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LibQUAL+ Survey Analysis Report

Old Dominion University Libraries

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LibQUAL+ Survey Analysis Report

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Introduction

This report details the process and results of the recent Library Quality Survey held on campus. The survey was powered by LibQUAL+. “LibQUAL+ is a suite of services that libraries use to solicit, track, understand, and act upon users' opinions of service quality. These services are offered to the library community by the Association of Research Libraries ([ARL](http://www.arl.org)). The program's centerpiece is a rigorously tested Web-based survey bundled with training that helps libraries assess and improve library services, change organizational culture, and market the library” (libqual.org). LibQUAL+ is a well-known service used for library quality surveys, and has been used by more than 1,200 libraries worldwide (libqual.org).

In January of 2015 it was decided by the Libraries' Management Team that the LibQUAL+ survey should be administered to the ODU population. They convened a volunteer group of Librarians and Library Staff. The planning and design process took place Spring through Summer 2015, and the survey was launched in September. It ran for the recommended three weeks, and was closed in October. The analysis and reporting phase of the project started then, and will be completed in February 2016.

This report takes the form of an IMRAD style paper. The design and distribution of the survey will be discussed in the Methods portion. Specific statistics can be found in the Results portion. Within the Discussion portion, the report will cover the important points from the LibQUAL+ Results Notebook, the free text comments analyzed by ODU Libraries' LibQUAL+ Task Force, comparisons to two other libraries that completed the LibQUAL+ survey in 2015, and future options for both using the data and future surveys.

Methods

This section will cover the design of the survey, the population surveyed, distribution, and analysis methods. Besides the 22 core questions provided by LibQUAL+, there are also

several demographic questions such as age, sex, user sub-group, and discipline. The Task Force was able to decide whether or not to include the age and sex questions. They opted to do so. They were also able to do some customization of the user sub-group and discipline questions to best reflect the ODU population.

Lastly, the Task Force was given the option of adding five additional questions to the survey. These five questions could either be selected from a list of already approved questions, or submitted by the institution. Since this was the Libraries' first time doing the survey, it was decided that the Task Force should choose from the preexisting list. To see the complete text of all the questions see Appendix I. In general, the five questions were chosen to help pinpoint areas of current concern in the Libraries.

It was decided that a sample population should be directly contacted, but that the survey would be open to the entire campus population. While the sample population was directly contacted, the rest of the campus would be informed of the survey through marketing efforts across campus to include: flyers, events, digital signage, social media, advertising video, etc. This was done to help boost the response numbers, while ensuring that a core representative population was asked to complete the survey.

One final decision in regards to the survey design was whether or not to offer "Lite" views of the survey. This is a relatively new feature of the LibQUAL+ survey started in 2010 (libqual.org). The "Lite" version of the survey is shorter, and so takes less time and is less visually intimidating than the full version. The Task Force had the ability to choose what percentage of the views would be "Lite" ranging anywhere from zero percent to one hundred percent. Since this was the first time doing the LibQUAL+ survey, the Task Force chose to do no "Lite" views in the hopes of gathering more data.

To help boost survey completion, it was also decided to offer 50 prizes, of twenty dollars in Monarch Plus Points, as incentives. The emails were collected by LibQUAL+, disconnected from the survey results, and 50 random emails were selected by LibQUAL+ and made available to the Task Force after the survey was closed.

Once the survey design was completed, the survey was submitted to the Institutional Review Board. The survey was given expedited review, and was judged to be exempt.

The Task Force then moved forward with choosing a sample population. With the help of Tisha Paredes and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, the Task Force identified the populations that the Libraries wanted to sample. The sample was selected by first identifying the individual cohorts: undergraduate students (not including first year students), graduate students, full-time active classified staff, adjunct faculty, full-time active instructional faculty, and administrative faculty. The entire Library staff was emailed with the survey directly by the Task Force. The sample total came to 6,895. The initial invitation to take the survey was emailed to the sample group on September 22nd. Three reminder emails were sent out, and the survey was closed on October 13th. During the sample time period, the survey was actively being marketed to the campus through multiple channels. This was done in hopes of boosting the response rate.

Once the survey was closed, LibQUAL+ performed analysis on the results, and produced a full Results Notebook. The Task Force was responsible for analyzing the free-text comments, and for comparing ODU's results to the results from other Libraries that have completed the LibQUAL+ survey in 2015.

Results

This section will include highlights of aggregate data, and an exploration of each of the four major demographic groups. The LibQual+ survey was viewed a total of 2203 times. Of those views we received 910 complete surveys, and 827 valid surveys. Validity is determined with two criteria--the number of N/A responses, and the number of logical inconsistencies. Surveys containing either >11 N/A responses or >9 logical inconsistencies were eliminated from the summary statistics.

The majority of our respondents (n=508) were undergraduates, skewing slightly in favor of third-year students. Graduate students were also well-represented (n=179), with faculty (n=93) and staff (n=47) rounding out the rest of our responses. Respondents varied in age from under 18 to over 65, with nearly half of respondents (41.35%) between the ages of 18 and 22 years. The vast majority of respondents (82.26%) used Perry Library as their primary branch. 54.8% of respondents were female, 45.2% male, though it's important to note that there was no option for non-binary individuals; these numbers may not be entirely representative of our respondents.

In the **aggregate**, respondents perceive that the University Libraries' service quality is greater than the minimum acceptable service level, but nowhere do those perceptions exceed the desired service level. The 22 core survey questions are grouped into three dimensions: Affect of Service, Information Control, and Library as Place. The mean total service expectations ranged from a minimum of 6.89 (on a 9 point scale) to a desired 7.97, with the perception of the University Libraries services falling at 7.48. It's worth noting that the Affect of Service category was generally de-prioritized in the aggregate data, with lower minimum-acceptable and desired service levels, however the data show that the perceptions of the Libraries in this category are in line with perceptions survey-wide, translating as higher "adequacy" for this category. Our local questions showed signage

By far the largest group of respondents were **undergraduate** students. As with the aggregate data, perceptions of library services were within the bounds of both minimum and desired service levels for each of the core questions. ODU undergraduates were most concerned with Library as Place, rating it highest in both minimum and desired mean out of all three dimensions. Also, the adequacy mean (the space between the minimum and perceived level of service) was smallest in this dimension for undergraduates. Undergraduates were relatively unconcerned with receiving individual attention, giving this the lowest mean ranking for desired level of service out of all core questions. On the other side of the scale, the highest minimum service level for undergraduates was focused on modern equipment to help students access information.

Graduate students also perceived service levels above the minimum and below desired levels for the core questions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, ODU graduate students ceded more weight to Information Control than the other dimensions, focusing on electronic resources and a usable, self-serve website as critical expectations. Graduate students have high expectations that the library will provide them with the electronic information resources they need, and desire off-site access to those resources. Less important to graduate students is individual attention, ranking lowest on the “desired” mean.

For five questions within core questions, **faculty** perceived the library’s service quality as *falling below* their minimum expectations. Each of these core questions can be mapped to the Information Control dimension: a website and access tools enabling users to find information on their own, the electronic resources they need, easily-accessible information for independent use, and print or electronic journal collections required for faculty work. Most egregious of these, as perceived by respondents, is the failing to provide a library website that meets expectations enabling faculty to locate information on their own. Unsurprisingly, Information Control is the dimension faculty are most concerned with, and they have rated both their minimum and desired service levels as quite high in comparison to Affect of Service and Library as Place. Faculty have the highest minimum expectations that the Libraries will provide the print or electronic journal collections they require, and low desires for community spaces for group learning and study.

University **staff**, including Libraries personnel, also have some concerns, with mean perception *falling below* mean minimum in three core areas. Staff have higher minimum desires for a user-friendly website, easy to use tools, and library space that will inspire study and learning. Staff rate Information Control as the most desired dimension, but have high desires for the other dimensions as well. Library as Place has a much wider range for this user group than others--perhaps because of the inclusion of Libraries’ personnel. Modern equipment is a priority for staff. Interestingly, staff don’t particularly desire individual attention from the libraries, with the lowest desired mean falling to that question.

In addition to the demographic breakdown found above, results were analyzed by **college**, revealing areas for improvement and an area in which the libraries surpass desired service levels. The College of Engineering perceives individual service (AS-2) at a greater-than-desired level, whereas both the College of Business and the College of Health Sciences perceive our quiet space to be below their minimum expectations. It’s also interesting to note that the data for those who identified as “other” (not affiliated with a college) seem to map closely to the data gathered from staff.

The five local questions were chosen to delve into areas of current concern for the Libraries: wayfinding, archives & special collections, learning environments, research data, and information instruction. In the **aggregate**, the libraries’ weakest area was in wayfinding, but in all questions our perceived level of service was greater than the minimum. The wayfinding question was the only local question in which **faculty and staff** perceived service to be less than the minimum.

Discussion

Notebook Highlights

This section will include a discussion of survey results and their impact on future considerations. **Overall satisfaction**, based on the 22 core questions within the three sections of Affect of Service, Information Control, and Library as Place, show varied minimum, perceived and desired service levels. From the overall results we see that the respondents rank Library as Place as highest minimum level of service, meaning that the respondents have the highest expectations for this area. However they perceive that Information Control ranks the highest in level of service provided. Respondents desire the highest level of service in the area of Information Control as well.

When we analyze the **individual sections** of the survey beginning with Affect of Service, we score the closest to desired service, indicating the greatest satisfaction, in dealing with users in a caring fashion, willingness to help, giving users individual attention, readiness to respond to questions, and dependability in handling service problems. All of these areas have a superiority mean of less than -0.50. In the measure of Information Control, we score closest to the desired in this area in having modern equipment to access information, having needed electronic resources, and in making information easily accessible for use. In Library as Place, we score the highest in community space for group learning and group study and a comfortable, inviting location.

When we consider **satisfaction by population group**, we see that undergraduates are most satisfied with the majority of the Affect of Service measures, many of the Information Control measures including electronic resources, modern equipment, accessible information, and journal collections. In the Library as Place area, they are most satisfied with the comfortable location and the community space for group work. Graduate students, on the other hand, are less satisfied than undergraduates in almost all areas. Graduate students give high marks in Affect of Service to getting individual attention, being dealt with in a caring fashion, responsiveness to questions. In Information Control, they express only limited satisfaction with the measures and in Library as Place, they give the highest rating to community space for group work.

For the population groups of faculty and staff, we see that faculty are highly satisfied with most of the Affect of Service measures while staff are less satisfied. In Information Control, faculty and staff have some areas of minimal satisfaction and several areas of dissatisfaction. Faculty are most satisfied with the library as comfortable and a good place for group collaboration in Library as Place.

Improvements indicated by the survey data occur in the areas of Information Control and Library as Place. The greatest gap in perceived versus desired service in Information Control is in the areas of the library website enabling independent use, easy to use access tools, and electronic resources accessible from home or office. In Library as Place there is a great gap in perceived versus desired levels of service in quiet space for individual activities, library space that inspires study and learning, and a gateway for study, learning, research.

Improvements by population group indicated by the survey data are again based on the gap between perceived and desired level of service. Undergraduates see the biggest gap in Library as Place areas of space that inspires study and learning and quiet space for individual activities. Graduate students want improvements in Information Control regarding easy to use tools for independent searching and library website, more journals, and electronic resources accessible from home or office. Faculty strongly desire improvement in Information Control areas of library website, electronic resources and journals. Staff members saw inadequate service areas in Information Control regarding easy to use tools for independent searching and in Library as Place concerning library space that inspires teaching and learning.

Comments

The LibQUAL+ Survey provided an open text box at the end of the survey in which our users could include comments about any topic. 341 survey takers made use of the comment box and several themes emerged. These themes can be directly correlated to the themes that we see in the other parts of the survey. In general, undergraduates care about space, graduate students were mixed with concerns about both space and access, and faculty are primarily concerned with Library collections and resources.

Undergraduates are much more concerned with space than the other demographic groups. 189 undergraduates made use of the comment box, and the majority of their comments addressed space and hours. About a fourth of those who commented said that the library is too noisy and that noise rules should be better enforced. To go along with that, another theme was that undergraduates want more designated quiet study space. The undergraduate commenters also want more space in general and more group study and collaboration spaces. Some complained about furniture and requested more computers, other equipment, and outlets. Only 6 of the undergraduate commenters said that they were satisfied with the space. About 10% of the commenters stated that they wanted the library to have longer hours. There were a handful of complaints about the cost or process of printing at the Learning Commons. The comment box responses indicated that undergraduates are happy with the services provided by the Libraries.

Graduate students are also concerned with the physical space of the libraries. They want more quiet space. Another theme that emerged in the graduate student comments was concern with access to materials. About 10% expressed satisfaction with the access to materials that the Libraries provide, and a similar number of commenters expressed a dissatisfaction with access to materials. A handful expressed dissatisfaction with library collections. A large number of graduate students commented specifically on their satisfaction with library services and with Interlibrary Loan.

Our faculty commenters were very positive about the staff, services, and ILL and instruction services in particular at the Libraries. One theme that came out of the comments was that faculty are more concerned with resources than the other demographic groups.

A very small number of staff commented. The majority of those comments discussed space needs.

Comparisons to peer institutions

One major benefit of using the LibQUAL+ survey is that it provides users access to other libraries' survey data. The LibQUAL+ Task Force decided to compare our results to two other institutions. The first is a peer institution, and the second is an aspirational peer institution.

The first institution is James Madison. Not only is James Madison a local university, but it is of a comparable size to ODU at a total enrollment of 20,000 in Fall 2014 (jmu.edu). James Madison also opted to email a specific sample population (lib.jmu.edu/libqual/). They had just over 3400 views, with 680 completed and 636 valid surveys. All of the surveys were "Lite surveys" (See Methods above for an explanation of the "Lite" survey protocol). Their overall average minimum was 6.4, the overall average desired was 7.9, and the overall average perceived was 7.2. The majority of their respondents were undergraduates (n=548), much like our respondents.

The second institution that the Task Force compared results with is the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This is an aspirational peer. It is bigger, with a total enrollment of just under 30,000 (www.umass.edu). It is a large research institution that is well known among academic libraries. Their survey was open to all faculty, graduate students, library staff, and a random sample of 3000 undergraduate students. This was their fourth time completing the LibQUAL+ survey. They had roughly 11,500 views, with 1543 completed surveys, and 1413 valid surveys. All of their surveys were "Lite surveys". They offered everyone who was invited to complete the survey a coupon for one free beverage from the library café (library.umass.edu/). Their overall average minimum was 6.4, the overall average desired was 7.9, and the overall average perceived was 7.1. Unlike ODU's and JMU's surveys, the majority of their surveys were completed by graduate students (n=680).

The first interesting place of comparison is in the percentage of valid surveys out of the views. The ODU Libraries' had a valid completion rate of 37.5%. James Madison had a valid completion rate of 18.7%, and the UMass Amherst had a valid completion rate of 12.1%. Also, both James Madison and UMass Amherst used 100% "Lite" survey views, while ODU used 0% "Lite" survey views.

Another interesting place of comparison is in the aggregate mean scores. On a 9 point scale, ODU received a mean score of 6.9 for minimum service level, a mean score of 7.9 for desired service level, and a mean score of 7.5 for perceived service level. Both James Madison and UMass Amherst received a mean score of 6.4 for minimum service level. This is slightly lower than the score ODU received, meaning that our respondents set their bar for minimum expected service slightly higher. The mean score for desired service level for all three institutions was 7.9, showing that respondents are relatively standard in their expectations for how well their libraries should perform. As for perceived service level, James Madison received a mean score of 7.2 and UMass Amherst received a mean score of 7.1. Both of these are only slightly lower than

ODU's 7.5. Overall, this shows that our students have the same level of desired service, a slightly higher minimum service level, and they perceived our current service level to be slightly higher as well.

Further Considerations

The data gathered from the LibQual survey holds various types of potential ongoing utility. This data can be used as a benchmark to measure similar future survey and measurement results. The data also enables a deeper comparative analysis with peer institutional data. Less obvious, the schema developed for comment coding can be adopted for future qualitative studies. The LibQUAL+ Notebook, and the current analysis includes only the valid surveys. It is unclear at this point if the non-valid data will be useful for further analysis, as those results may be compromised by excessive N/A answers and logical facilities. The incomplete surveys primarily serve only to show how many people clicked into the survey without completing it. Based on the number of incomplete surveys, the Library might consider using the Lite LibQual version in future LibQual surveys in order to increase participation.

The survey, in either iteration, offers the opportunity to add additional questions. This flexibility allows the library to collect data outside the default questions. Each version allows participants to comment in a free text area. User comments provide added value and insight.

The data from this survey also suggest areas of interest for future surveys. Perhaps a survey solely on space or the website; or a survey of just graduate students to highlight their specific needs. Or, perhaps a joint survey with the other Learning Commons partners as their services, while not directly surveyed by the core questions, were mentioned by participants in the free-text comment box.

The data from the survey will also be of ongoing use as the Libraries move forward on different objectives. One example would be our current efforts to improve space utilization in the Libraries. Both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the survey hold useful information related to the Libraries' space, and the current use of it. Additionally, the results have indicated that there is a strong concern about the Libraries' website, which the Libraries will now improve sooner rather than later. Finally, all of the information will be used as the Libraries plan our services, organization, and priorities in the near and long term. While this report does not address every area of interest in great depth, all the data is ready and available.

Appendix I - Question index

Affect of Service -

- AS-1: Employees who instill confidence in users
- AS-2: Giving users individual attention
- AS-3: Employees who are consistently courteous
- AS-4: Readiness to respond to users' questions
- AS-5: Employees who have knowledge to answer user questions
- AS-6: Employees who deal with users in a caring fashion
- AS-7: Employees who understand the needs of their users
- AS-8: Willingness to help users
- AS-9: Dependability in handling users' service problems

Information Control -

- IC-1: Making Electronic resources accessible from my home or office
- IC-2: A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own
- IC-3: The printed library materials I need for my work
- IC-4: The electronic information resources I need
- IC-5: Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information
- IC-6: Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own
- IC-7: Making information easily accessible for independent use
- IC-8: Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work

Library as Place -

- LP-1: Library space that inspires study and learning
- LP-2: Quiet space for individual activities
- LP-3: A comfortable and inviting location
- LP-4: A getaway for study, learning, or research
- LP-5: Community space for group learning and group study

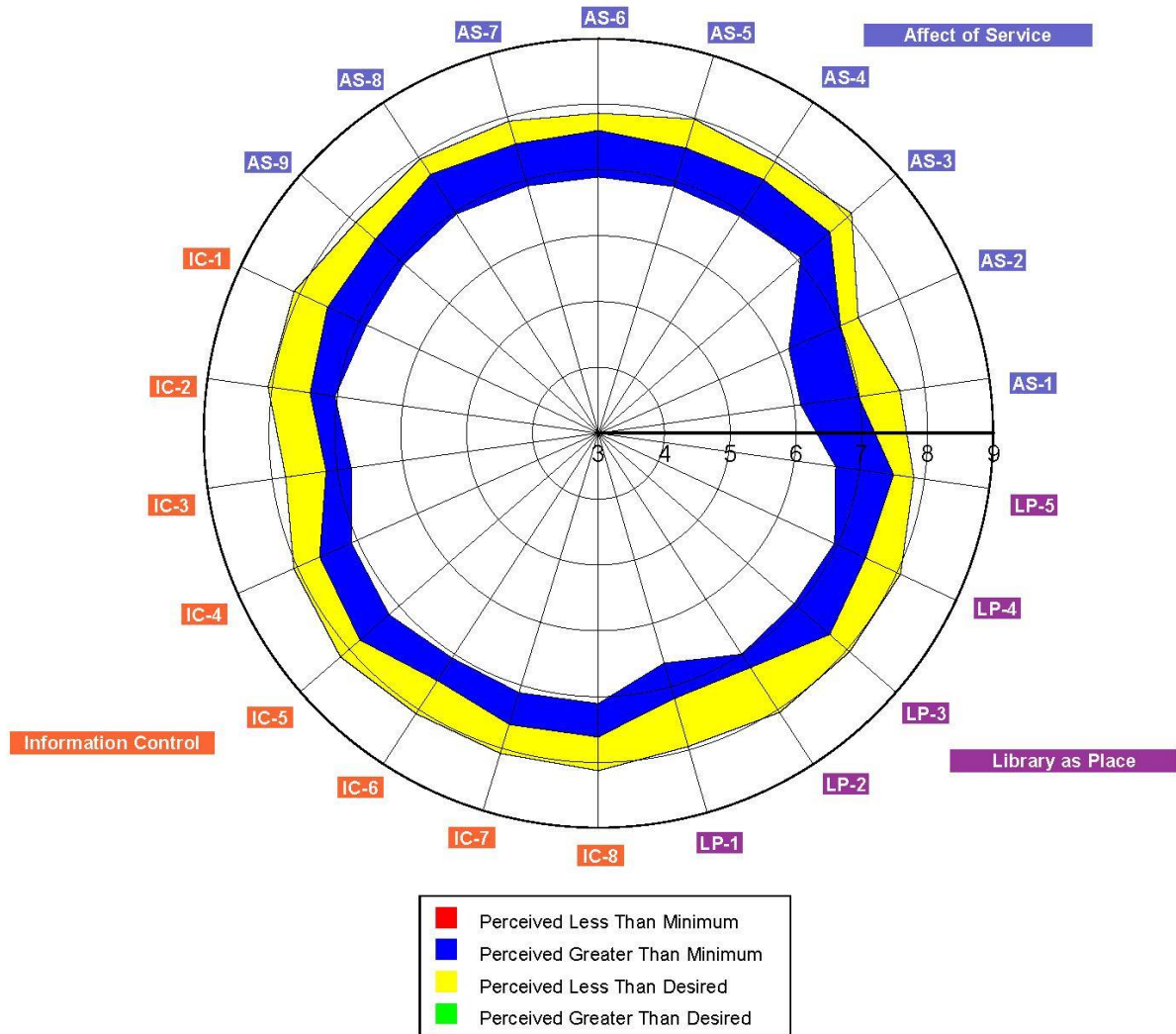
Local Questions -

- 1: Access to archives, special collections
- 2: An environment conducive to learning through classes, programs, activities, and meetings
- 3: Services that help me manage and share my research data
- 4: Signs in the library are helpful and the library layout makes sense
- 5: Teaching me how to locate, evaluate, and use information

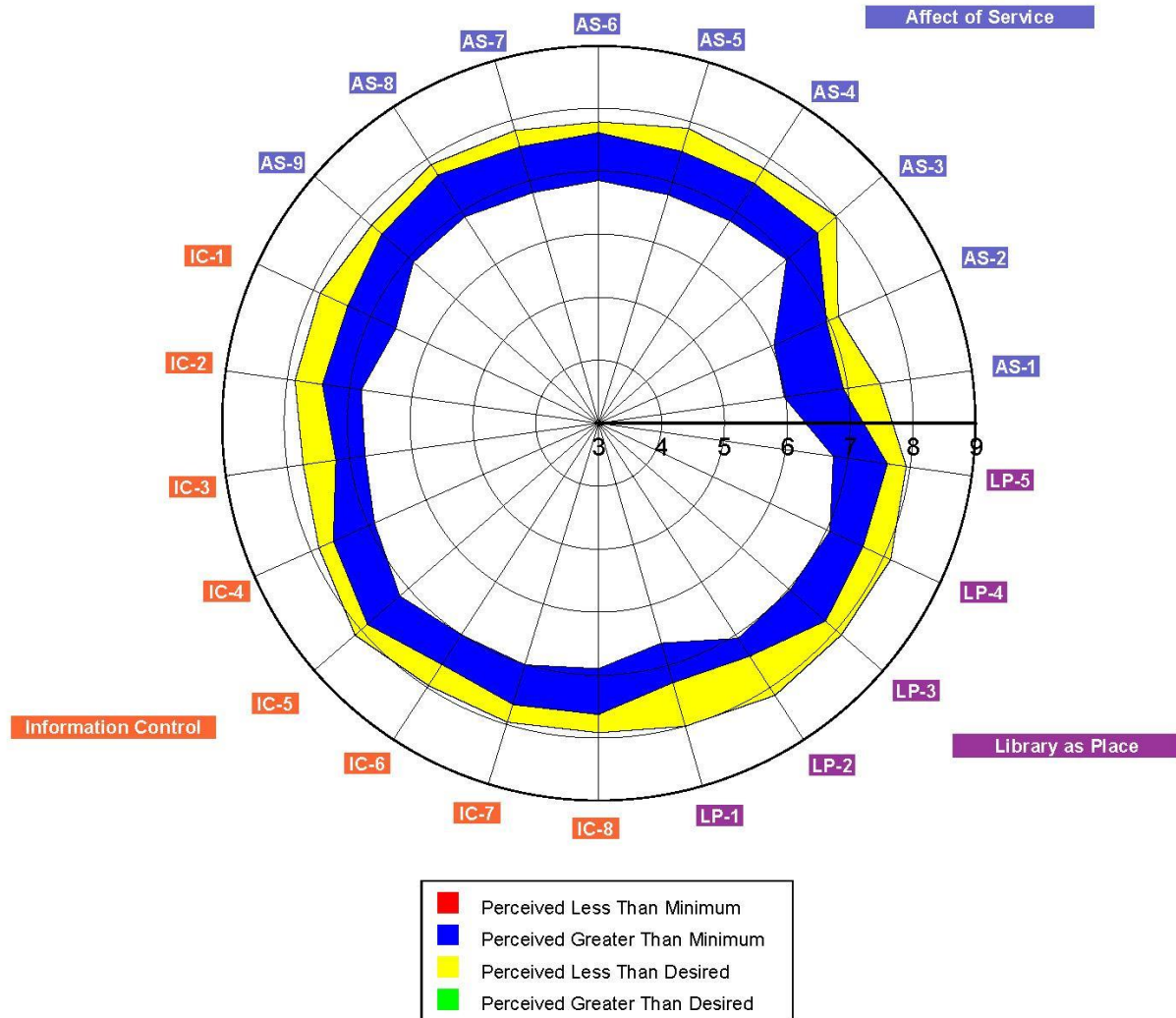
Appendix II - Graphs

By User-groups:

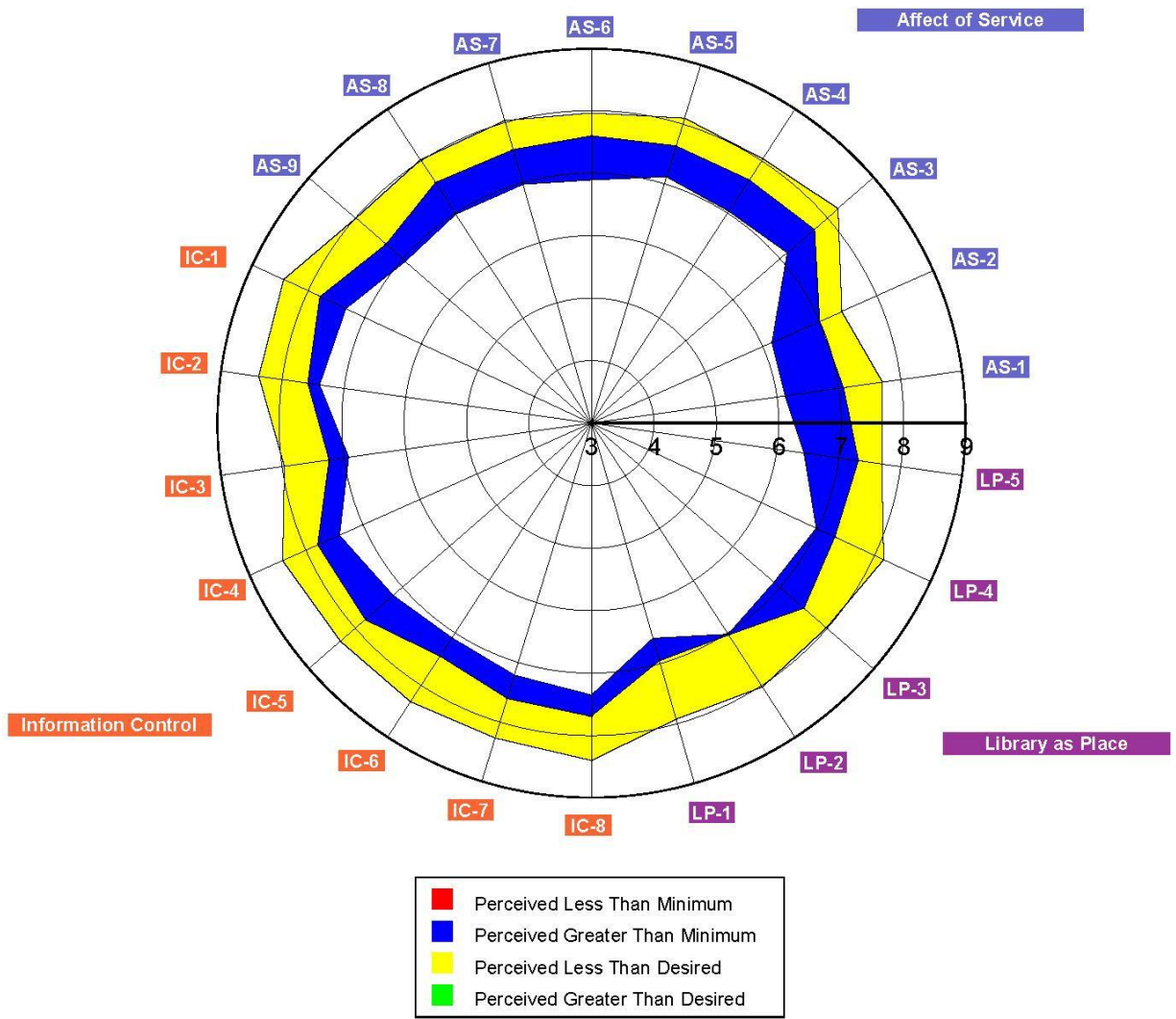
Total population -



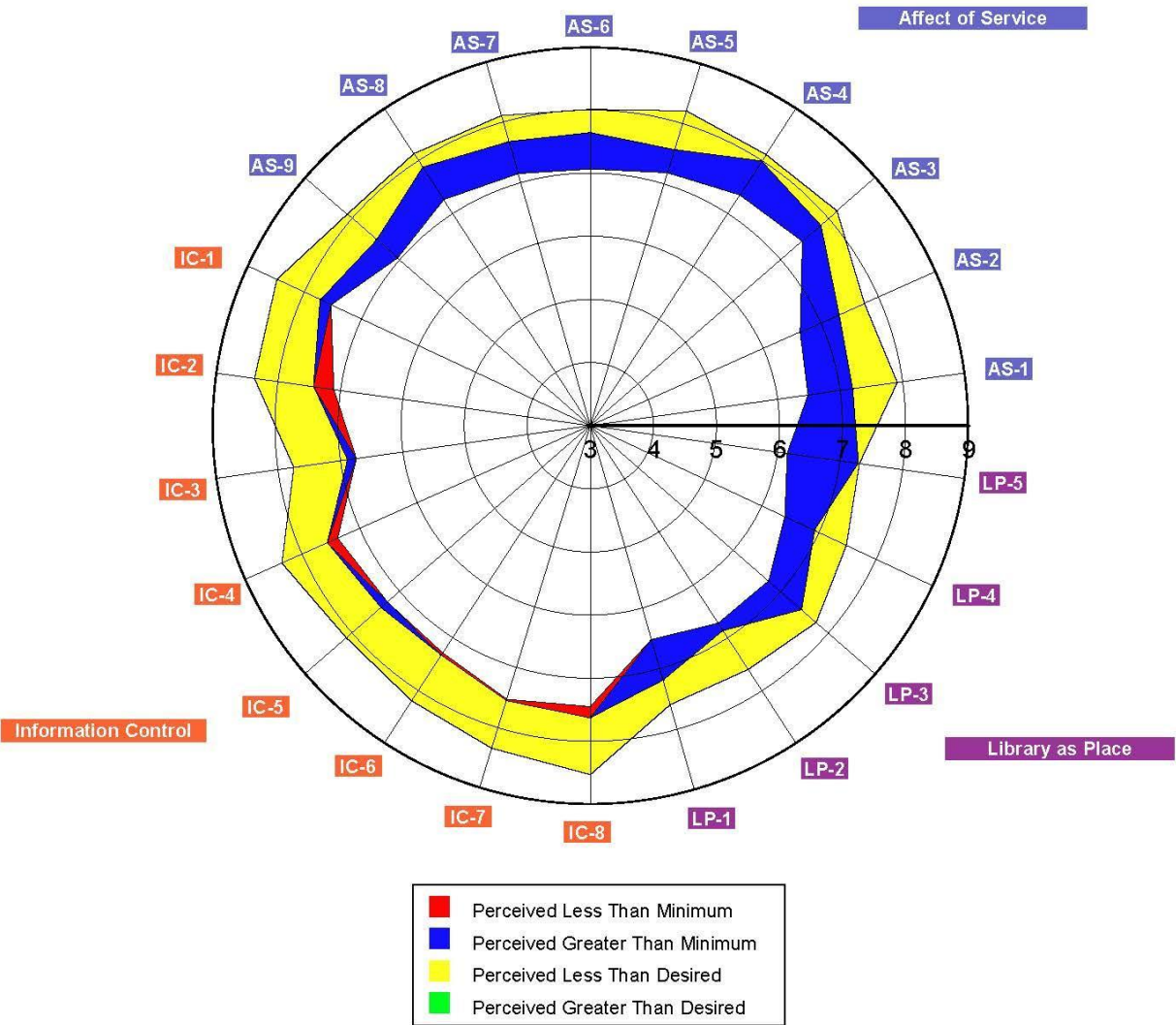
Undergraduate population -



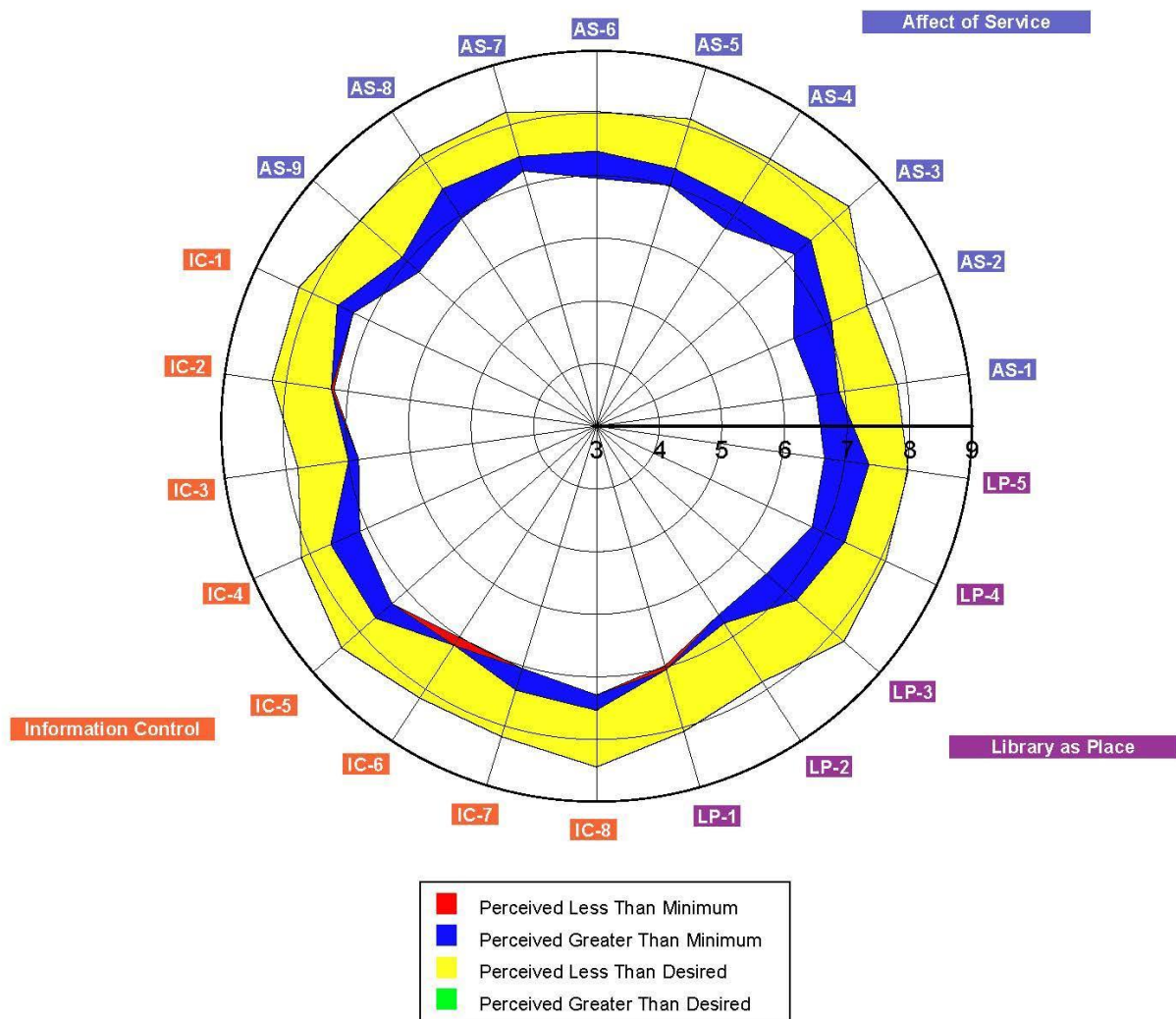
Graduate population -



Faculty population -

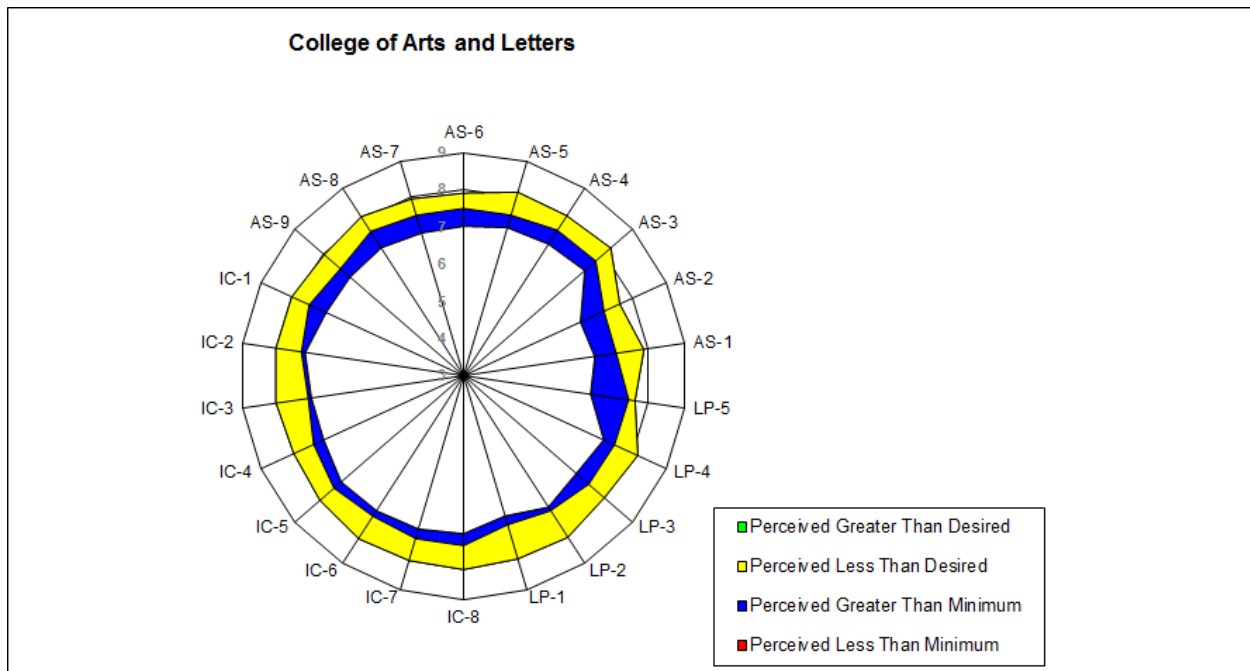


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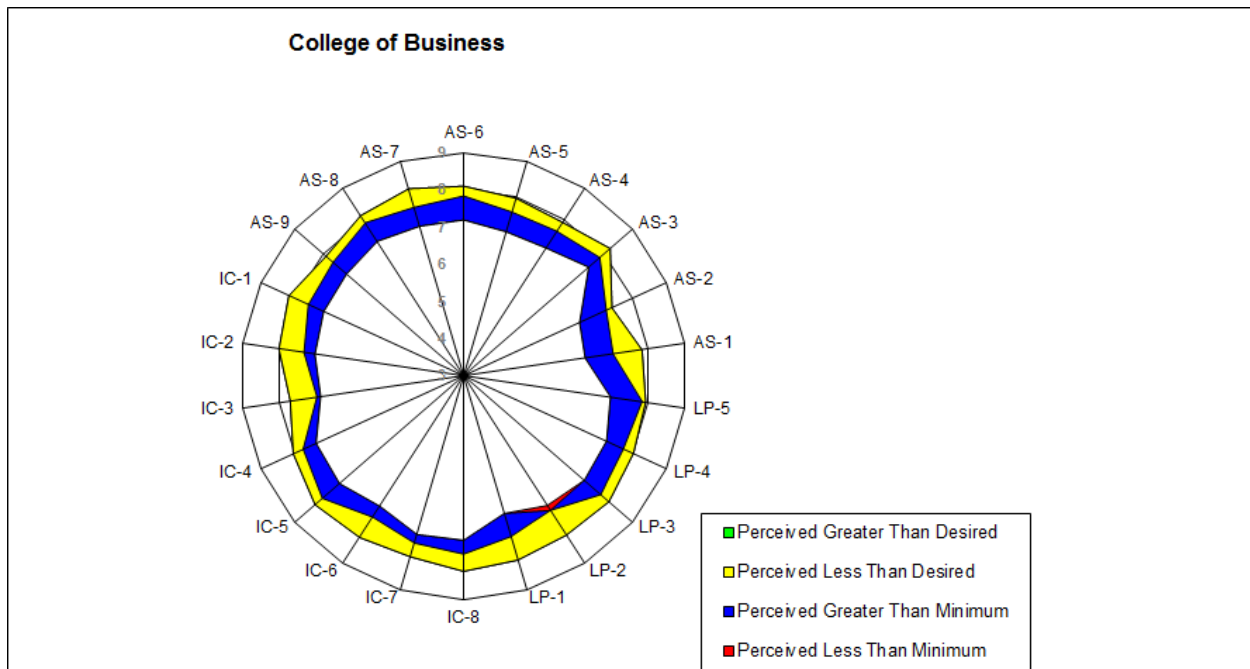


By College

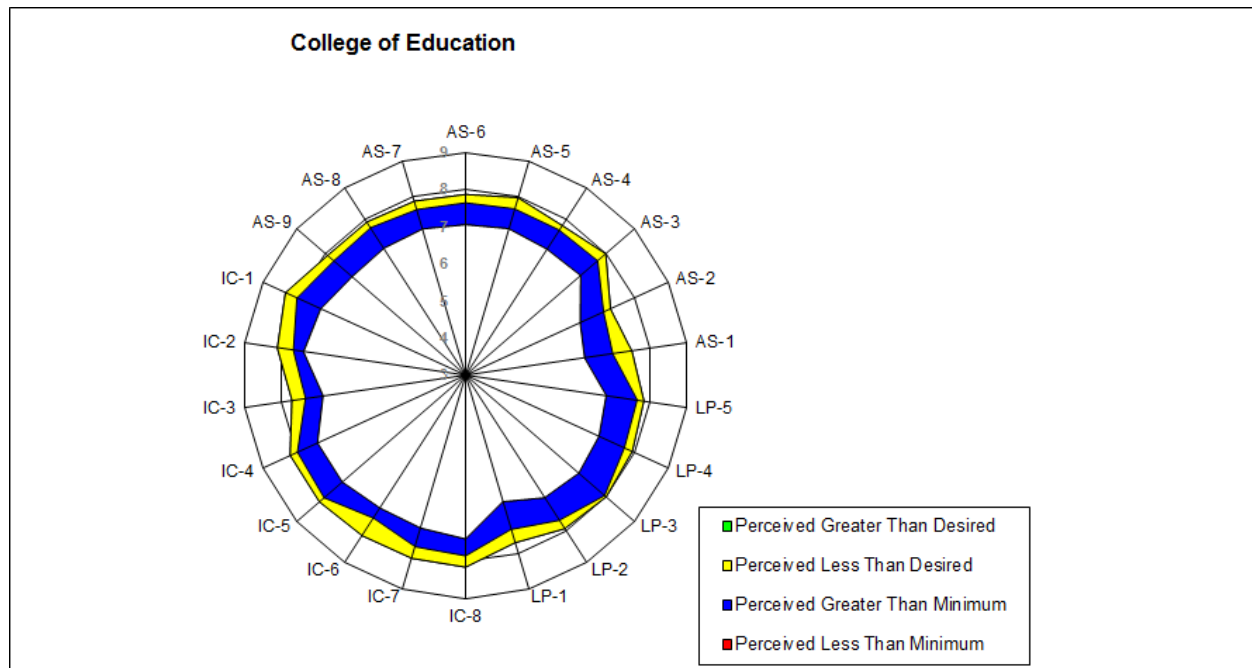
Arts and Letters –



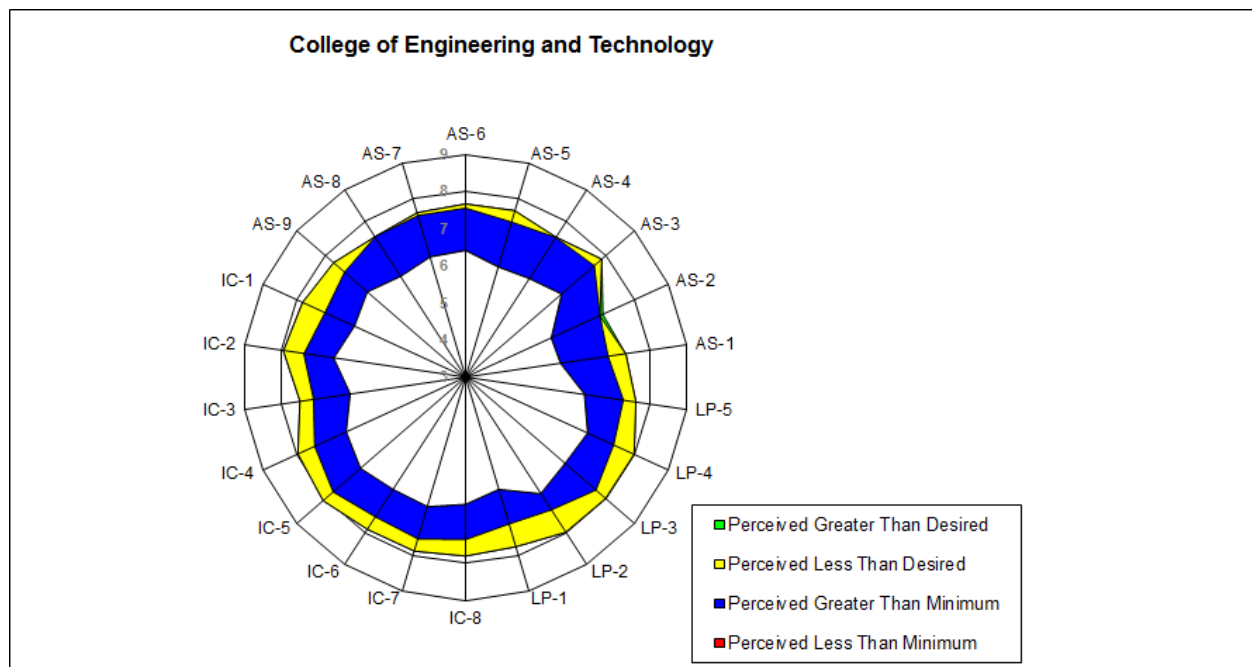
Business –



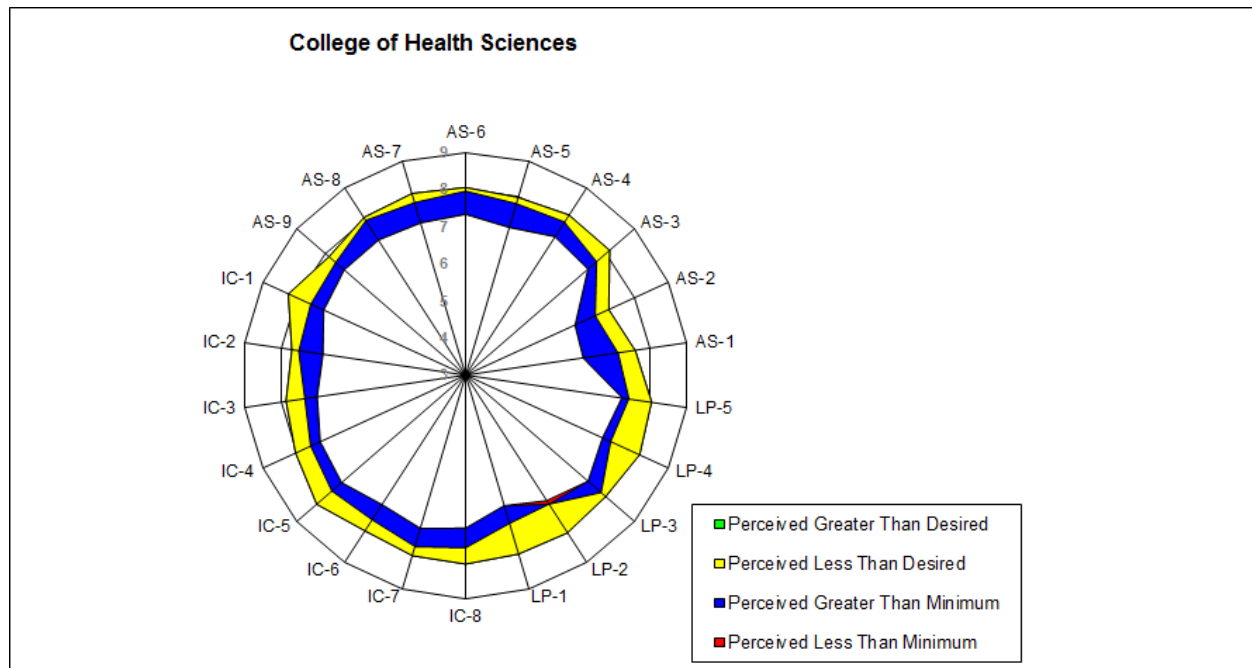
Education –



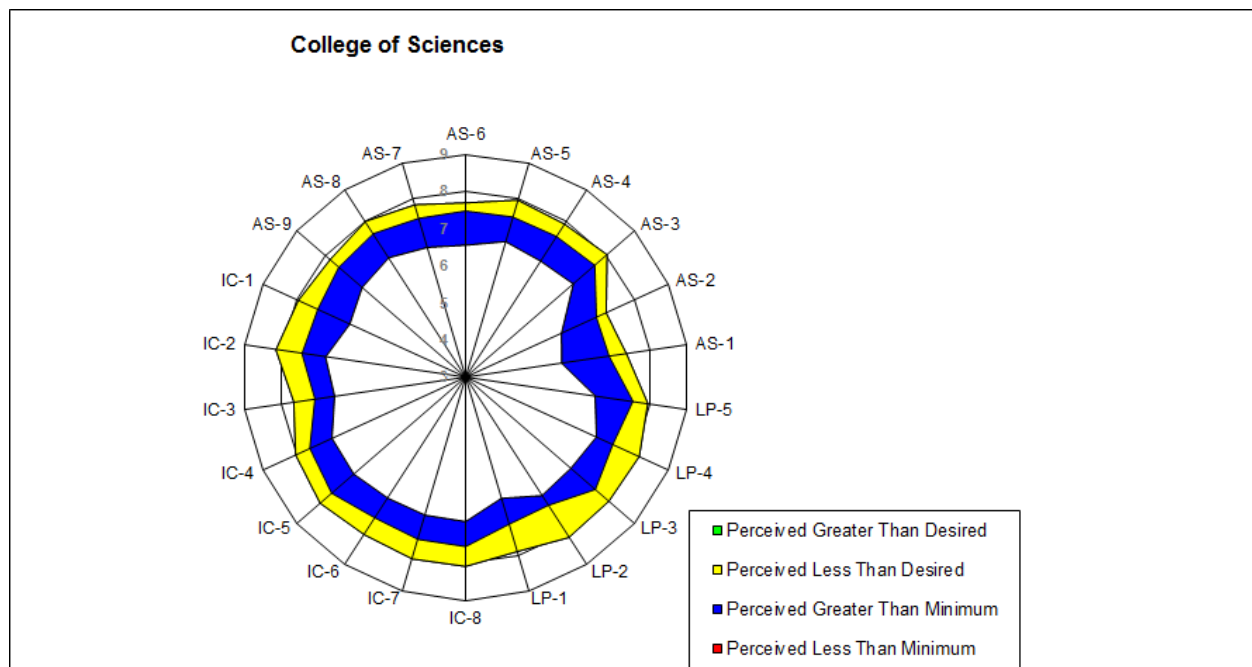
Engineering & Technology –



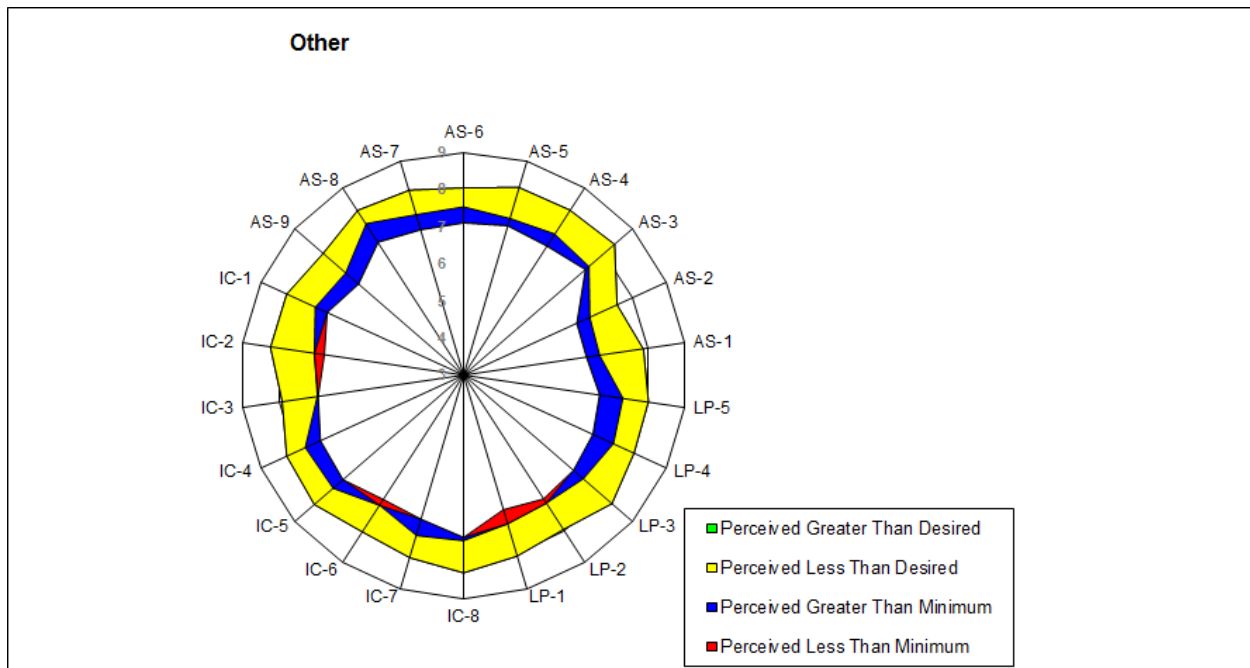
Health Sciences –



Sciences –



Other –



Local Questions, Aggregate –

