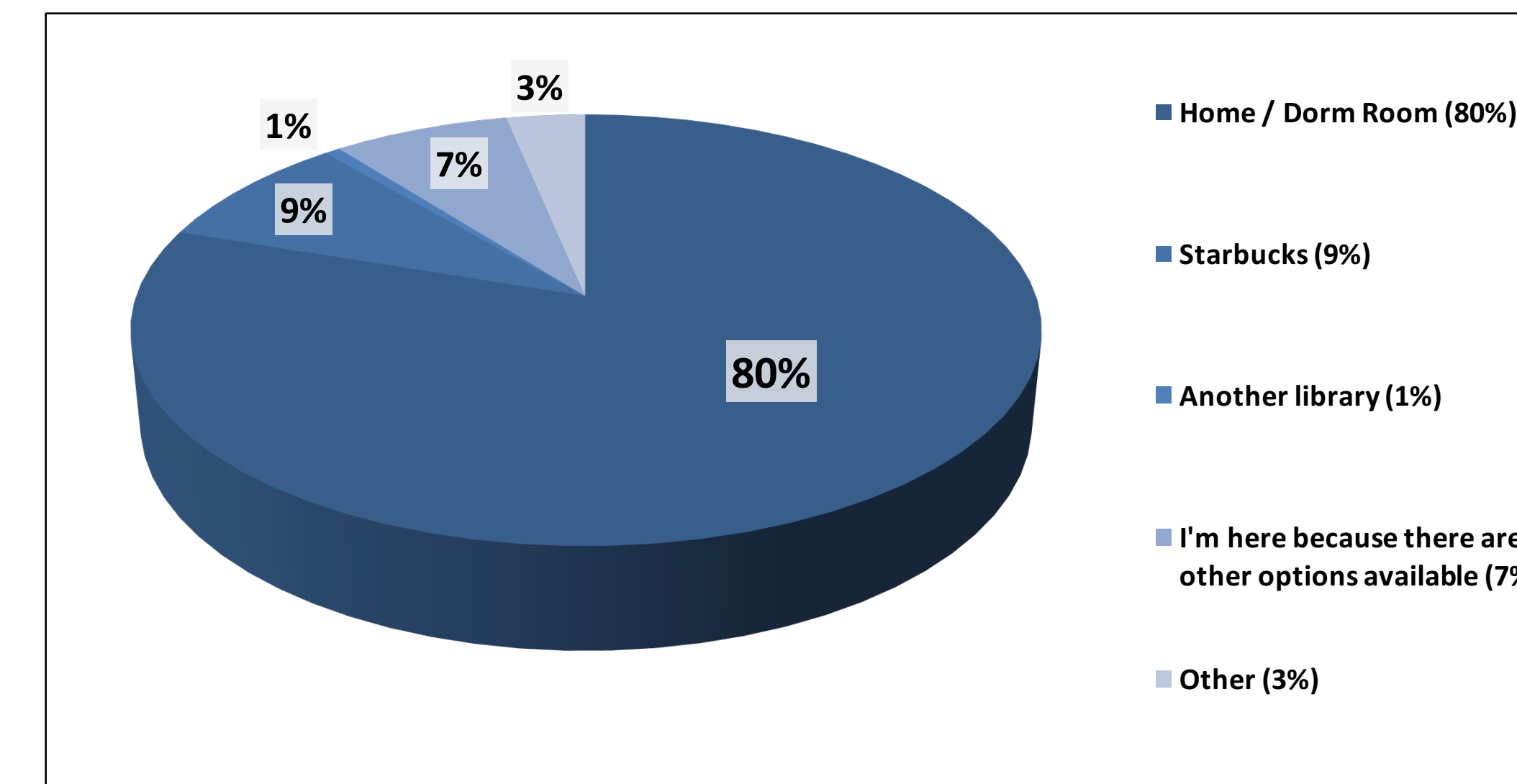


Figure 5 (RQ4). Survey response to "If you weren't in the library, where would you go during this time?" (After midnight; n=615).



### Do students associate 24/5 library access with academic success? Do their self-reported grade point averages confirm their opinion?

Figure 6 (RQ5). Survey responses to "How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: 'Having the ability to use the Learning Commons/Library during the overnight hours (midnight-7 a.m.) has made a positive difference for me academically.'" (n = 611).

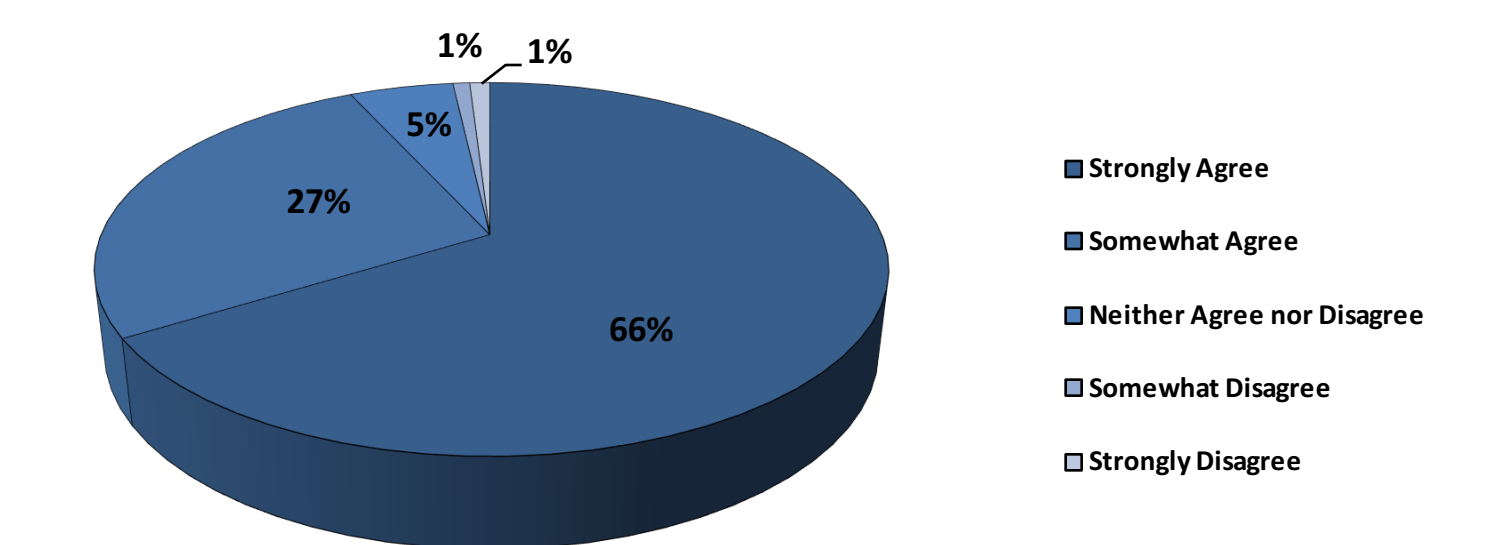
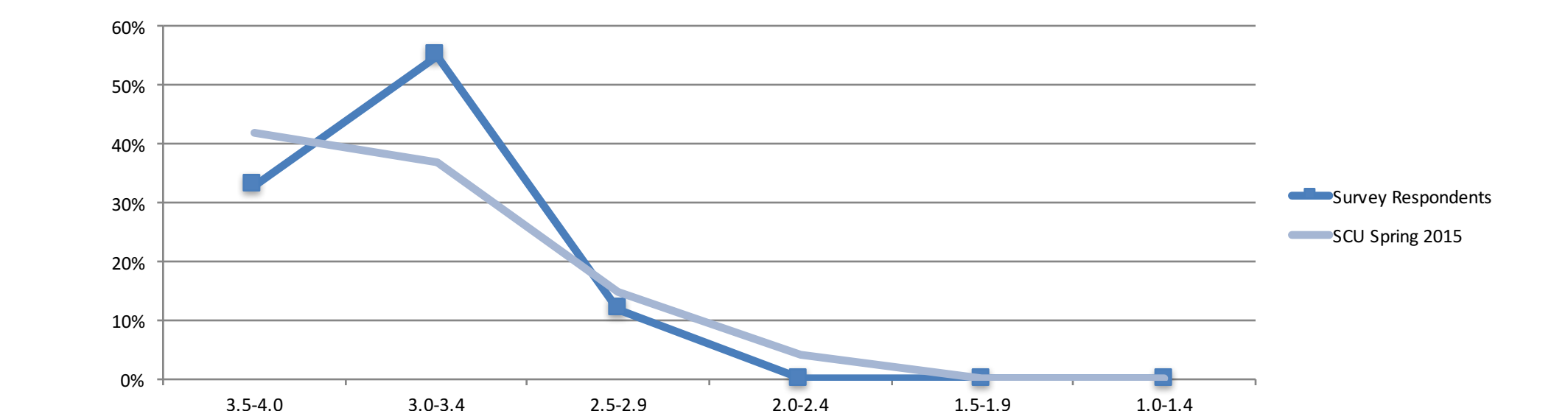


Figure 7 (RQ5). Self-reported GPA data (n = 543) from FY15 survey compared to SCU Spring 2015 GPA data (n = 8,286 for campus data).



The majority of students (55%) using the overnight hours self-reported a GPA of between 3.0-3.4. While it is not possible to draw many conclusions from these data, it might be assumed, based on the self-reported GPA, that students who believe they are already doing well academically (more than 80% reported a GPA over 3.0) also use the Library during overnight hours.

### Conclusions (RQ6)

Overall, everything is all right at night at the SCU Library. However, we now know quite a bit more about what overnight library users do in the Library. The survey results, along with activity patron counts, provide data that answer the questions posed by this research. We know not just how many students use the Library after midnight but their favorite spaces and activities. We know students typically leave the Library before 2 a.m., use laptops, and prefer a tabletop or desk to study. They require few, if any, traditional library services but do trend toward requiring technology, like computers, Wi-Fi, and printers, to assist them in their work.

In addition, SCU students do associate 24/5 library access with academic success. Additional support for this comes from patron counts showing most SCU post-midnight library users are awake and working, not socializing or sleeping. The Library can provide the space and the late-night hours, but the culture of the student body and their choice in how to use that space and time are the true determinants of success. Still, the Library's role is not inconsequential, and extended hours demonstrate the Library's commitment to student success.

### Poster Source

Chrzastowski, T. E., & Nutefall, J. E. (2016). Is everything all right at night? Measuring user response to overnight library services. *Journal of Access Services, 13*(3), 179-198.

### Acknowledgments

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