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# Use and Awareness of Library Services among Faculty at Two Armenian Universities

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## Abstract

This study surveyed instructional faculty at two Armenian universities to determine use and awareness of academic library services or resources including reference, interlibrary loan, subscription databases, subject liaisons, and more. A minority of respondents reported making frequent use of the services investigated, with usage varying according to such factors as academic rank, length of employment, and full- or part-time status. Many participants also had suggestions for services not available at their libraries. These results help illuminate user preferences among faculty at these universities and could help librarians at similar institutions identify underutilized resources to promote or new services to offer.

*Keywords:* Armenia, South Caucasus, research libraries, reference services, interlibrary loan

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## **Introduction**

The investigators conducted this study at the academic libraries of two universities in Yerevan, Armenia. Yerevan State University (YSU) is a not-for-profit, publicly funded institution. In operation since 1920 as a national university, YSU at present employs more than 1,600 faculty members and hosts approximately 20,000 students pursuing bachelor's and master's degrees in 19 different departments or faculties<sup>1</sup>. Instruction is conducted in Armenian with extra support provided for Armenian diaspora or other international students whose primary language is often Russian or English. The YSU Library holds about two million volumes in its collection<sup>2</sup>. The library offers reference services, interlibrary loan, and subscription databases, and includes a special collections/archives division with rare and antique items. Faculty may submit requests to the library for purchase of books or other materials.

The American University of Armenia (AUA) began operations in the fall of 1991, concurrent with Armenia's independence from the Soviet Union. A private institution, it receives US accreditation through the WASC Senior College and University Commission; the University of California also provides technical and pedagogical support<sup>3</sup>. The language of instruction is English. Originally conceived as a graduate institution, AUA did not begin offering undergraduate degrees until 2013<sup>4</sup>. In the fall of 2015, AUA had a total enrollment of 1,537 and employed 200 faculty members<sup>5</sup>. Today students have access to three bachelor's programs, eight master's programs, and two certificate programs. The AGBU Papazian Library serves the university. The library contains more than 42,500 volumes and is Armenia's only fully open-stack academic library<sup>6</sup>. The Papazian Library offers both in-person and virtual reference services, interlibrary loan, subscription databases for use either on campus or remotely, and online guides and tutorials. Subject librarians serve as liaisons to departments and programs for

bibliographic instruction and purchase requests. In addition to the library's collection, AUA also hosts a digital repository for scholarly work produced by the university's faculty, staff, and students.

## Literature Review

Use and awareness of academic library services among faculty has been explored in library literature for nearly 50 years. Often, scholars have approached this topic from the vantage point of a particular library service or with regard to faculty in a particular discipline. Hollister and Schroeder, for example, explored how research productivity among education faculty correlates with library support, examining the implications for enhancing research partnerships between librarians and faculty<sup>7</sup>. Separate studies by Watson and Yang both focused on faculty perceptions of library liaison activities, finding that most faculty (92% and 66%, respectively) reported increased use of library resources or services as a result of meeting with a subject specialist<sup>8,9</sup>.

Other researchers have examined the use and awareness of library services from a more holistic perspective at a broad range of institutions. Bausman, Ward and Pell describe an ongoing project to gain an understanding of “what instructional faculty *know* about library resources, of how instructional faculty *use* library resources, and of the *impact* of library engagement upon instruction and research” at a large public institution<sup>10</sup>. Slutskaya, Rose, Salter and Masce used online surveys to explore faculty awareness of library tools, resources, and services and their impact on information literacy at two institutions, one a small private liberal-arts college and the other a large, commuter-oriented, public university<sup>11</sup>. In the 1990s Dilmore tracked interactions between librarians and instructional faculty at nine small college libraries in New England<sup>12</sup>.

Although this study focuses more on faculty satisfaction than on basic awareness, it reveals the importance of cultivating an ongoing dialog to promote awareness of library services and form the strongest possible partnership between librarians and faculty. Previous researchers had long called for this type of increased communication on the part of librarians and revealed its efficacy. Nelson's study of faculty at six colleges found the highest levels of awareness of library services and resources at the institution whose library placed the highest premium on public service and communication<sup>13</sup>.

Researchers have investigated various aspects of research libraries in post-Soviet Armenia. Dowling, for instance, focused on the economic challenges faced by libraries in the South Caucasus region<sup>14</sup>. Donabedian, Carey, and Balayan assessed the state of five major Armenian research libraries twenty years after independence from the Soviet Union using the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education<sup>15</sup>. Zargaryan has chronicled the impressive development of open access publications in Armenia in recent years<sup>16</sup>. However, a search of the library literature revealed no studies focusing on the use and awareness of academic library services among university faculty in Armenia. This paper seeks to address that gap.

## **Methods**

### *Research Methodology and Instruments*

The researchers employed a survey research method. After reviewing previous studies that sought to assess faculty awareness and use of library services, the investigators developed questions to address the core services that academic libraries offer to faculty. The researchers then developed an instrument containing 13 items customized to address services offered at the

Papazian Library (see Appendix A) and an instrument of 12 items addressing services offered at the YSU Library (see Appendix B). In both cases, the questions were brief, easy to understand, and involved a mixture of multiple choice and open answer. Respondents at both institutions had the option of taking the surveys in either English or Armenian.

On the AUA survey, the first two questions asked respondents how often they make use of in-person reference and then virtual reference services. Since the YSU library does not offer virtual reference, the YSU instrument instead asked how useful faculty thought such services would be for both themselves and their students. Subsequent questions asked about the frequency with which respondents used interlibrary loan and accessed the library's subscription databases. The AUA survey distinguished between on-campus and remote use of databases; the YSU instrument did not make this distinction because that library offers database access on campus only. Other questions specific to the AUA library addressed online guides and tutorials; use of the university's digital repository; and collaboration with subject or liaison librarians for purposes of collection development. The YSU instrument did not include these questions but instead asked about use of the special collections and archives unique to YSU and about submitting purchase requests to the library. Both surveys asked respondents for any suggestions regarding additional services their libraries could offer, and both captured data about respondents' department, rank, full-time or part-time status, and length of service at their institutions. (While this study did collect data regarding faculty participation in collection development and requests for additional services, these topics are beyond the scope of this paper and will be addressed in a forthcoming publication.)

### *Data Collection*

With the help of library directors at AUA and YSU, the researchers were able to distribute the survey electronically to the e-mail accounts of instructional faculty at both institutions during January and February of 2016. Faculty members received an e-mail requesting their participation along with a link to respond online via Qualtrics survey software. As YSU does not maintain a listserv to contact its faculty, the director of the library assisted the investigators in distributing the link via social media channels as well as by e-mail to faculty, of whom 43 took the survey. Upon proceeding to the survey, respondents first viewed a form explaining the aim of the study, listing contact information for the investigators, and requesting consent to participate. Participants were free to skip any questions they did not want to answer and could exit the survey at any time. At AUA, 28 participants began the survey and 25 finished entirely, for a completion rate of 89%. At YSU, 43 participants began and 28 answered all questions, for a completion rate of 65%. The authors processed the results with analytics provided in the Qualtrics platform. The authors wish to thank A.J. Pathak of the Hunter College Libraries for providing further data analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics version 22 software.

### *Characteristics of Participants*

Respondents to the survey represented a diverse group of disciplines. At AUA, 19 out of the 28 respondents identified the department, school or program in which they serve. Of these, 11 (58%) came from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, representing such departments or programs as Political Science and International Affairs (n=4), General Education (n=1), and English and Communications (n=1); the remainder did not specify a field within the humanities. Other AUA respondents came from the College of Business and Economics, College of Science and Engineering, the School of Public Health, and the graduate Law program (see Table 1 for complete information on AUA respondents by discipline). At YSU, 28 participants indicated the

department in which they serve. These responses revealed a wide range of disciplines, including subjects not represented in the AUA cohort such as Armenian philology, Romance-Germanic philology, Oriental Studies, Physics, and Philosophy and Psychology. See Table 2 for complete details on YSU respondents by discipline.

<b>Faculty or Department</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
College of Business and Economics	4
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	11
Computational Science and Engineering	2
Law	1
Public Health	1

Table 1  
Disciplines of Respondents at AUA

<b>Faculty or Department</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Armenian Philology	5
Economics and Management	1
History	2
Journalism	1
Law	1
Mathematics and Mechanics	2
Oriental Studies	5
Philosophy and Psychology	7
Physics	1
Romance-Germanic Philology	2
Sociology and Social Work	1

Table 2  
Disciplines of Respondents at YSU

The participants also spanned a range of faculty ranks, employment status, and length of service at their institution. Twenty-three AUA participants provided information about their rank; among these, the largest single group was Lecturer status (43%, n=10). At YSU, where 30 respondents provided information about their rank, Associate Professors and Assistants were

most heavily represented, at 37% and 33% respectively. Please see Figure 1 for complete data on the faculty rank of respondents at both institutions. Full-time faculty formed a slight majority of respondents at each institution, comprising 52% (n=12) at AUA and 57% (n=17) at YSU. Recently hired faculty appeared to make up a majority of participants at both institutions: at AUA, 65% (n=15) stated that they had been at the institution fewer than 5 years, and at YSU 53% had worked there for 5-10 years. See Figure 2 for characteristics of respondents by length of service.

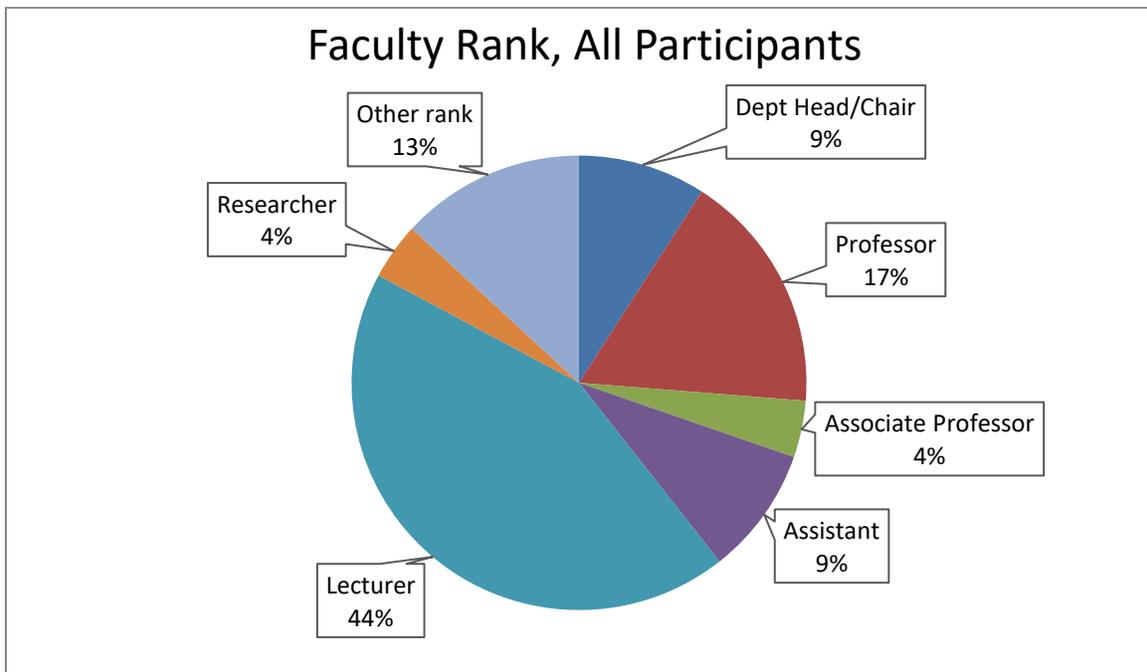


Figure 1  
Faculty Rank of Participants, by Percentage

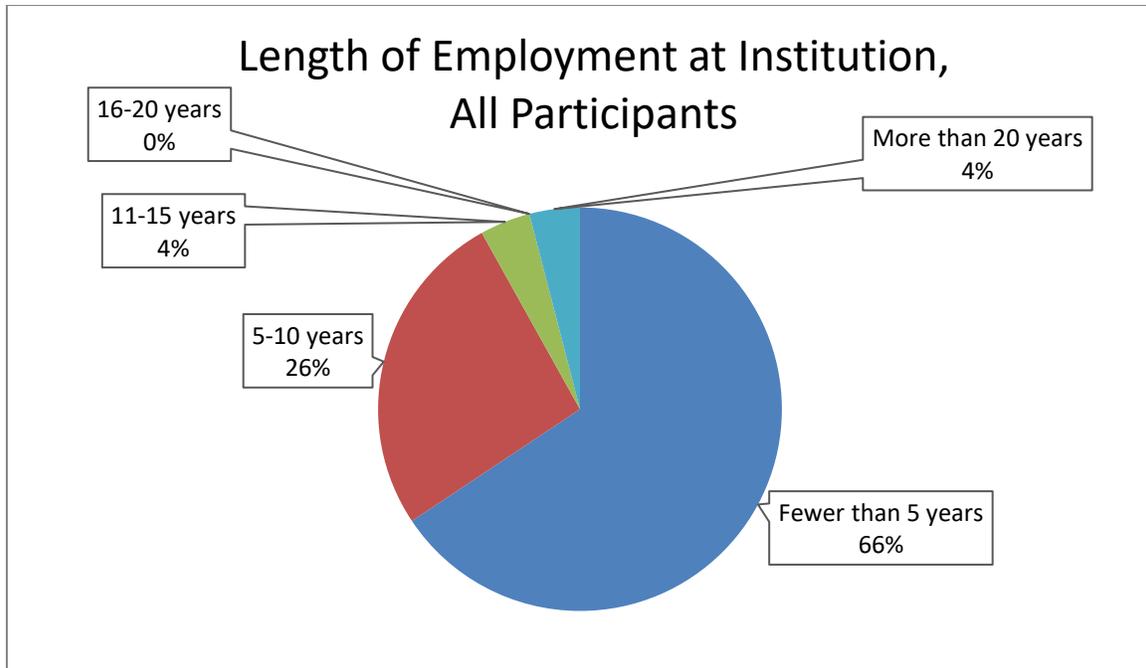


Figure 2  
Participants' Length of Employment at Institution, by Percentage

## Results

The primary findings of both surveys follow, organized according to area of library service.

### *Reference Services*

The survey began by asking participants about their use of reference services at their institution's library. The first item asked about use of in-person reference services (defined as face-to-face contact with a librarian at a traditional reference desk or other location within the campus library). At AUA, 20% (n=5) of respondents indicated that they "frequently" make use of in-person reference assistance, with an equal number responding that they "never" do so; another 32% (n=8) answered that they "sometimes" use in-person reference, and 28% (n=7) that they "rarely" do. By contrast, at YSU a smaller proportion (9%, n=3) indicated frequent use of in-

person reference and a slightly higher share (24%, n=8) said they never use face-to-face reference. Almost half the respondents at YSU (48%, n=16) said they rarely use in-person reference, with 18% (n=6) selecting “sometimes.”

Use of in-person reference services varied according to academic rank, length of service, and full- or part-time status. All participants who held the rank of department head or chair at AUA (n=2) and at YSU (n=1) reported that they “frequently” made use of in-person reference assistance. This usage decreased with descending ranks. At AUA, 75% (n=3) of participants with the rank of professor “frequently” made use of in-person reference at the Papazian Library, and 25% (n=1) “sometimes” did. At YSU, 18% (n=2) of respondents at the associate professor level reported that they “frequently” used in-person reference, and 55% (n=6) that they “sometimes” did. Forty percent (n=4) of AUA respondents at the rank of lecturer “sometimes” used this service, while 60% (n=6) “rarely” did; meanwhile, 60% of YSU lecturers (n=3) reported that they “rarely” used in-person reference and 40% (n=2) indicated that they “never” do. See Figures 3 and 4 for complete data on use of reference desk services by rank.

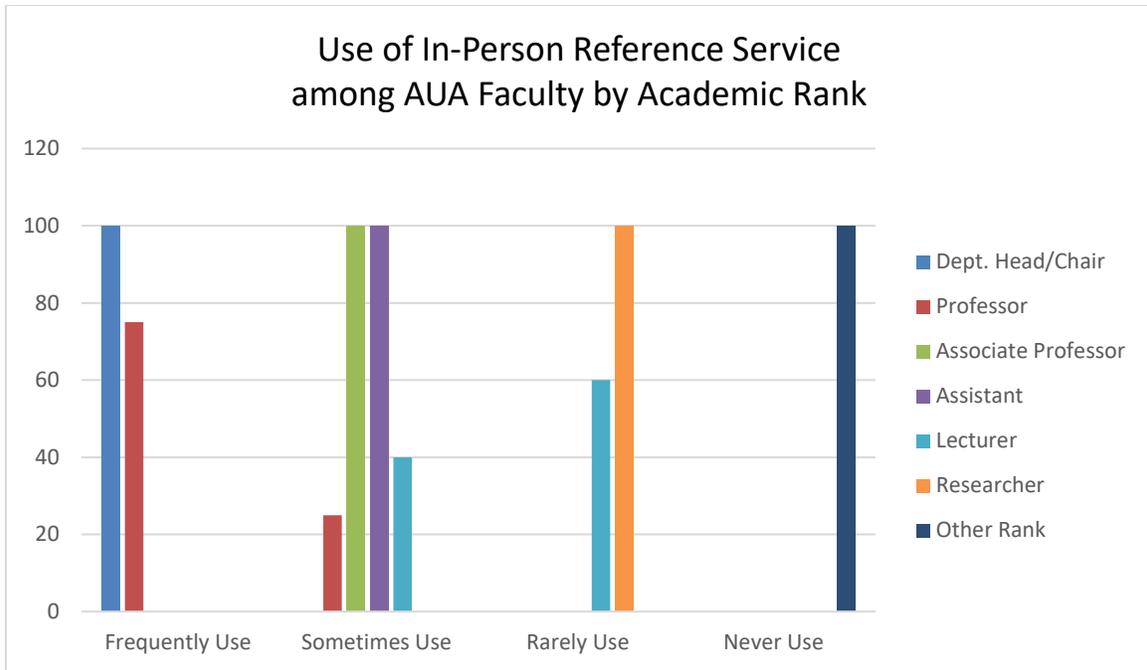


Figure 3  
Use of In-Person Reference Service among AUA Faculty by Academic Rank, by Percentage

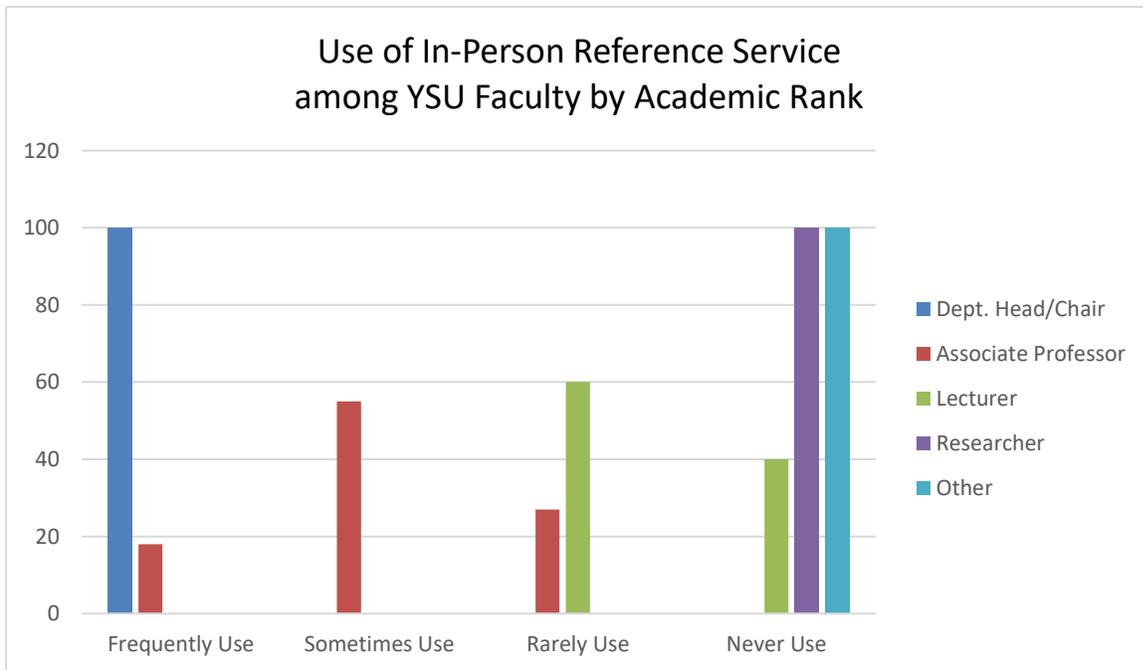


Figure 4  
Use of In-Person Reference Service among YSU Faculty by Academic Rank, by Percentage

Visits to the reference desk were more frequent among newer faculty at both institutions. In fact, at YSU all respondents who had been there for fewer than 5 years (100%, n=5) reported that they “frequently” use in-person reference assistance. At AUA this figure was 33.3% (n=5), with another 53.3% (n=8) indicating that they “sometimes” used the reference desk and 13.3% (n=2) saying that they “rarely” did. Thus, all study participants affiliated with their institutions for fewer than 5 years reported making at least some use of the reference desk. With greater length of work history the rate of use dropped. For instance, at YSU 38% (n=6) of respondents with 5-10 years there “sometimes” used in-person reference and about 63% (n=10) did so “rarely”; in the 11-15 year category, 75% “rarely” used reference assistance while 25% “never” did. Use of the reference desk dropped off entirely for all respondents who had been at YSU for 16 years or longer. At AUA, 83% of respondents who had been there for 5-10 years indicated that they “rarely” used in-person reference, with 17% of this group reporting that they “never” did. Again, use dropped to zero among those who had been at AUA longer than that.

At both institutions, full-time faculty showed a greater propensity for use of in-person reference. Among full-time faculty at AUA, nearly 42% (n=5) reported that they “frequently” made use of in-person reference assistance, and 58% at least “sometimes” did. By contrast, almost 64% (n=7) of part-time AUA faculty “rarely” visited the Papazian’s reference desk, and just over 27% (n=3) said that they “never” did. The situation was similar at YSU, where all full-time faculty reported making at least some use of in-person reference, with 18% (n=3) using it “frequently,” 35% (n=6) “sometimes,” and 47% (n=8) “rarely.” Among part-time YSU faculty, about 62% (n=8) said that they “rarely” used reference service, and 38% (n=5) “never” did.

The next item on the surveys concerned virtual reference services, defined here to include e-mail, online chat, and text messaging reference, all of which the Papazian Library makes available.

When asked about their use of any virtual reference services, 25% (n=6) of the AUA respondents indicated that they “frequently” use them; three respondents (13%) replied that they “sometimes” do, seven (29%) that they “rarely” do, and eight (33%) that they never have. As with in-person reference, usage rates were higher for faculty of higher rank: all respondents with the rank of chair or professor said that they “frequently” used remote reference, and all participants with the rank of associate professor or assistant “sometimes” did. Usage began to drop at the level of lecturer, where 70% of participants (n=7) said that they “rarely” used virtual reference services and 30% (n=3) “never” did. All participants at the rank of researcher reported making no use of virtual reference. Full-time faculty were more likely to use virtual reference, with 50% (n=6) of this group saying that they did so “frequently,” 25% (n=3) “sometimes,” and 25% (n=3) “rarely.” Part-time faculty, by contrast, used remote reference only “rarely” (36%, n=4) or “never” (64%, n=7). Usage was similarly low among faculty who had been at AUA the longest—all participants who had been at AUA for five or more years reported that they “never” used virtual reference, with the exception of one participant (17%) from the 5-10 year category who used it “rarely.” Those respondents who had been at AUA for fewer than five years were evenly divided between those who reported using the service “frequently” (40%, n=6) and those who did so “rarely” (40%, n=6), with the remainder (20%, n=3) using it “sometimes.”

Because the YSU Library does not offer virtual reference modes, the YSU survey instead asked how useful participants thought virtual reference, if available, would be both for their own research and for their students’ work. Seventeen respondents at YSU (53%) thought virtual reference would be “very useful” for their own research with a slightly higher number (n=19, 63%) replying that it would be “very useful” for their students. Fourteen respondents (44%) thought virtual reference mediums would be “somewhat useful” for themselves and eleven

(37%) “somewhat useful” for their students. One respondent (3%) regarded such services as “not useful” for their own research but no participant expressed that sentiment with regard to utility for students.

All participants at the level of department head or associate professor thought that virtual reference services would be “very” useful both for themselves and for their students. Fifty percent (n=5) of participants who held the rank of assistant thought that virtual reference would be “very” useful for their own research with the remainder saying it would be “somewhat” useful. This same group felt that virtual reference would be valuable for their students, with 70% (n=7) saying it would be “very” useful and 30% (n=3) “somewhat” useful. All participants with the rank of lecturer, researcher, or “other” indicated that virtual reference would be “somewhat” useful, both for themselves and for their students. All full-time faculty respondents thought virtual reference would be “very” useful for both their own work and their students’ work. Among part-time faculty, 100% (n=13) said that it would be “somewhat” useful for their own work, 15% (n=2) that it would be “very” useful for their students, and 85% (n=11) that it would be “somewhat” useful for their students. Respondents who had been at YSU for less than five years showed the greatest enthusiasm for virtual reference, but all groups indicated that they would use the service for their own research. For those with five years or less, 100% (n=3) said that virtual reference would be “very” useful; 87% (n=14) of respondents who had 5-10 years of work experience at YSU said the same, with 13% saying it would be “somewhat” useful; and all other YSU respondents felt that it would be “somewhat” useful for their own work. With regard to student work, all participants with up to 10 years of experience at YSU felt that virtual reference would be “very” useful for students; all other participants regardless of years of service said that it would be “somewhat” useful for students.

*Interlibrary Loan*

One item on the survey asked participants about use of their institution’s interlibrary loan (ILL) service to obtain either books or journal articles. At AUA, one respondent (4%) stated that they “frequently” use ILL, while equal numbers (n=7, 29%) selected “sometimes” and “rarely.” The highest share at AUA (33%, n=8) were those that said they “never” use ILL, and one respondent (4%) said that they were unaware of the service. At YSU, again only one respondent (3%) reported being a frequent user, while five (16%) selected “sometimes” and one (3%) “never.” The largest single group (45%, n=14) consisted of those who used ILL “rarely,” although a considerable number (32%, n=10) indicated that they were not aware of this service. See Figure 5 for complete data on ILL use among all study participants.

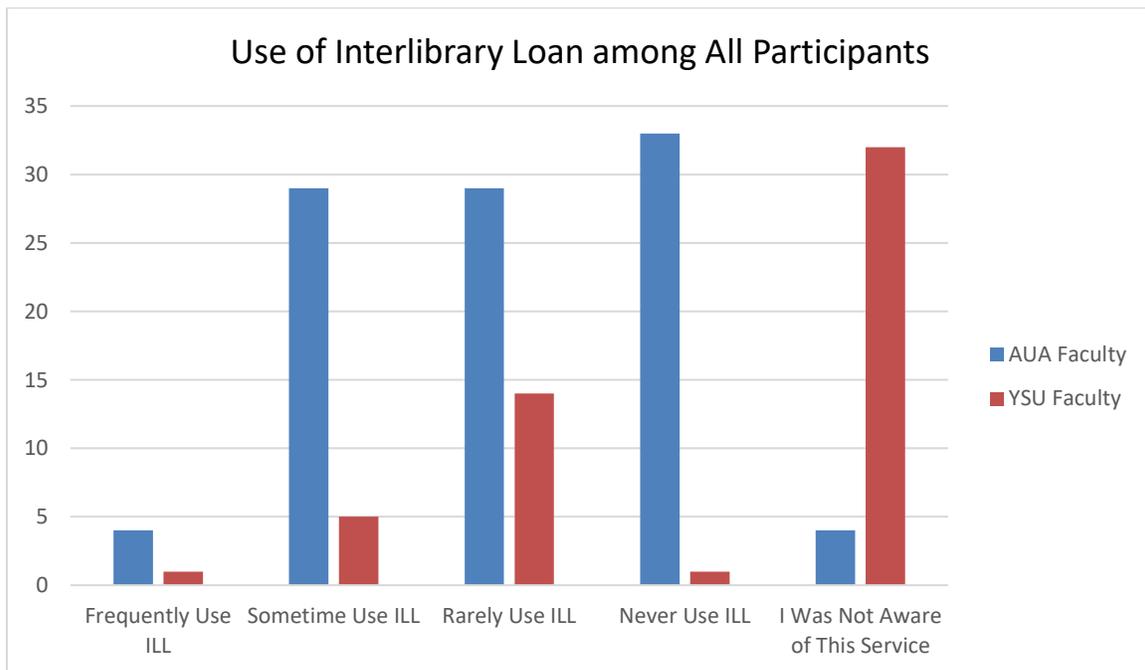


Figure 5  
Use of Interlibrary Loan among All Participants, by Percentage

As with reference services, awareness and use of ILL varied with rank and other factors. At AUA, all respondents with the rank of department head (n=1), professor (n=4), or associate professor (n=1) used ILL either “frequently” or “sometimes.” Respondents at the level of assistant were evenly divided between using ILL “sometimes” (50%, n=1) and “rarely” (50%, n=1). Among lecturers, 60% (n=6) of participants “rarely” used ILL, while 40% (n=4) “never” did, and no respondent holding researcher or some other rank reported using ILL at all. At YSU, all department heads reported using ILL “frequently,” while 46% (n=5) of associate professors used it at least “sometimes.” Eighty percent (n=8) of YSU participants at the rank of assistant “rarely” used ILL, while 10% (n=1) of this group “never” did and an equal number (10%, n=1) were unaware of the service. No YSU respondent at the rank of lecturer, researcher, or “other” reported being aware that their library offered ILL. Employment status also played some role: at AUA, 73% (n=8) of respondents describing themselves as part-time faculty reported “never” using ILL, and at YSU roughly 69% (n=9) of part-time faculty were not aware of the service. As for length of employment, at AUA, those respondents who had worked there for fewer than 5 years reported varying levels of ILL use, but all other respondents indicated that they “never” use ILL. Similarly, at YSU 33% (n=1) of respondents with fewer than five years of service reported using ILL “frequently,” while 67% (n=2) used it “sometimes.” Usage then dropped among other groups, so that 81% (n=13) of participants with 5-10 years at YSU said they “rarely” used ILL, while 75% (n=6) of those with 11-15 years and all participants (n=2) with 16 or more years at YSU reported being unaware of ILL.

### *Database Use*

The survey asked AUA participants about their use of subscription databases, from both on and off campus, for access to scholarly resources such as journal articles and abstracts. Overall,

respondents were more likely to use databases in the campus setting: nine respondents (38%) indicated that they used the library's databases "frequently" while on campus but only 17% (n=4) said the same regarding off-campus use. Moreover, 50% of AUA respondents who answered this question (n=12) reported that they "rarely" use the library's databases from off campus, while for on-campus use this figure was only 33% (n=8). The survey results did not reveal great differences between on- and off-campus usage rates among those participants who reported using databases either "sometimes" or "never."

All AUA participants holding a rank of department head, professor, associate professor, and assistant reported "frequently" using the library's databases while on campus. However, this did not carry over to off-campus use: all department heads (n=2) reported "frequently" accessing the databases from off-campus, but only 50% (n=2) of professors did, and all respondents at the level of associate professor, assistant, and lecturer reported using remote access only "sometimes" or "rarely." Differences also emerged between full- and part-time faculty. Among those AUA respondents who described themselves as full-time faculty, 75% (n=9) reported using the databases "frequently" while on campus but among part-time faculty, 73% (n=8) said that they "rarely" did so and 27% (n=3) that they "never" did. This difference was less pronounced with regard to remote access, where 64% (n=7) of part-time faculty and 42% (n=5) of full-time faculty each reported that they used the databases from off-campus only "rarely." The remainder of full-time faculty reported at least some remote use of databases, but 36% (n=4) of part-time faculty gave the response of "never." Moreover, participants showed varying usage rates according to their length of employment at the institution (see Figures 6 and 7).

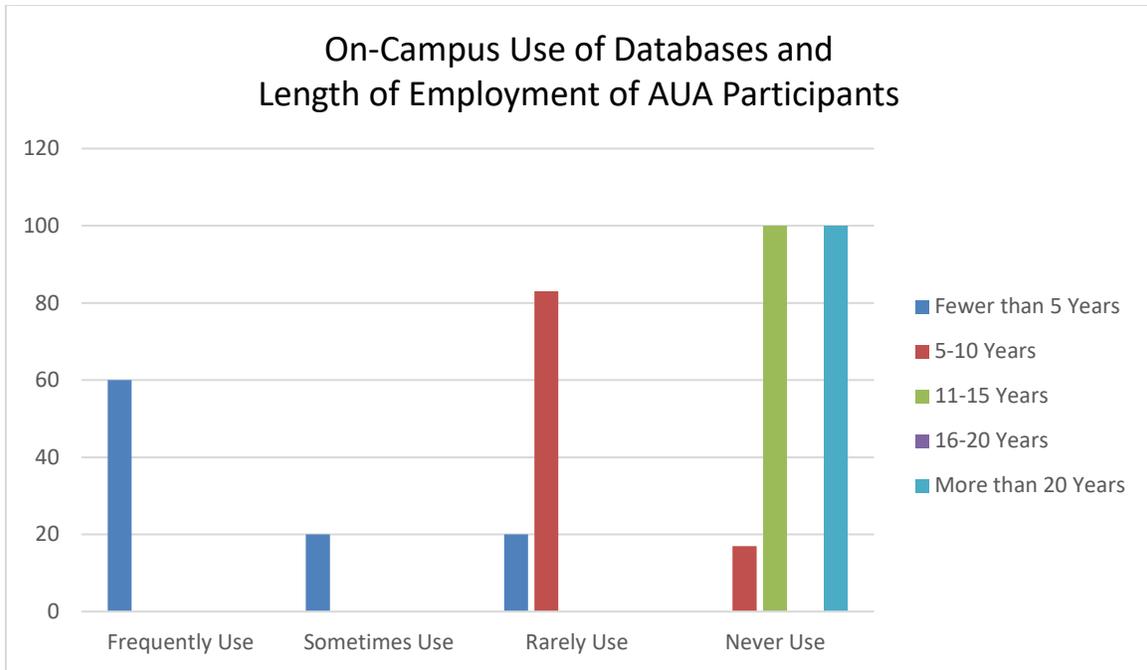


Figure 6  
On-Campus Use of Databases among AUA Participants, by Percentage

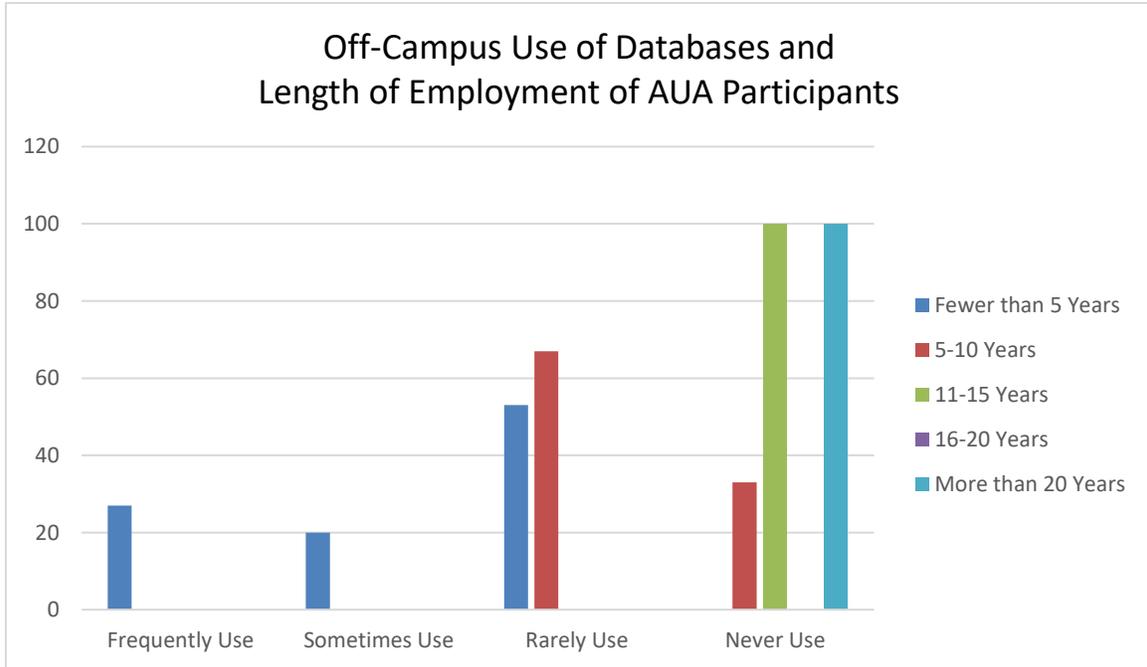


Figure 7  
Off-Campus Use of Databases among AUA Participants, by Percentage

As Figures 6 and 7 show, recently hired faculty were more likely to use library databases and were the only frequent users whether on-campus or off. Sixty percent (n=9) of respondents who had been at AUA for fewer than five years said that they “frequently” use the databases while on-campus and 27% (n=4) that they do so from off-campus. No respondent in this group reported “never” using the databases. For participants who had been at AUA for five years or longer, only those in the 5-10 year category reported any database use at all, whether on-campus or off, and even then only “rarely.” No respondent who had been at AUA any length of time greater than 10 years reported using the databases in either setting.

Because the YSU Library does not offer remote access to the library’s subscription databases, the survey instrument distributed to YSU participants asked only about on-campus use. Four YSU respondents (13%) indicated that they “frequently” use the library’s databases to access scholarly resources such as journal articles or abstracts, while seven (23%) reported that they “sometimes” do and nine (30%) selected “rarely.” One third of YSU respondents (33%, n=10) said that they never use the library’s databases.

As at AUA, use of databases at YSU varied according to rank, employment status, and length of employment. Higher-ranking faculty reported higher rates of use, with 100% (n=1) of respondents at the rank of department head and 27% (n=3) of those at professor saying that they “frequently” used the library’s databases. Of the remaining professors all exhibited at least some database use, with 64% (n=7) saying that they used the databases “sometimes” and 9% (n=1) that they did so “rarely.” Among respondents at the assistant level, 80% (n=8) said that they “rarely” used the databases and 20% (n=2) that they “never” did, and no participant holding the rank of lecturer or researcher reported any use. With regard to employment status, all full-time faculty respondents reported at least some database use, with 41% (n=7) saying that they

“sometimes” used them, 35% (n=6) that they “rarely” did, and 24% (n=4) that they “frequently” did. However, no part-time faculty reported being frequent users; instead, 77% (n=10) of these respondents said that they “never” used the library’s databases and 23% (n=3) that they did so only “rarely.” Differences also emerged with regard to length of employment at YSU; for complete information on database use by years of service, please see Figure 8.

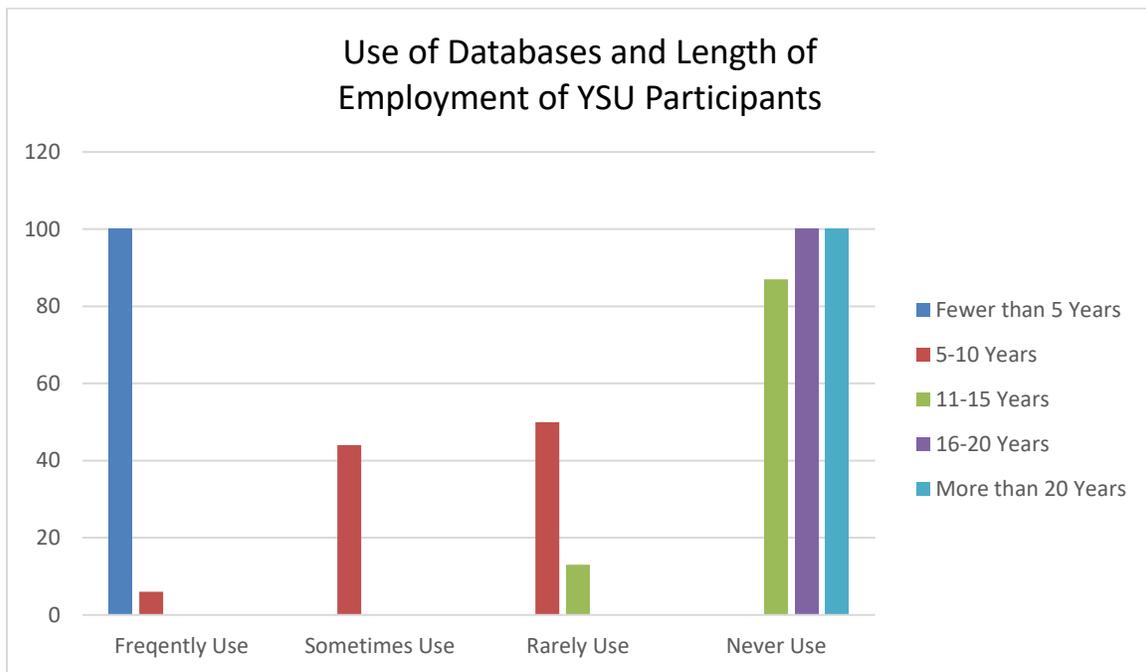


Figure 8  
Use of Databases and Length of Employment of YSU Participants, by Percentage

As Figure 8 shows, the primary (and almost only) users of library databases among YSU respondents are faculty who have been at the institution 10 or fewer years. All respondents (n=3) who had been at YSU for fewer than 5 years reported using the databases “frequently,” as did 6% (n=1) of those in the 5-10 year group. The remainder of participants in the 5-10 year category divided themselves almost evenly between using the databases “sometimes” (44%, n=7) and “rarely” (50%, n=8). No YSU respondent from any other category reported any use of the

library's databases, with the exception of one participant (13%) from the 11-15 year group who reported using them "rarely."

*Other Resources: Guides and Tutorials, Repository, and Special Collections*

Certain of the questions included on the survey instruments addressed resources or services specific to only one of the institutions examined. For instance, while the AUA Papazian Library does not hold archives or special collections, the YSU Library includes a Department of Antique, Rare and Art Books. When asked how often they use the antique and rare book collection, the largest single group of YSU respondents (43%, n=13) indicated that they "never" use this, and another 40% (n=12) that they "rarely" do. Three respondents (10%) stated that they "sometimes" use this collection and two (7%) that they "frequently" do. Of those participants who did report using the antique and rare materials, all were full-time faculty, all held a rank of assistant or higher, and all had been at YSU for 10 or fewer years.

The Papazian Library at AUA offers a section of "Guides and Tutorials" available on the library's website. These include LibGuides created by AUA librarians on topics such as citation tools, copyright, and avoiding plagiarism, as well as instructions for using the library catalog and databases. A question on the AUA survey attempted to assess use of these resources. Two AUA respondents (8%) indicated that they "frequently" use the guides and tutorials and seven (29%) that they "sometimes" do. Five respondents (21%) said that they "rarely" use these resources, and 10 participants (42%) selected "never." All participants who reported using the guides and tutorials had been at AUA for five or fewer years. Most were full-time faculty—only 18% (n=2) of part-time respondents reported making any use of the guides, and then only "rarely." The most frequent users were higher in rank, with 100% (n=4) of department heads and 100% (n=4)

of professors saying they used these resources “frequently.” All participants at the level of associate professor (n=1) and assistant (n=2) reported that they “sometimes” used the guides, and 50 % (n=5) of lecturers that they “rarely” did. No other lecturer or researcher reported any use.

The AUA also maintains an institutional repository, the AUA Digital Repository, the content of which includes faculty publications, Master’s theses and other student work, course materials, administrative or departmental documents, and other items (<http://dspace.aua.am/>). The AUA survey asked participants how often they use the repository to access faculty or student work. Many respondents (63%, n=15) indicated that they “never” use the AUA Digital Repository; another 29% (n=7) said they “rarely” use it, and one respondent each selected “sometimes” (4%) and “frequently” (4%). All participants who did report accessing content in the repository had been at AUA for five or fewer years, all were full-time faculty, and all held a rank of assistant or higher.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal noteworthy patterns concerning the use of library services by teaching faculty at both of these institutions. Of particular significance is the degree to which use of library services correlates with academic rank and length of employment at these institutions. In particular, recently hired faculty stand out for their level of engagement with the library. They were more likely to seek assistance from a reference librarian and were the most frequent visitors to the reference desk. They were the only users of certain services, such as virtual reference and online guides or tutorials. They comprised almost the entirety of database users and interlibrary loan borrowers and submitted the most purchase requests for their

libraries' collections. Conversely, use of many library services dropped to zero among respondents who had been at their institutions for more than ten years, with many longer-term employees indicating lack of awareness of services. A similar trend emerged with regard to rank. Department chairs and high-level faculty such as full professors often showed both high awareness and frequent use of library services, while instructors holding ranks such as lecturer or researcher often indicated lack of awareness and use.

For recent hires who are junior faculty, this greater use of library services may be due to the requirements of tenure or promotion; these faculty have a greater need to conduct original research for publication, and thus have a greater need of their institution's library. This seems to be borne out by the fact that those respondents at the opposite end of the spectrum, who had been at these institutions the longest, showed much lower awareness and use of library services.

However, two other major trends found in this study seem to resist this explanation. For one thing, instructors at the lower ranks, who presumably need to progress toward promotion, nonetheless showed a low level of engagement with their institution's library; meanwhile, higher-ranking faculty such as department chairs and professors, although apparently well established in their careers, showed high awareness and use of library services. It may be that high-ranking faculty are more engaged with contemporary debates in their disciplines and more connected to researchers in other countries, which could explain their greater interest in accessing journal literature and requesting purchases for the library's collection. Differing work habits may account for other of these findings. For instance, faculty with a long history of employment at their institution may have formed their research practices before the automation of libraries, and therefore may make greater use of resources not investigated in this study, such as the library stacks and print journals.

This study also indicates an apparent lack of popularity of remote access to library services. Virtual reference and off-campus use of databases met with low levels of use among participants as a whole, and even those groups identified as the most engaged with library services showed less enthusiasm in these areas. This may surprise academic librarians in North America and the United States, where patrons routinely demand constant online access to library resources. It may be that researchers at these institutions have not yet developed such expectations simply because remote access is less common; demand might grow as the precedent becomes more firmly established. Other factors, such as less widespread Internet connectivity and information technology infrastructure in Armenian society overall, may also play a role. However, this also represents a future growth area for these libraries, as at present only AUA offers remote access to reference and databases, and there were respondents at YSU who mentioned home access among their requests for additional services.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has some limitations. For one thing, the sample sizes for both surveys remain small; out of 200 teaching faculty at AUA only 28 took the survey, and at YSU only 43 faculty members out of 1,616 responded. There may also be discrepancies in some of the data collected because respondents could skip questions. These factors make it difficult to generalize the results of the study to gauge sentiments of the faculty as a whole at these institutions.

The survey instruments themselves, in certain instances, failed to capture complete data about faculty awareness of library services, in that not every question included an option for the participant to indicate whether they were aware of a given service. Thus, for certain items—such

as virtual reference services at AUA—there is no way to know whether participants who reported “never” using that service did so because they do not find it relevant to their needs, or because they are simply unaware that their library offers that service. A revised survey instrument could address these missed opportunities.

Finally, the design of this study made it difficult to isolate variations in use and awareness of library services according to field of study. The survey instruments did ask respondents to identify their department or area of specialization—but as an open question rather than multiple choice. Thus, respondents used a variety of names or acronyms to refer to departments and programs at their institutions, or sometimes expressed affiliation with a school-level division rather than a department or program within that school. This makes it difficult to draw connections to usage by discipline. Thus, even though Tables 1 and 2 suggest a high response rate from faculty in the humanities, we cannot determine from the data collected whether this corresponds to higher use of library services. Cultural differences between the two institutions add another layer of complexity, in that AUA uses a classification system for its degrees and divisions similar to that found in the United States or North America, while YSU organizes and labels its curriculum in a manner that seems more in keeping with regional or European models. Future research could focus more precisely on identifying faculty in different disciplines at these institutions and examining their use (or reasons for varying levels of use) of library services.

## **Conclusion**

In examining these two institutions, this study investigated the core services and resources common to most academic libraries. Certain of these resources, such as subscription databases,

represent a major investment of budgetary resources on behalf of the library; others, such as online guides and tutorials, represent a great investment of time and labor on the part of the librarians involved. Services such as interlibrary loan provide a means of accessing items not held in an institution's local collection—a crucial consideration for faculty or graduate students carrying out advanced research, especially given the financial constraints on Armenian research libraries. If faculty are not availing themselves of these resources or services—as the data in some instances seems to suggest—then this represents an important area for the libraries to address through outreach at these institutions. For all these reasons, librarians must continually strive to understand the research habits and preferences of the users we serve. By assessing awareness and use of their services, libraries at these and similar institutions can gain insight into underutilized resources to promote and new services to offer.

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## Appendix A

Questionnaire, Library Services

American University of Armenia

1. How often do you make use of **in-person** reference assistance at the Papazian Library?

**Please select ONE of the following:**

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

2. How often do you make use of **virtual** reference services (i.e., e-mail, online chat, text message) offered by the library?
- a) frequently
  - b) sometimes
  - c) rarely
  - d) never
3. How often do you use interlibrary loan for books or articles?
- a) frequently
  - b) sometimes
  - c) rarely
  - d) never
  - e) I was not aware of this service.
4. How often do you use the library's subscription databases to access scholarly resources (such as journal articles, abstracts, etc.) while **on campus**?
- a) frequently
  - b) sometimes
  - c) rarely
  - d) never
5. How often do you use the library's subscription databases to access scholarly resources (such as journal articles, abstracts, etc.) from **off-campus**?
- a) frequently

- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

6. How often do you make use of the Guides and Tutorials available on the Papazian Library website?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

7. How often do you make use of the University's digital repository to access faculty and/or student work?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

8. How often do you work with a Subject/Liaison Librarian assigned to your department to help select books or other materials for purchase?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely

- d) never
- e) I was not aware of this service.

9. Do you have any suggestions for additional services you would like the library to offer to AUA faculty?

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10. In which faculty or department do you serve?

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11. What is your rank?

- a) Head/Chair
- b) Professor
- c) Associate Professor
- d) Assistant
- e) Lecturer
- f) Researcher
- g) Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. Are you:

- a) Full-time
- b) Part-time

13. How many years have you been at AUA?

- a) <5
- b) 5-10
- c) 11-15
- d) 16-20
- e) 20+

## **Appendix B**

### Questionnaire, Library Services

#### Yerevan State University

1. How often do you make use of in-person reference assistance at the YSU library? **Please**

**select ONE of the following:**

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

2. How useful do you think virtual reference services (i.e., e-mail, online chat, text message)

would be for **your own research** if offered at the library?

- a) very useful
- b) somewhat useful
- c) not useful

3. How useful do you think virtual reference services (i.e., e-mail, online chat, text message) would be for **your students** if offered at the library?

- a) very useful
- b) somewhat useful
- c) not useful

4. How often do you use interlibrary loan for books or articles?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never
- e) I was not aware of this service.

5. How often do you use the library's subscription databases to access scholarly resources such as journal articles, etc.?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

6. How often do you use the library's special collections, including antique/rare book collections or archives?

- a) frequently

- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never

7. How often do you submit requests to the library for purchase of books or other materials?

- a) frequently
- b) sometimes
- c) rarely
- d) never
- e) I was not aware of this service.

8. Do you have any suggestions for additional services you would like the library to offer to YSU faculty?

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9. In which faculty or department do you serve?

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10. What is your rank?

- a) Head/Chair
- b) Professor
- c) Associate Professor
- d) Assistant

e) Lecturer

f) Researcher

g) Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are you:

a) Full-time

b) Part-time

12. How many years have you been at YSU?

a) <5

b) 5-10

c) 11-15

d) 16-20

e) 20+