



2023  
KATHRYN A MARTIN LIBRARY  
**FACILITIES  
SURVEY**

UMD

KATHRYN A. MARTIN  
LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH  
Driven to Discover

## Who responded to the 2023 Survey?

- 161 students (9% of all contacted)
- 63 employees (18% of all contacted)

The proportion of student respondents from each college roughly reflected enrollment patterns.

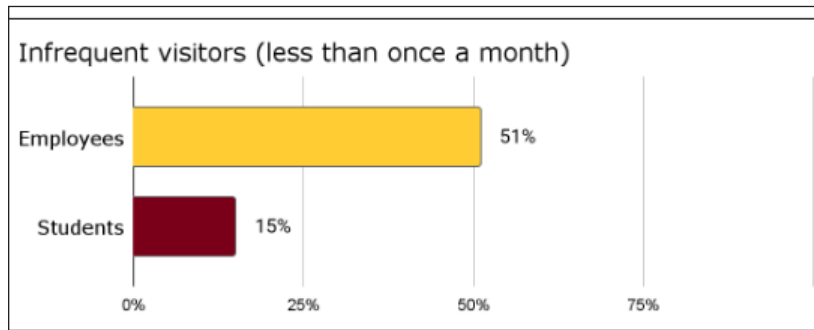
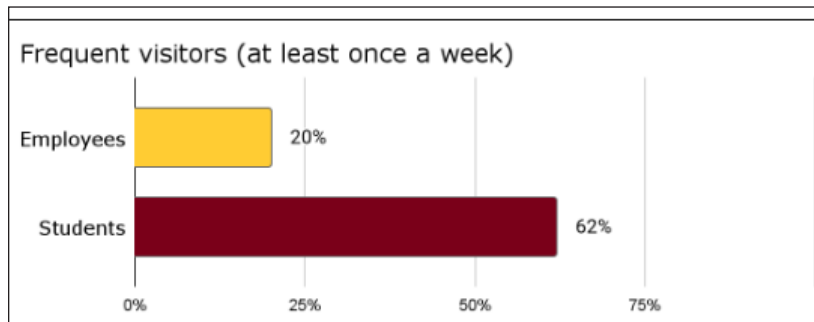
College	% of student respondents	% of students enrolled
Arts, Humanities, & Social Sciences (CAHSS)	22%	20%
Business & Economics (LSBE)	17%	22%
Education & Human Service Professions (CEHSP)	23%	23%
Science & Engineering (SCSE)	37%	34%

At the beginning of the survey, respondents were told:

*Library facilities include spaces, technology, and furniture. We'd like to hear from you whether you're in the library all the time or visit very rarely.*

## Approximately how frequently do you visit the library?

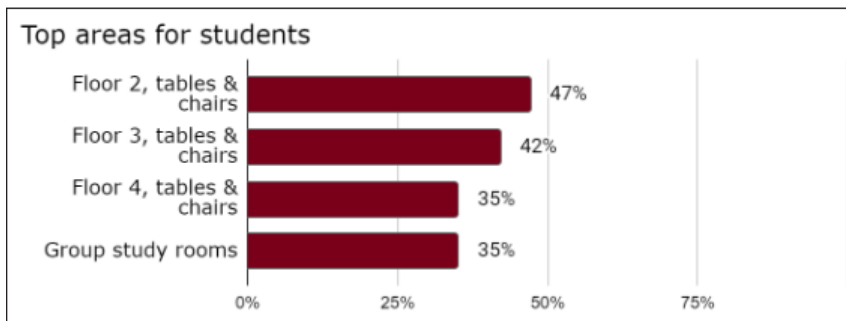
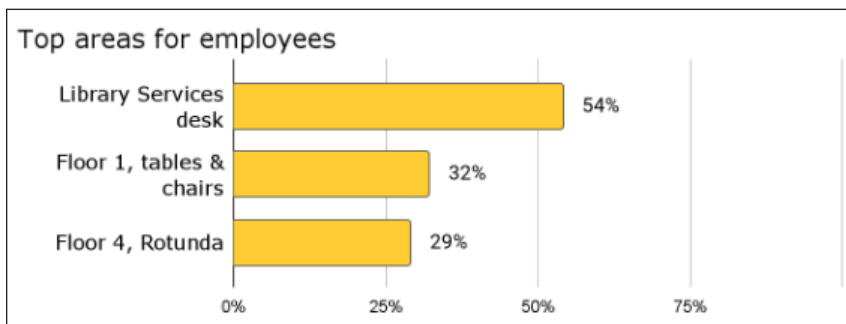
Among survey respondents, students tended to visit the library much more frequently than employees did.



Visit Frequency	Employees	Students
Several times a week	2 (3%)	52 (32%)
At least weekly	11 (17%)	49 (30%)
At least monthly	17 (27%)	36 (22%)
At least once a semester	16 (25%)	16 (10%)
Rarely or never	16 (25%)	8 (5%)

## Which library areas do you usually use?

Respondents could choose multiple options for this question.



For a fuller picture of what library spaces respondents used, refer to the table below.

Area	% of Employees	% of Students
Floor 1 tables and chairs	32%	29%
Floor 1 classrooms	5%	15%
Floor 1 Library Services desk	6%	3%
Floor 1 technology help (Computer Help, Media Hub, AT Assist)	54%	12%

Area	% of Employees	% of Students
Annex	14%	4%
Archives and special collections spaces	11%	35%
Floor 2 tables and chairs	6%	47%
Floor 2 Learning Commons (Math Learning Lab, Research Help, Tutoring Center, Writers' Workshop)	8%	21%
Floor 2 rotunda	8%	16%
Floor 3 computers	6%	42%
Floor 3 tables and chairs	3%	11%
Floor 4 rotunda	29%	15%
Floor 4 tables and chairs	11%	35%

## What do you appreciate about library spaces?

38 employees and 89 students commented about things they appreciated about library spaces. Some of their comments are counted in more than one of the categories below.

### *Variety of spaces*

68 respondents appreciated the variety of library spaces, including 8 employees and 60 students. Here are a few of those comments.

- *There is plenty of space to be able to work and I really appreciate the distinction between quiet areas and areas that are open for conversation.*
- *I appreciate the ability to find a different space to work be it at a table on the first floor or a study room over in the annex*
- *There are many different places to work and there's somewhere to sit on every floor 99% of the time.*

### *Library staff*

8 respondents appreciated library staff. Here are a few of those comments.

- *The knowledgeable, helpful, patient, and friendly staff.*
- *Staff have always been very helpful, and I really like all the little activities that are offered throughout the year. I especially had a blast last semester during the finals week activities, where there was a book scavenger hunt to find little ducks. It really got me to look at all the incredible material available on the bookshelf and I checked out some really unique books. Wish I had explored the selves way earlier in my school career. Just want to add that I brag about our library - when my sister would visit from the main campus, she was jealous at how much our library really proved a centralized resource and study space.*
- *The staff at the service desk were friendly and efficient.*

## What do you appreciate about library spaces?

### **Ease of use**

7 respondents commented that the library was easy to use, including 4 employees and 3 students. Here are a couple of those comments.

- *I like that they are clearly labeled as to quiet/versus talking and whether or not food and drink is allowed.*
- *They are comfortable and easy to navigate*

### **Comfortable space**

44 respondents appreciated the comfort or appeal of library spaces, including 17 employees and 27 students. These comments addressed various aspects of the space, like cleanliness, furniture, and building layout. Here are a few examples:

- *I love the third floor open area because the windows bring in a lot of light*
- *Clean, inviting, comfortable chairs, warm colors, wood*
- *Open and airy*
- *That they are always clean! And that they are free and have good vibes*
- *very nice and cozy*

### **Atmosphere**

20 respondents commented on the building atmosphere, including 6 employees and 14 students. Here are a few of those comments:

It provides a nice environment with people working or chilling which makes you get in the same mindset

The nice and calm surroundings

I love how welcoming the 1st floor space is. I should explore the library more.

I probably made use of the library more than any other student service. Heck, I still have a melted vinyl disc bowl I made in my first week of undergrad during a welcoming event at the library back in 2013. Just thank you for being there, thank you for supporting me throughout my academic journey, even if I never really directly interacted with many library staff.

### **Affordances**

20 respondents appreciated affordances of library spaces, e.g. what they are able to do in those spaces.

- *You can be with your friends and work on stuff during the day, rather than go home.*
- *I like how private some spaces can be. They are still public but not in the open. It makes me feel more secure and helps me stay focused.*
- *It has a talkative space instead of being wholly quiet the entire time. Allowing for a semi-loud space to communicate with lab partners is really beneficial.*

## What would you change about library spaces?

Respondents were asked two open-ended questions at different points in the survey.

- What would you change about library spaces? [Textbox]
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about library spaces? [Textbox]

The majority of these comments addressed accessibility, building atmosphere, or furniture. Because respondents also discussed these in response to some more specific questions later in the survey,

these comments are included in the sections that follow.

Here are a few specific suggestions that do not fit neatly into those categories.

- *Better access to food. Suggestions included a microwave, vending machines, and a snack area.*
- *Add a silent or prayer room*

## Accessibility

Respondents were asked “Are library spaces accessible? What changes would you recommend to make them more accessible?”

Survey respondents described changes to make library spaces more accessible to users with disabilities along with changes to make library processes easier to navigate.

Most comments addressed at least one of the following, in order of frequency:

- *furniture and equipment (especially adjustable seating/desks)*
- *study rooms (physical accessibility & ease of booking)*
- *building navigation and signage (elevators, clearer signage for visually impaired, finding the Annex)*
- *gender neutral bathrooms*

### Accessible furniture and equipment

- *Stand up desk stations in the quiet station. I need to stand more than sit, and having the ability at home to do both, and not at the library, is why I'm studying mostly from home (which is louder, but sitting is worse)*
- *Adaptive seating around the library*
- *CCTV for magnifying documents for visually impaired people. If these exist, tell us or ask our disability resources person to tell us how to access them. If your staff don't know what these are, ask them to contact the Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss (Vital Living) in Duluth.*
- *I think that there should be more of the tables that are along the edges like in the middle they are easier to get into*
- *It's hard to mass order chairs that are comfy. That's expensive, but ergonomic chairs with more back support would be nice, as well as standing pads if you eventually get stand-up desks.*
- *Adjustable stand-up desks, enough to fit a computer, notebook, mouse, cup, with a standing mat. I physically cannot work in the library for more than an hour otherwise.*
- *Desks that raise and lower to be better on our backs and necks*
- *adjustable armrests/ no armrests*
- *Adjustable desks*
- *More tables with foot rests.*
- *Chairs with arm rests, especially the chairs that are on the first floor. I like having more support when sitting for long periods of time.*
- *chairs that are adjustable*
- *I like the chairs on the second floor that support your back and are easy to move around. I don't like the wooden chairs that are sometimes in the study room. I think chairs that have good support for the lower back and butt would be great.*

Furniture and equipment comments are also discussed in more detail later in this report.

## Study rooms

- *Somewhat. Almost none of the study room spaces are accessible, according to the website. It would be nice for the study rooms to be wheelchair accessible and otherwise.*
- *I would recommend study rooms that you do not have to rent out, study rooms you can easily come into between classes (individuals)*
- *I wish you could just use a study room and didn't have to reserve a spot. Don't get me wrong we enjoy having private rooms with a guarantee spot and that should not go away, but I wish there were also rooms to just use as you please that are open to use w/o reservation.*
- *They are. The study rooms were a little bit difficult to figure out the first time. There could be more accessibility for reserving rooms. Make the online booking more streamline and simple.*
- *It would be nice to be able to rent out study rooms for longer than 3 hours a day.*
- *Classrooms more a. Essible*

Respondents were also asked specifically about sensory study rooms in the library.

- There are two sensory study rooms in the library (405 and 472). They currently include lamps, weighted lap pads, balance balls, and balance discs.  
What else would you like to see in these rooms?

Respondents suggested the following, in order of frequency:

- *Stress/fidget items*
- *Adjustable lighting*
- *White noise machines*
- *Soft/comfortable seating*
- *Walking pads [under-desk treadmills]*

Here are a few comments regarding sensory study rooms.

- *Wow, I had no idea that these rooms existed! I'd like to see these rooms!*
- *White noise machine that can be turned on/off*
- *Stability balls*
- *Possibly stress balls or things to fidget with (as long as people don't end up taking them). Could yoga balls be added to more rooms?*

## Navigation and signage

- Some of the signage isn't clear enough for those who are visually impaired.
- Not sure - I have heard the elevators don't work very well though but I have never used them.
- One more elevator.
- The stairs going up some are too small and have to be careful going down or ypbto not trip!<sup>1</sup>
- Initially had a difficult time locating gender neutral bathroom - more clarity about where those are
- More gender inclusive restrooms rather than a singular hidden one on the back of the 2nd floor, not having doors that slam shut immediately after letting go of the door, not rely on People Soft for students' names, have a contact email on your website for students to be able to seek a name change in the library system
- I would consider them accessible, although the Annex feels a little complicated to get to

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<sup>1</sup>This comment regarding balance on stairs may refer to the main staircase in the Kathryn A. Martin Library - the treads on the first flight of these stairs vary widely in width. This type of staircase can be more difficult to navigate than stairs with fixed width, because people often look at the edge of stair treads to orient themselves. See for example den Otter, A.R., Hoogwerf, M., & van der Woude, L.H. (2011). The role of tread fixations in the visual control of stair walking. *Gait & Posture*, 34(2), 169-173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaitpost.2011.04.004>

- NA for me. Maybe the only space that feels more difficult or arduous to access is the library annex. It's a somewhat long feeling walk and it's a dark cold space. (That may be a good thing for the people who like to work there, however.)
- Getting to the Annex is a bit convoluted / uninviting. I know this isn't something you can solve for, but having the elevators open up right outside the rotunda space is distracting. The newspaper area is hidden / uninviting.

When asked specifically “How easy is it for you to find things in the library using signs and maps?” 95% of respondents reported it was somewhat easy or very easy.

<b>Finding things in the library</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Very easy	40%
Somewhat easy	55%
Somewhat difficult	4%
Very difficult	1%

## Building Atmosphere

### *Welcoming and safe*

<b>The library is a __ place</b>	<b>Welcoming</b>	<b>Safe</b>
Strongly agree	72%	81%
Somewhat agree	21%	13%
Somewhat disagree	2%	2%
Strongly disagree	4%	4%

### *Hours*

Respondents were largely satisfied with library hours.

<b>How satisfied are you with the library's hours?</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Very satisfied	57%
Somewhat satisfied	36%
Somewhat dissatisfied	4%
Very dissatisfied	3%

Comments mostly expressed an interest in extended hours - particularly later hours on Friday and earlier hours on Sunday. A few people also mentioned confusion around hours (e.g., on holidays).

### *Quiet and Talking spaces*



Survey respondents were asked several questions on this topic.

- Are you able to find quiet space or space for individual work in the library?
- Are you able to find talking space or space for group work in the library?
- Rate the volume levels in quiet spaces
- Rate the volume levels in talk zones
- Is there anything else you want us to know about the availability of talking and/or quiet space?

For the most part, respondents were able to find both quiet space and talking space to work in the library. They were also satisfied with the volume levels in both quiet and talking spaces, with 95% of all respondents rating them good or very good.

It was slightly harder for respondents to find talking space or space for group work, with 12% of students and 20% of employees choosing sometimes or never.

<b>Are you able to find space to work in the library?</b>	<b>Quiet space</b>	<b>Talking space</b>
Always	54%	46%
Most of the time	41%	40%
Sometimes	3%	13%
Never	1%	1%

Here are a few comments about the availability of talking and quiet spaces in the library.

- *I appreciate the different sectioning of floors as designated talking spaces and quiet spaces. I think it's smart that the bottom floor is a talking space since that's where most people go.*
- *Love how the floors are separated! Maybe more sound proofing in the study rooms.*
- *The talking space availability needs to be more available, most likely by adding more tables for group work.*
- *There's usually plenty of quiet space available but it's difficult to find places on talking floors*
- *Unhelpful when groups use the tables in quiet spaces for talking*
- *When students don't respect the quiet spaces it would be nice to be able to text a librarian to do a walk through and remind students, politely, to take phone calls into a cell phone area or to use headphones for their music or screen readers. (I'm a screen reader user, if that matters.) Sometimes students get mean or rude if another student asks them to use headphones.*

### **Lighting**

<b>Rate the Lighting in the Library</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Very good	44%
Good	49%
Below average	5%
Poor	2%

While respondents weren't asked any open-ended questions specifically about lighting, they did comment on lighting in various parts of the survey. Here are a few of those comments.

- I would like to see more study areas with adjustable lighting. They wouldn't need to contain other sensory things and would be excellent for many students without special needs as a good place for their eyes to rest, to watch a longer assigned video and other things.
- Adding Sunlamps for students to have access to in the winter would be good.
- I love the third floor open area because the windows bring in a lot of light
- [Appreciate] lots of natural light
- Dim the lights sometimes because they can be too bright

Lighting impacts the overall accessibility of a space. Because lighting needs differ widely between individuals, adjustable lighting and/or a range of lighting levels within a building are ideal. For an overview of considerations, see Boyce & Wilkins' 2018 article, "Visual Discomfort Indoors."<sup>2</sup>

### **Art**

Respondents were asked two questions about art in the library:

- What kinds of art would you like to see in the library?
- Where in the library would you like to see more art?

Respondents were especially supportive of adding art by students (26 people) and other local artists (11 people), including marginalized artists.

There was widespread interest in more art throughout the library. Here are a few specific areas that were suggested.

- along the stairs
- study rooms
- The floor, walls, desks, everywhere
- The bathrooms could use some art
- Maybe more art around the shelves?
- I would like to see more art by resting spaces (the benches, the arm chairs, etc.)

Respondents were interested in a wider variety of art in the building as well. Here are a few comments:

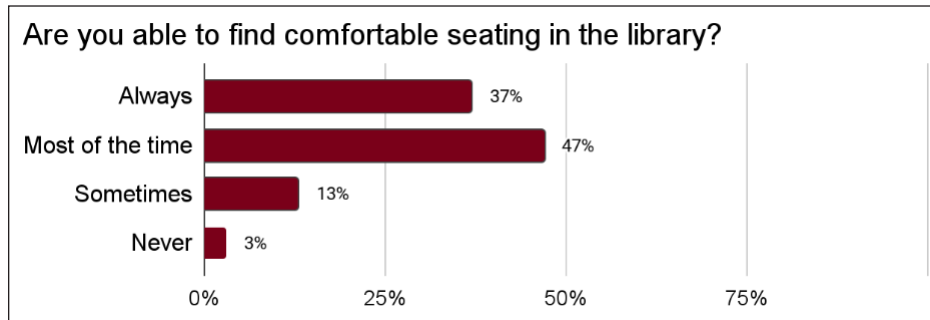
- Different styles in different locations, a few of one type in a corner on one floor then different style completely on another floor
- Lots of color. Soothing, uplifting, or motivating imagery to aid in study breaks. Sculptural, multidimensional, textile- and light-based would be especially excellent, but any art is good (and inspiring) art
- Abstract art and some sculptures
- maybe more beautiful pillows/color design on the furniture
- Art of multiple areas of study and also nature, specifically of Duluth and Minnesota
- Various paintings depicting Duluth and UMD's History.

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<sup>2</sup>Boyce P, Wilkins A. Visual discomfort indoors. *Lighting Research & Technology*. 2018;50(1):98-114. doi:10.1177/1477153517736467

# Furniture

## Seating



Survey respondents brought up seating in response to several questions, including:

- Tell us more about what kind of seating you would like to see in the library.
- What would you change about library spaces?
- Are library spaces accessible? What changes would you recommend to make them more accessible?

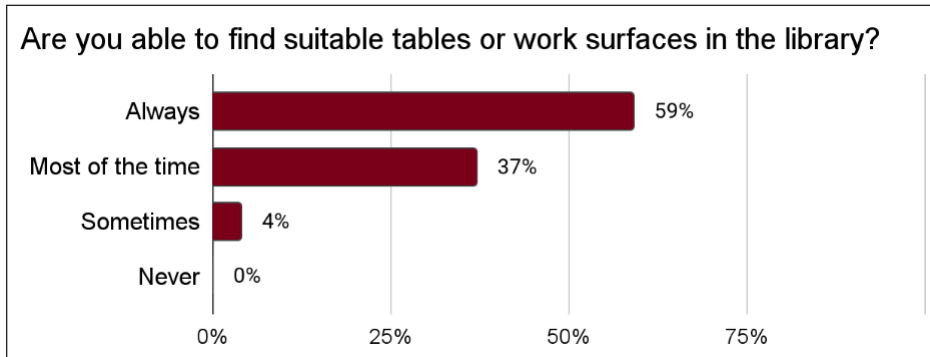
There were a few major themes in comments about seating. Respondents wanted:

- More cushioned seating
- More adjustable and ergonomic seating
- A wider variety of seating options within both quiet and talk zones

Here are a few of their comments:

- Chairs with arm rests, especially the chairs that are on the first floor. I like having more support when sitting for long periods of time.
- I would like more comfy armchairs with moveable/adjustable desks (like in the hallway of Cina Hall, first floor.) I would almost like couches, but I know they would be so popular (with nappers and resters) I would never get to sit on one by myself. It would be cozy to create a comfy quiet work corner with sofas/coffee tables meant for quiet work and quiet reading. It's hard to concentrate in the other school places that have this (like Kirby Student Center or the school cafe. They always have loud music and lots of people talking.)
- More comfortable/cushioned seats or even couches
- It would be nice to have the option to sit in more lounge-type chairs sometimes.
- I would love a few more comfortable chairs or couches, especially on the third and fourth levels. I feel like that is the only thing stopping me from studying in the library more often.
- More seating options with something behind you. Almost all seating has a person's back facing out and sometimes with noise cancelling headphones, it feels vulnerable not knowing what's behind you

## Tables



Respondents had an easier time finding suitable tables in the library than comfortable seating.

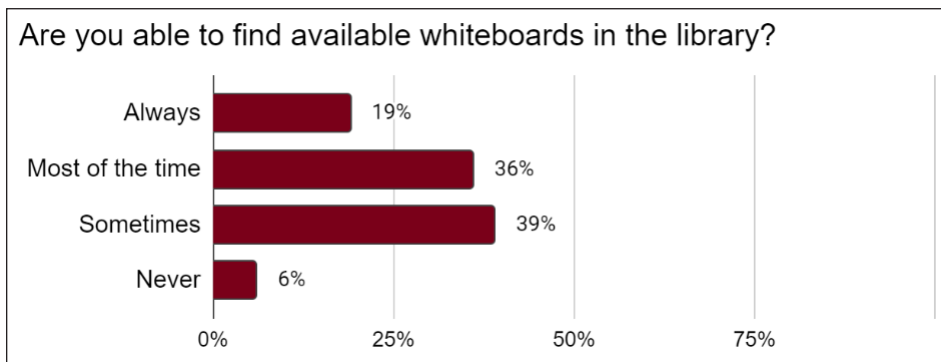
There were a couple of major themes in the comments. Respondents wanted:

- More adjustable-height tables (including standing height tables)
- More small tables for 1-2 people

Here are a few of their comments:

- standing desks/table options
- Adjustable stand-up desks, enough to fit a computer, notebook, mouse, cup, with a standing mat. I physically cannot work in the library for more than an hour otherwise.
- More small tables for like 1-2 people
- More tables with foot rests

## Whiteboards



In their comments, respondents expressed a need for

- more whiteboards
- more markers
- more erasers

Respondents were interested in a broader range of marker colors, whiteboards in more study rooms, and smaller movable whiteboards throughout the building.

## Technology

Respondents were asked specifically about the availability of electrical outlets, computers, and

large monitors in the library. It was most difficult for respondents to find large monitors, with 31% of respondents choosing sometimes or never.

Are you able to find available...	Electrical outlets	Computers	Large Monitors
Always	46%	55%	27%
Most of the time	40%	41%	41%
Sometimes	12%	4%	27%
Never	2%	0%	4%

### Technology Suggestions

Respondents were asked “Is there additional technology you’d like to see in the library?”

Many comments were requests for wider access to technology already in the library. Here are a few examples:

- The energy outlets should be fixed on the first floor tables, sometimes they don't hold the charging cable as it should and it falls and doesn't charge
- large monitors in every study room
- secondary monitors you can plug a laptop into for a dual monitor setup would be helpful at the individual workstations.
- I would say more outlets at some of the group tables on the third floor of the library.
- The touch screen TVs in the study rooms are great. I'd love to see more of those.

There were also several suggestions for new technology in the library.

- Adding Sunlamps for students to have access to in the winter would be good.
- Interactive tablets for viewing historic papers, documents, and photos.
- CCTV for magnifying documents for visually impaired people. If these exist, tell us or ask our disability resources person to tell us how to access them. If your staff don't know what these are, ask them to contact the Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss (Vital Living) in Duluth.
- Smartboards, AirPlay capability, etc.
- Projectors being available in some study rooms!!! Would be nice for practicing presentations or having group meetings.
- Exposure to new generations of technology, like VR, and AR.
- 3D technology (VR, Oculus) or a place where students can do podcast

### Study Space Preferences

Respondents were asked two questions about places outside the library where they studied. What spaces outside of the library do you visit to study or do coursework? Check all that apply. What do you like about these spaces? [Textbox]

Space	Students
Dorms or apartments	38%
Food Court or Dining Center	12%
Kirby Student Center	55%
Northern Shores Coffee Shop	21%
VenDen	25%
Other campus areas	44%
Off Campus	50%
Not applicable (I only study in the library)	2%

The largest number of students also studied in Kirby Student Center or off campus.

The two factors students mentioned most often in choosing study spaces were the following:

- convenience/location (especially for studying in between classes)
- comfort (including furniture and access to food)

Here are a few student comments about what they liked about the places they studied.

- They have taller desks. And I LOVE the fireplaces. I so wish the library had fireplaces!!
- Own space, relative privacy
- I like the different atmospheres for different things. Kirby has comfortable chairs and music but can be crowded and same goes for the coffee shop.
- Location. I feel like the library is in the middle of nowhere related to the buildings my classes are in.
- the louder atmosphere and accessibility to food
- I like to study in Solon, and I like the bright, natural light and how pretty the place is. That's probably why I also like the annex.
- I enjoy VenDen because I can make lunch there and take a nap on a couch (if I'm lucky and nab one for myself) if I have a busy day and still more classes to complete later on.

I like the Kirby Student Center because it has many couches, footrests, armchairs and coffee tables. It also has a decent amount of outlets and a nearby bathroom/waterfountain.

I like my dorm because mostly it is quiet and I have affordable food there. Buying food on campus is usually a minimum of \$8, so meal planning and having ready-made things is important. I get dizzy a lot without meals, so I always have to plan my studying and class time around that. I try to have every meal I make cost less than \$7 so I can afford school here.

The Northern Coffee Shop has really easily accessible outlets for laptops and nice counters to work on. The couches are nice if you're sitting with friends.