

# STUDENT INPUT & FEEDBACK TEAM

*Year-End Report 2016-17*

Summary of Results and Follow-up Recommendations

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# Student Input & Feedback Team

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## BACKGROUND

The Dalhousie Libraries Student Input & Feedback Team (SIFT) is the revamped version of the Student Advisory Group (SAG).

From 2012–2015, the SAG had student members from each campus who joined either by responding to openings advertised by us or if asked by a Dean to join the group. Students were offered a co-curricular record credit on their transcripts for participating.

With this approach, we often ran into difficulty scheduling meetings at a time when all student members could attend. As a result, when meetings were held, there were often more staff in the room than students. Meetings were generally held twice a year.

In July 2016, we decided to revamp our approach so that we would reach more students. This also better fulfilled recommendation 10.1 from our recent Senate and external review that stated: "The Libraries, perhaps through the Office of the University Librarian, should create some kind of formal consultation process with the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) and the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) to have a recognized conduit for student advice regarding changes in services and space on campus." The Assessment Librarian joined the Communications Coordinator as co-chairs of the SIFT.

We decided to hold a meeting on each campus where students could drop in, have a slice of pizza and talk about their experiences in the libraries. Meetings were structured around three themes: spaces, services, and collections. Consulting with each library head, we determined the ideal time of year and time of day for the meeting on each campus. The Law Library did not participate this year; they wanted to observe how this version of the advisory group would work.

In addition to meetings on each campus, we held a final wrap-up meeting tying all the themes together to communicate our findings to students, as well as to communicate any progress made on issues that were cited. This final meeting took place in the Killam and was advertised on every campus. Students from Truro were video-conferenced into the meeting and pizza was ordered for both locations.

All meetings were audio-recorded and the notes were later transcribed. Students signed a consent form and the recordings were deleted once the notes were made. Students were asked to fill in a name plate upon joining the meeting that stated their program and year of study. In all cases, someone representing the host library was in attendance at each meeting, along with one or both of the co-chairs of SIFT.

Meeting location and date	Number of attendees
<p>SEXTON Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 1–2 p.m. Room B227, B Building, Sexton Campus</p>	<p>9 students</p> <p>Chemical Engineering (4th year Undergraduate), Electrical and Computer Engineering (3rd year undergraduate), Electrical and Computer Engineering (1st year undergraduate), Chemical Engineering (5th year co-op), Electrical and Computer End (graduate MSc.), Two students came in late and did not fill in a name plate, 1 student from student union there to observe, 2nd year engineering undergrad student stopped in to chat before session started. The recorder was not turned on. Marlo took notes during this time.</p>
<p>CARLETON Wednesday, November 16, 2016, 4–5 p.m. C150, CHEB</p>	<p>9 students</p> <p>Civil Engineering (2nd year undergraduate), Mechanical Engineering (2nd year undergraduate), Pharmacy (1st year), Pharmacy (1st year), Information not provided, Arts (no year given), Dentistry (2nd year), Dentistry (2nd year), No information given, but it was a student circulation assistant</p>
<p>STUDLEY Wednesday, January 18, 2017, 12–1 p.m. Science Academic Resource Centre, Wallace McCain Learning Commons</p>	<p>11 students</p> <p>MACS, Master of Applied Computer Science, 1<sup>st</sup> year; MACS (1st year); IDS, International Development Studies, (2nd year); BA, English, (4th year); Sociology, Anthropology &amp; Sustainability (2nd year); Kinesiology (2nd year); IDS (3rd year); MACS (1st year); Psychology (4th year); Psychology (4th year); Psychology (4th year)</p>
<p>MACRAE Thursday, January 19, 2017, 12–1 p.m. Program Room, MacRae Library</p>	<p>6 students</p> <p>Diploma in Engineering, Business, Ph.D. in Biology, Ph.D. Poultry Science, Pre-vet/Animal Science, BSc Ag. Econ.</p>
<p>FINAL MEETING OF 2016/17 Tuesday, March 14, 2017, 12–1 p.m. LITS Conference Room, Killam Library</p>	<p>17 students (approx.)</p>

	Some people came and went throughout the meeting. Many did not fill in the name plates so information about their year of study and programme was not recorded.
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## FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### Spaces

#### All

In general, a lack of study space for individuals and groups was reported at the different SIFT sessions. Other comments included:

Noise (especially in CHEB)

Students want doors on study rooms and frosted glass for privacy (to avoid the fish-bowl effect). They also want a variety of sizes in study rooms to accommodate different group sizes.

Questions about policy and mechanism regarding number of people needed to book a room. (Libraries website states three people are needed, but if signing up online only one banner number is needed.) This appeared to be especially an issue in the WMLC.

Students are not fully aware of extended hours, and still want 24/7 access (best exemplified by a student who studies at the 24 hour Freemans on Quinpool).

#### Agriculture

Students expressed the need for food/coffee options on campus/in library after 8 p.m. (This is recognized and will be built in to the plan for the top floor renovation project.)

Currently the students see the top floor as the place for individual work.

Students want doors on the study rooms.

Single-user kidney tables are awkward on their own, unless placed in a corner.

Students would like extended hours during exams.

## Carleton (CHEB)

Noise is still a major issue in this space.

Lights on timers are very disruptive.

## Studley

Concerns regarding minimum number of students to book study rooms (frustration at seeing only one person in a room).

Students expressed the need for spaces where groups can talk without concern of disrupting others.

Allowing food in the library: some said yes, some said no, both could see the other side's point.

## Sexton

Many engineering students go elsewhere (outside of the Sexton Library) to find available and suitable places to study. This includes going to the CHEB and the WMLC. (A variety of new study spaces will be created with the new construction due to be complete by spring 2018.)

## Services

### All

Students are not aware of Document Delivery, recalling books and the BARA program.

Requests for a quick link to quick document delivery instructions. (This has been forwarded to Joe Wickens and Lindsay McNiff.)

Students are open to receiving information from the Libraries via departmental means (newsletter or alerts from their departments).

### Agriculture

Issues with wireless printing. (Followed up with Mick. Improvements can be made when the system is upgraded in the summer.)

## Studley

Many students did not know they could get walk-in research assistance.

## Sexton

Turnaround time for 3D printed items can be too long for engineering students. They are happy with the service they receive from Sarah Davis, but for times when she is unavailable, they lack confidence in the service when their print job is rerouted to be completed at another library. (Confirmed with Mick that re-routing is how the system works.)

## Collections

### All

Request for more online textbooks.

### Carleton (CHEB)

Many students stated they didn't borrow materials. At the final meeting, we announced that the collection is now more available (i.e., compact shelving at Tupper).

## Studley

A student suggested that we promote the fact that we have books. Books are kind of hidden in the Killam.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General

Review our website and policy regarding study room bookings as well as check-in procedures to ensure they meet the needs of students and are consistent across our spaces.

When designing new study rooms, include a variety of sizes to accommodate different group sizes.

Continue considering 24/7 access. Brainstorm ideas, including 24/7 in just one Halifax location in lieu of night owl hours at all locations.

Consider user-friendly updates to the wireless printing interface (particularly printer location), following upgrades this summer.

Develop a quick guide for document delivery for the online point of need.

Promote both walk-in and by-appointment research assistance.

One student mentioned that when asking if the library has a book, staff check and give an answer without showing the student how to check on their own. (This has been forwarded to Sandy Dwyer as Chair of the DLSPC for consideration of quick instruction at service points.)

Consider online textbook purchases and support open textbook initiatives.

## Communications

Meetings were advertised in a number of ways: through posters in each hosting library and campus, on digital signage, through social media, and through our contacts at the DSU.

One thing that we heard from students at multiple meetings was that they would like to receive updates and news from the Libraries via departmental communiques they already receive. At this point, we will have to investigate which departments do a regular newsletter or email to students that we could submit to when relevant. Due to the many departments at Dalhousie, this will be a big undertaking, but could be well worth the effort.

We also collected the email addresses of students who wanted to sign up for updates from SIFT. An email account [sift@dal.ca](mailto:sift@dal.ca) has been created and is regularly monitored. The students whose email addresses we have were informed about the final meeting via email.

## Assessment

An "ethnograph-ish" study of students should be conducted to observe student work behaviour when searching for and accessing materials (e.g., what do they do when the item is not available?, what do they do when they can't find material or have questions?) This study should also determine which lines of institutional communication with students are most effective.

Analyze document delivery usage statistics for students.

A space study should be conducted at the Killam to identify potential improvements to help meet demands for individual and group study spaces.

Circulation stats for the Kellogg collection should be analyzed (before move, during Chapter House location, since return to the Kellogg).

## **2017-18 SIFT**

We will drop the Co-Curricular Record (CCR) incentive from the SIFT as it didn't appear to have an impact on participation. The free food and freedom from an ongoing commitment seemed to provide the incentive needed. Promoting and explaining the CCR proved to be an additional task during a very busy introduction to the SIFT.

An additional helping hand to provide instructions to participants will allow the co-chairs to more comfortably conduct the sessions without interruptions.

The dual responsibility of conducting the final SIFT for both Halifax and Truro locations at once was difficult in terms of consistently engaging all participants. We recommend two separate "final" SIFTS be conducted.

We are exploring the possibility of structuring an eLearning version of the SIFT for students who mainly or only attend Dal this way.