

# Assessing Awareness and Use of Library Services within Chinese Partner Academic Programs: A Case Study Developing and Analyzing Bilingual Surveys

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## Abstract

A library at a regional comprehensive university created a Global Access Committee to provide support for students and faculty at two international partner campuses in China. In 2022, the committee sent out a survey to these students to assess their awareness, usage, and satisfaction with library resources and services. Students reported high awareness, usage, and satisfaction with online library resources, instructional materials such as guides and tutorials, and the library's Ask A Librarian service. However, there was a discrepancy between students' self-reported usage and usage statistics collected by the library. The responses may also have been influenced by

cultural differences and by the translation of the questions and responses into and out of Mandarin Chinese. However, the library was able to make positive changes based on the survey results.

*Keywords:* surveys, translation, international students, academic library use, library service assessment, cross-border partnerships, library user satisfaction, United States, China

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## Introduction

Fort Hays State University (FHSU) is a regional comprehensive institution in Hays, Kansas. In the year 2000, FHSU formed a partnership with Sias International University, an institution in the Henan province of China, to offer dual bachelor's degrees. Three years later, it formed a similar partnership with Shenyang Normal University (SNU), an institution in the Liaoning province of China. FHSU does not have satellite campuses; rather, the university hires FHSU faculty to live in China and teach courses at the partner institutions. FHSU enrolls over 1000 students at SNU and approximately 2000 at Sias (Fort Hays State University, n.d.-b).

Since the inception of these international partnerships, FHSU's Forsyth Library, like other academic libraries, has moved a large proportion of its collections online. FHSU has a sizeable population of online students, particularly since the university was an early developer of online education programs, forming a Virtual College (later renamed FHSU Online) in 1997. Students at Sias and SNU are supposed to have access to the same online FHSU resources that domestic students have access to. However, China's strict governmental policies regarding access to online information cause lag time when attempting to access online content stored on U.S. servers. Accessing online library resources was challenging for FHSU's Chinese partnership students. To address this challenge, in 2020, Forsyth Library formed a China Access Committee, consisting of the electronic resources librarian and liaison librarians for the academic programs offered at Sias and SNU. As FHSU formed more international partnerships outside of China, the committee was renamed the Global Access Committee (Fort Hays State University, n.d.-a). International students using academic libraries in the U.S. have unique needs due to language barriers, different library cultures in their home countries, or a lack of awareness about what resources and services they can access in American libraries (Aaronberg, 2017; Reed, 2022).

The Global Access Committee was charged with increasing the use and quality of library services and resources offered to the faculty and students at FHSU international partner institutions, with a goal of helping them navigate the added technological, linguistic, and cultural barriers of accessing and using the library.

In its first two years, the Global Access Committee focused on identifying and promoting FHSU library resources that worked well at Sias and SNU by marking recommended databases on Forsyth Library's A-Z database list, creating a cross-border faculty guide and bilingual Chinese-English library guide, providing trainings for and sending regular messaging to cross-border faculty, and creating bilingual tutorial videos for students. In 2022, the committee decided to assess the impact of its work in

China by conducting a survey of students at Sias and SNU regarding their awareness of, usage of, and satisfaction with Forsyth Library resources and services. The survey was also intended to continue needs assessment of FHSU's Chinese partner students and to improve library programs and services accordingly.

## Literature Review

All libraries must engage in self-assessment, to ensure they are meeting users' needs and to demonstrate their value to stakeholders (Killick & Wilson, 2019). Different user groups have unique needs, and assessment tools designed for specific users are sometimes necessary. In addition to domestic and international students and faculty on campus and online, Forsyth Library serves two additional groups: students in foreign countries who are taking FHSU courses, and the faculty who teach them, online or at campuses that are part of our global partnerships.

There have been many studies of the information and service needs of international students. Sin & Kim (2018) compared the information needs and information barriers of domestic and international college students. They found that the top information needs (about their education and future careers) and barriers (that information they found was irrelevant, not credible, or outdated) were similar across both groups. Contrary to the findings of earlier studies, they found that a lack of technology skills was no longer a major barrier for international students. Common information barriers among international students involved language, questions about library services, and confusion over how to determine if sources are credible.

Knight et al. (2010) performed a study involving three California universities of varying sizes and numbers of international students. They found that most students came to the library for a quiet place to study and had few interactions with librarians. Their most frequent request was for more non-English information sources. They agreed that they didn't use library resources or services often because they didn't need to, but also admitted they didn't know much about the library. All three libraries then made increasing awareness of library services and resources among international students a priority.

There have been previous studies about serving library users at international branch campuses. For example, Green (2013) surveyed librarians at seventeen international branch campuses of U.S. universities. They all agreed that their purpose was to ensure graduates of their campuses were equally as proficient as American graduates. However, they varied in the amount of support and collaboration they

received from their home campuses, how much money they had to purchase collections, and how many staff were employed at the branch campuses. They spoke of their delight in working with very motivated students who saw themselves as the hope of their nations' futures but also noted that adjusting to the different ways things work in other cultures could be frustrating.

However, there are few if any studies about serving library users in other countries who are affiliated with American universities, without a physical branch campus. This study will help fill this gap in the literature. It also provided the data we needed to better understand the issues around the use of our resources by Sias and SNU faculty and students, leading to improved service and hopefully user satisfaction.

#### Cultural Impact on Survey Responses

Cohen et al. (1995) found that participants' responses to survey questions can be influenced by various factors, including cultural values. One such factor is socially desirable responding (SDR), which involves systematically providing answers that cast the respondent in a positive light (Paulhus, 2017). Lalwani et al. (2006) expand on this by suggesting that cultures emphasizing either individualism or collectivism can prompt individuals to engage in socially desirable responses, albeit through different mechanisms. Collectivist cultures, prioritizing harmony and positive relationships, may encourage individuals to depict themselves favorably while avoiding criticism of others. Conversely, individualistic cultures, valuing uniqueness and admirable traits, may lead individuals to engage in self-deceptive enhancement, providing "favorably biased yet honestly held self-descriptions" (Paulhus & Reid, 1991, p. 307).

Despite the common perception of China as a collectivist society, recent research suggests a shift towards individualism. For example, in their 2013 study of the subjective well-being of urban Chinese, Steele & Lynch found that individualistic factors like "higher income, self-reported health, freedom of choice and control over life" (p. 447) were correlated with higher subjective well-being, while collectivist factors were associated with lower well-being, indicating Chinese society is becoming more individualistic.

Tan et al. (2021) found that Chinese youth exhibit a blend of collectivist and individualist traits. This suggests a dual motivation for impression management through response bias among this demographic. In our study, many students reported that they had interacted with the library in more ways and at higher rates than our usage statistics show. This discrepancy may be due to culturally motivated impression management (i.e., a tendency to respond in overly positive ways that make them appear more socially acceptable). Also, our respondents provided more positive comments

(157) than negative ones (48), perhaps reflecting a collectivistic desire not to criticize others, especially those in authority.

## Methods

### Development of Survey Questions

In 2014, Forsyth Library conducted a small survey of users in the library building regarding their reasons for coming to the library, how often they came, and when they needed the library to be open. In 2017, we built upon and expanded this survey into an online survey given to faculty and students, both on campus and online. This survey was adapted from questions used in LibQUAL+ (offered by the Association of Research Libraries) and MISO: Measuring Information Service Outcomes ([miso.org](http://miso.org)) surveys and asked about why and how often patrons came to the library or used our website and assessed their satisfaction with the library's collections and services. In December 2021, the Global Access Committee began developing a survey to assess library services to our institution's China partners, Zhengzhou Sias University (commonly known as Sias) and Shenyang Normal University (often referred to as SNU). The 2022 survey of students at our partner schools in China grew out of the 2017 survey with a more comprehensive focus on awareness, use, and satisfaction with library resources and services.

Factors that were discussed included survey instrument selection, audience, language, translation, distribution, and recruitment. To better understand the awareness, use, and satisfaction with FHSU library electronic resources among faculty and students at Sias and SNU, two surveys were developed, one directed towards faculty members teaching in China and another for students enrolled in FHSU programs at Sias and SNU. The study was approved by the FHSU institutional review board (IRB) Committee. Though this study was in relation to FHSU programs taking place internationally, no additional review was deemed necessary by the IRB.

Due to the Chinese government's regulations regarding access to web content for those within the country's borders, it was necessary to develop and administer a survey instrument that could be easily accessed in both China and the U.S. The surveys were created using Springshare's LibWizard software because of questionable and reported inconsistent access to Qualtrics and Google forms from China IP addresses. LibWizard also offered various question formats and the utilization of skip logic, while being capable of providing analysis similar to Qualtrics. It did not have any restrictions or limitations as far as the number of users. While it was briefly considered, building the

survey within Blackboard, the learning management system used by FHSU and their global partners, was not recommended as it was not predicted to generate the most response.

Various aspects, particularly regarding library service awareness and communication with library liaisons, made it clear that a separate survey for faculty would be needed, as faculty have more direct communication with librarians. In 2022 there were 38 cross-border faculty teaching at Sias and SNU representing programs in English, Business, Leadership Studies, Informatics, and Health and Human Performance. Using a contact list of faculty given by Global Affairs staff and the cooperation of cross-border program coordinators, the survey was announced and a link shared via email allowed faculty to access the survey between May 11, 2022 and June 9, 2022. Initial questions were developed for faculty about the inclusion of a research component in their course design, any requirement for using and citing FHSU library electronic resources as opposed to local search engines (such as Baidu), how often they were in contact with their library liaison, and whether they utilized services such as library instruction or the library's bilingual digital learning objects. Of the 38 cross-border faculty members contacted, only 12 survey submissions were received.

In the student questionnaire (Appendix 1), Sias and SNU students were given the option of taking the survey in English or in Chinese (Mandarin) to encourage a greater survey response and better achieve a healthy sample size. Students were asked questions relating to where they searched for sources, what instruction they had received about library research, and whether they sought local library assistance from their home institution's library for FHSU coursework. The main themes of the student-focused survey related to the awareness of library services, comfort level utilizing FHSU library resources, use of library services in their coursework, and satisfaction with the library and librarians. 253 students from Sias and 49 from SNU responded.

Throughout the planning of this project, investigators worked with FHSU's Global Affairs Department to understand population size and answer questions about concurrent enrollment between Chinese and American institutions, as well as seek out assistance regarding any potential cultural and language barriers. Such consultations helped to determine which questions to ask and the best method of survey distribution. The ordering and wording of survey questions had to take a more strategic approach, particularly with the student survey as it had to undergo the translation process. Objectives and questionnaire items were vetted with members of the committee and the research was approved by the IRB. Each survey included an informed consent section. No identifying data beyond the institution's name was collected. Participation was

entirely voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. No compensation or incentive was provided.

#### Translation of Survey Questions

In addition to the English version of the student survey, a Chinese version was created with the help of an FHSU Global Affairs graduate assistant originally from Sias, and reviewed by an FHSU adjunct instructor, who had previously worked as a graduate assistant at the library assisting in the translation of the many of the library's Chinese/English bilingual tutorials and guides. Both volunteers were native Chinese speakers with previous experience as a student or as an instructor at one of the institutions where students were being surveyed, so they each had context of the Sias library and its services in addition to context about the FHSU library. All student communications were translated, including recruitment emails, consent forms, survey questions, and announcements, giving students the option to take the survey in their preferred language. Initial survey responses, with particular focus on the multiple choice and open-response questions, were translated by the same graduate assistant who had translated the survey questions.

With the closed survey questions, two committee members attempted to reverse translate the responses using the translation documents created by the translators, but it proved to be a time-consuming task and got complicated when questions were formatted as multiple response, so the graduate student translator was brought in to assist. If we had foreseen this reverse translation step, perhaps the survey design could have been modified to make the analysis easier. In addition to the multiple response question formats, all the open-ended survey questions also had to be translated from Chinese to English for analysis.

#### Distribution Challenges

Students received an announcement in Blackboard inviting them to take the survey. At Sias, the recruitment message was also sent directly through the Sias internal communication platform DingTalk. This is the official communication tool Sias uses to send messages to students to yield a higher student response rate. To distribute the survey through DingTalk, the Global Access Committee communicated with the Dean of the Sias Kansas International School to make the request. Faculty teaching SNU students were asked to share the invitation to take the student survey using the channels they use to communicate with the students currently enrolled in their courses. These methods varied depending on the instructor but included a Blackboard announcement for the course, direct email from the instructor, a message on WeChat, or other group messaging platforms set up for each course.

## Results

The student survey, distributed May 16, 2022 through June 5, 2022, received 302 responses from students (253 from Sias and 49 from SNU). During the 2021-2022 academic year there were a total of 3,696 students enrolled at both institutions, offering a sample large enough for a confidence level of 90%. The response rate at Sias was likely higher because the survey was sent directly to students through DingTalk, the institution's internal communication platform, rather than relying only on the faculty using their individual means of communicating with students enrolled in their course. SNU did not have an internal communication platform equivalent to DingTalk. At SNU, a student listserv does not exist, and it is not possible to obtain access to student email addresses because there is no university-issued email. The Sias and SNU student results were analyzed separately by institution and also analyzed as a combined student experience. The combined student experience yielded a bigger sample size and very similar results to the institution-specific results, so only the combined student experience results are reported in this article.

Of the students who responded, 89% reported that they had been given assignments in their FHSU courses that required the use of library resources. More students (93%) said their instructors direct them to use the special FHSU Library landing page for those living and studying in China. The results showed that an overwhelming majority claimed to be aware of the page, even if their instructors did not require them to use it in course assignments.

When asked about using their local library resources, 55% reported using the China campus library or consulting on-campus librarians "always" or "frequently." China-based search engines Baidu (62%) and Baidu Scholar (59%) were the top two non-FHSU resources students report using for their courses.

Students reported receiving instruction on how to search for FHSU library resources in multiple ways, including from their instructor (79%), from a librarian through a video or Zoom (49%), through tutorials (31%), and/or from a librarian on the China campus (21%). When it came to source evaluation, however, the majority of students stated they most often received instruction on how to evaluate sources from their instructor (76%). Instructors were also the primary source of instruction on how to cite sources (77%).

Most students said they were aware of FHSU Library resources such as the institution's catalog (91%), databases (73%), scholarly articles (83%), e-books (88%), and streaming video (81%). Slightly lower percentages, though, reported actually using

those resources. Streaming video was the least used resource at 38%, which librarians believed could be due to slow internet speeds making video downloads difficult.

Many students are aware of FHSU Library services and digital learning objects, including the library's Chinese/English Guide (93%), library tutorials (94%), research guides (86%), and the Ask a Librarian research help service (84%). When asked if they had used these services, most respondents claimed they used the Chinese/English Library Guide (86%), library tutorials (88%), research guides (73%), and the Ask a Librarian service (60%).

Of those who reported using the Ask a Librarian service, most said they'd used email (77%), followed by online chat (47%), the contact form on the Chinese/English library guide (39%), Zoom appointment (15%), text (13%), and phone (9%) to contact a librarian. Topics discussed by students using the Ask a Librarian service included help searching for library resources (70%), citation help (48%), requesting a PDF of an article (35%), reporting that they had received an error message when trying to access library resources (24%), and/or a general library question (29%). Students' satisfaction with the Ask a Librarian service was varied, with 65% claiming to be either satisfied or very satisfied.

When asked where they learned about FHSU's library services, students responded saying they learned from their instructor (81%) and/or Blackboard (72%). Twenty-one percent were unsure how they learned about them, and one respondent was unaware of these services. Regarding their overall experience with the FHSU Library, 94% said they were satisfied, and 6% were unsatisfied.

A mix of positive and negative themes were identified in the open-ended questions asked at the end of the survey. The positive themes identified in the comments included: convenient, useful for classwork, abundant/good quality resources, and easy to use. Five negative themes identified included: hard to use/need more instruction, log in/password problems, slow/unstable internet, dissatisfied with resources/not enough full-text, and need more Chinese translation.

## Discussion

### What We Learned from the Survey Process

Various aspects of survey development, distribution, and analysis have resulted in reflection about how the survey process could have been improved, which could

have potential implications for the results. These aspects include translation, low faculty response rate, and other recommendations for future surveys.

#### *Translation*

None of the members of the Global Access Committee speak, read, or write Mandarin Chinese, so all of the translation that was completed had to be outsourced to a native-speaking graduate student and adjunct instructor (as mentioned in the methods section). There is a potential for meaning to get lost in the series of translations that occurred before the data could be analyzed. The first translation occurred after the survey was developed in English and translated into Chinese. For those students taking the English survey, a second translation occurred in the respondent's mind when Mandarin-speaking students elected to use the English survey and respond in their non-native language. A third translation occurred when data from the Chinese surveys had to be translated to English before any data could be analyzed by the researchers.

The ultimate goal of any translation exceeds a verbatim exchange of words and should aspire toward "transcreation" that purposefully integrates the creative and practical functions of a translation to be accessible and engaging for diverse audiences (Ji, 2022). However, the quality of the translated survey and responses was unlikely to reach the level of transcreation. Some of the data's accuracy was likely sacrificed due to the limitations of using two volunteer translators and a process that involved two to three steps of translation. Ideally, if a future survey is deployed, a native speaker would serve on the survey development and analysis team rather than translation being outsourced to volunteers. With a project where a native speaker is not directly involved, it is hard to tell how much substantive confusion was caused by the translation efforts.

#### *Low Faculty Response Rate*

The decision to re-launch the faculty survey in September and the translation of the student survey, results, and comments caused the survey and analysis process to take longer than anticipated. Although a similar survey was sent out to both students at Chinese partner institutions and FHSU faculty teaching in China, the response rate from faculty was much lower, with only 12 responses. When the faculty survey was initially made available online between May 11, 2022 and June 9, 2022, only 12 responses were received. Due to the low response rate, the survey was re-launched on September 12, 2022 and closed October 14, 2022. During that time one additional response was received. A total of 13 responses were received, giving investigators a response rate of 35%. It was determined that the sample size was too small to produce statistically significant results, as the results from the faculty survey may not be representative of the whole group's experiences and opinions. It is unclear why so few faculty responded, but it may have to do with the timing or length of the survey. The Global

Access Committee plans to send out both the faculty and the student surveys again five years after the initial survey to gather longitudinal data and hopes that the faculty response rate will be higher in the future.

#### *Future Process Recommendations*

The Global Access Committee found that it would have been helpful to have a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese on staff to handle the translation work. Some student responses indicated that the respondents may have been unclear on the focus of the question, such as whether the committee was asking about the FHSU library or the library at their home institution. Qualitative testing with a few native speakers might have offered an opportunity to revise the questions for clarity before rolling the survey out to a larger group. Cutting unclear survey questions might have also reduced drop-off in participation for later questions. In view of concerns that cultural variables may have led to socially desirable responding, administering a measure of SDR, such as the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Paulhus, 1991), should be considered in future assessments. The BIDR-7, later called the Paulhus Deception Scales (PDS), is a 40-question test designed to assess two forms of SDR, self-deceptive enhancement and impression management. Self-deceptive enhancement, unconsciously viewing oneself in an unrealistically positive light, is measured by such statements as “I am a completely rational person.” Impression management, responding to appear more socially acceptable, is measured by endorsing such statements as “I have never dropped litter on the street” (Paulhus, 1988, as cited in Paulhus, 1991, p. 40-41). The PDS has been judged as a “valuable tool to ...check on the validity of self-report test responses” (Kwan & Vitelli, 2003, para. 27). Administering it along with our survey could help us identify the level of socially desirable responding, possibly caused by cultural factors. This could help us evaluate the degree to which respondents are answering honestly and, therefore, how much weight to give to our results.

#### *What We Learned from the Results*

After analyzing the survey results, we drew several conclusions about the students’ use and perception of the library and ways to improve library services and communications to them. These areas include cross-referencing statistics and survey results, cultural differences, library perception, and actions taken since receiving the survey results.

#### *Cross-Referencing Stats and Survey Results*

Once the data was analyzed, a few of the survey results did not match up to the statistics that the library collects and the analytic reports that can be run based on geographic location. Specifically, the survey question, “Have you used any of the following research help services through FHSU Library?” asking respondents about

their use of the Chinese/English library guide, tutorials, other research guides, and the Ask A Librarian research help service caused some perplexing responses that did not reflect the reference librarians' experiences.

A majority of students (89.25%) claimed to be aware of the research help services offered by Forsyth Library, however only 76.75% of respondents had used either of the services. Some of the self-reported use of these services seemed plausible when compared to the use statistics for the academic year the survey was conducted (Table 1). For example, 255 out of 302 survey respondents claimed to have used the Chinese/English library guide which had 2,896 views from Chinese IP addresses during the 2021-2022 academic year. The Global Access Committee routinely promotes the Chinese/English library guide as the main resource for all students at Sias and SNU. The results were encouraging and indicate that the students engaging with the survey were those who had been taught by their professors or directed at orientations to visit the Chinese/English guide to learn about and use the library.

In contrast, the self-reported use of the Ask A Librarian research help services may have been influenced by impression management, socially desirable responding, or unclear translations. With each reference question, the Springshare platform provides the IP address of the patron. FHSU librarians are trained to look up the IP address to have enough data to categorize a student by modality: as either an on-campus student, an online student, or a student studying at one of the international partner institutions. However, if a student is using a virtual private network (VPN), this IP data can be misleading. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 859 reference questions were affiliated with our international partner institutions, which was heavily skewed by an assignment for an introductory class that required the 827 students taking UNIV 105 to submit a form on the Chinese/English library guide which created an Ask A Librarian ticket. This assignment helped the library test the form with various Chinese email domains and gave students the experience of asking a question and getting a response with the hope that it would lessen the barrier when the students had a true information need. If students counted this assignment as having used the Ask A Librarian research help, the survey results of 165 students using Ask A Librarian is plausible, especially considering that the course that required them to submit the contact form was affiliated with Sias University and Sias University represented the majority of survey respondents (253 out of the 302 total survey respondents).

However, the survey results report that 125 respondents reportedly used Ask A Librarian by emailing FHSU library. According to our statistics detailed in Table 1, we only received 5 emails that were affiliated with international partners that year.

Similarly, 77 respondents reportedly used Ask A Librarian via the live chat feature on our website. According to our statistics, we only received 21 chats that academic year that were affiliated with our international partners. Twenty five survey respondents claimed to have scheduled an appointment, but our records show zero appointments occurred for students at our international partner institutions that year. Fifteen survey respondents claimed to have used the phone to call FHSU's Ask A Librarian, but we recorded zero phone call reference transactions that were affiliated with our international partner institutions that year.

The thirteen-hour time difference between China (China Standard Time) and Hays, KS (Central Time Zone) has historically been a major reason most international students use email to contact a librarian rather than a real-time option like chat, Zoom, text or phone. The 20% of students who were "very dissatisfied" with these research help services may be explained by the fact that both Outlook and our Ask a Librarian service provider, Springshare, reject emails from qq.com, one of the major email domains used in China due to high levels of spamming. Our chat form asks for the user's email, so chats also get blocked if a qq.com email is entered. Librarians were unaware of the Springshare blocks until shortly before the survey was launched. To remedy this error, a special contact form for students in China was developed using LibWizard on Springshare and incorporated into FHSU's Chinese/English bilingual library guide.

Table 1

Comparison of Survey Respondent Use of Ask A Librarian vs. 2021-2022 Reference Statistics Affiliated with International Partner Institutions

		Survey Responses (5/16/2022 -6/5/2022)	Library Statistics (7/1/2021- 6/30/2022)
	Used the Chinese/English Library Guide	255	2,896
	Used Ask A Librarian (the respondent has used the AAL Research Help Service in some way)	165	859*
<b>Contact Methods</b>	<b>AAL: Contact Form</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>815<sup>a</sup></b>
	<b>AAL: Email</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>AAL: Live Chat</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>21</b>
	<b>AAL: Schedule Appointment</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>
	AAL: Text Message	21	16
	<b>AAL: Phone</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>

Note.

The **Bold** text draws attention to the Ask A Librarian contact methods that had a questionable discrepancy between the higher self-reported use from survey respondents and the significantly lower number of actual reference transactions tracked by FHSU Library.

<sup>a</sup> Indicates the number is inflated by the assignment for an introductory class in Spring 2021 that required 827 students taking UNIV 105 to submit a form on the Chinese/English library guide which created an Ask A Librarian ticket.

These inconsistencies in self-reported use and reference statistics reduce confidence in the accuracy of the survey; inconsistencies may be caused by several factors or a combination of factors. Perhaps the translation was confusing, or the wording was broad enough that the students were also considering whether and how they have contacted librarians at their home campus institution. Perhaps the survey helped reveal that a number of students are attempting to contact FHSU's Ask A Librarian and the communication channels are blocking more emails, phone calls, and appointment requests than we realize.

#### Cultural Differences

Another concern the Global Access Committee has about the student survey results' accuracy is cultural differences. In China, respect for authority is highly valued, especially among college students (Wu, 2015). Therefore, students filling out the survey may have exaggerated the degree to which they had heard about or used library

resources out of a desire to please the researchers, viewing FHSU's librarians as authority figures. The primary reason for suspecting this misrepresentation is that the data from the survey does not seem to align with statistics on Chinese cross-border student usage from other sources. In the survey, students reported high rates of usage of library help services and online library materials, but this usage is not borne out by independent data sources. As described above, these statistics include reference interactions recorded by librarians in response to live chats and emails and views of Chinese/English video tutorials.

#### *Library Perception*

While many sources of dissatisfaction (i.e., internet quality and not being able to view more articles in Chinese) were determined to be caused by circumstances beyond the library's control, FHSU librarians believe it is in the library's best interest to follow up with both faculty and librarians at our Chinese partner institutions to see how user experience could be improved for students enrolled there. Though most students claimed to be aware of library resources and services, due to students' self-reported use, there is speculation about students' true awareness and utilization of all that FHSU's library makes available to them. Though there may be increased library awareness, students may also lack understanding regarding librarians' reference skills and their definition of research compared to that of faculty (Fagan et al., 2022).

#### *Action Items*

The survey results enabled the Global Access Committee to identify common areas of confusion for our cross-border students, such as who to contact about various account and other access issues and how to search for and request specific items. In response to this feedback, we added a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) section to our Chinese/English Library Guide, the primary library resource for cross-border students. These FAQs cover how to activate or reset accounts, how to log in to library resources, where to find and how to search the library's catalog and databases, which databases are most reliably accessible from China, what to do when having trouble accessing a specific resource, and how to request articles through interlibrary loan. We also updated our catalog to offer a Chinese-language user interface option to make it easier for our cross-border students to navigate. We created additional bilingual tutorial videos on how to do specific tasks that our cross-border students found challenging, such as understanding their library accounts, contacting FHSU librarians, and searching for full-text articles in the catalog and databases. In consultation with FHSU's faculty in China, we also created new tutorials on how to quote, paraphrase, and summarize and various methods for avoiding plagiarism. These tutorials are available on our Chinese-

English library guide and in the Blackboard shell for cross-border faculty so that they can easily be embedded in instruction.

## Conclusion

The interest, commitment, and response to the survey deployment and analysis generated goodwill between the library and the Office of Global Affairs. After several years of communication and initiatives to improve services and resources for the students and faculty at the international partner institutions, the Office of Global Affairs now views the library as one of their strongest advocates within the university. As a result of that strengthened relationship, Global Affairs helps promote library services by including it prominently at faculty and student orientations and citing the library as an example of ways to work toward improving services to the international partners.

As is mentioned in the discussion section above, the Global Access Committee has already taken steps to address the action items identified based on the survey results, such as writing an FAQ for cross-border students, creating additional Mandarin Chinese/English bilingual tutorials, and adding a Chinese-language option in our catalog, Primo. Some work will be ongoing, particularly communicating with cross-border faculty about library resources and services, as the survey results indicate that FHSU's Chinese students are more likely to learn about the library through their instructors than through library tutorials or direct interactions with FHSU librarians.

The committee plans to collect longitudinal data on cross-border student and faculty awareness of, use of, and satisfaction with Forsyth Library resources and services by conducting a similar survey again in 2027, five years after the initial 2022 survey, and every five years thereafter. As FHSU has continued to cultivate additional cross-border partnerships, these future surveys will also focus on the needs of international partner students and faculty beyond China. The committee expects those surveys to differ based on cultural differences and variations in governmental policies regarding access to online resources.

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## Appendix 1: Student Survey, English Version

### 1. Which of the universities are you currently enrolled in as a student?

- Zhengzhou Sias University (Sias)
- Shenyang Normal University (SNU)

### 2. Have you had assignments in your FHSU classes that required you to use library resources (ex. research databases, articles, e-books, or streaming video)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

### 3. Do your instructors direct you to use [search.library.fhsu.edu](http://search.library.fhsu.edu) to access the FHSU library?

- Yes
- No, but I am aware of this page
- I was unaware of this page

### 4. Do you use the China campus library and/or librarians to assist with FHSU assignments?

- Always
- Frequently

- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

**5. What other sources or search engines have you used in your courses?**

- None
- Baidu
- Baidu Scholar
- China Campus Library Resources
- Other (please describe)

**Have you received instruction about how to:**

**6. Search for FHSU Library resources (check all that apply)**

- Yes, I was given instruction by my professor
- Yes, a librarian provided instruction via video or Zoom
- Yes, I was given instruction by a librarian on campus in China
- I was told to use the library's tutorials to learn this
- No

**7. Evaluate sources** (check all that apply)

- Yes, I was given instruction by my professor.
- Yes, a librarian provided instruction via video or Zoom.
- Yes, I was given instruction by a librarian on campus in China.
- I was told to use the library's tutorials to learn this.
- No

**8. Cite sources** (check all that apply)

- Yes, I was given instruction by my professor.
- Yes, a librarian provided instruction via video or Zoom.
- Yes, I was given instruction by a librarian on campus in China.
- I was told to use the library's tutorials to learn this.
- No

**9. Were you aware that you can access the following resources from the FHSU Library?**

I am aware of this resource. I was not aware of this resource.

Library catalog (search.library.fhsu.edu)

Research Databases, (such as EBSCO or ProQuest)

Scholarly or Peer-reviewed Articles

E-books

Video

**10. Have you used any of the following resources through FHSU Library:**

I have used this resource. I have not used this resource.

Library catalog ([search.library.fhsu.edu](http://search.library.fhsu.edu))

Research databases (like EBSCO or ProQuest)

Scholarly or Peer-Reviewed Articles

E-books

Video

**11. Were you aware that you can access the following research help services through FHSU**

**Library:**

I am aware of this service. I was not aware of this service.

Chinese/English Library Guide ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu/bilingual>)

Library Tutorials ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu/tutorials/bilingual>)

Research Guides ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu>)

Ask a Librarian (<https://libanswers.fhsu.edu> )

**12. How did you learn about the research help services?**

I was told by my instructor.

I learned about it on Blackboard.

I am not sure, but I am aware of them.

I was not aware of these services.

**13. Have you used any of the following research help services through FHSU Library:**

I have used this service.      I have not used this service.

Chinese/English Library Guide ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu/bilingual>)

Library Tutorials ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu/tutorials/bilingual>)

Research Guides ( <https://fhsuguides.fhsu.edu/>)

Ask a Librarian (<https://libanswers.fhsu.edu> )

13a. (If “I have used this service” on Ask a Librarian above): **Which of the following methods**

**have you used when reaching out to an FHSU librarian for help (Ask a Librarian):**

- Contact Form
- Online Chat
- E-mail
- Schedule an appointment
- Text
- Phone
- None of the above

13b. (If “I have used this service” on Ask a Librarian above): **Which of the following topics did you Ask a Librarian about? Check all that apply.**

- I needed help searching for library resources.
- I needed help citing something.
- I requested a PDF of a specific article.
- I got an error message when trying to access an FHSU library resource.
- General Library Question
- Other (please describe)

13c. (If “I have used this service” on Ask a Librarian above): **How satisfied were you when you used the Ask a Librarian service?**

Very Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

**14. Are you satisfied with your experience with FHSU Library?**

- Yes
- No

**15. Why or why not?**

**16. Please add any other comments or suggestions you may have about FHSU Forsyth Library.**