

SUPERFICIALLY ACCESSIBLE:

Moving from a Compliant Library to an Inclusive Library

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In 2021 and 2022, a cross-departmental team of library staff formed to explore the needs and experiences of library users with disabilities at Duke University. Two primary questions were considered: To what extent are the libraries supportive of disabled users, caregivers, and allies? How might library staff make the libraries more supportive for these users? The team conducted a mixed-methods study to answer these questions, including a literature review, environmental scan, user survey, and individual interviews. After analyzing data and developing preliminary findings, the team shared observations and initial recommendations with members of Duke's disability community for their reactions and refinement. This paper discusses the study methodology and data-driven recommendations for making the libraries more accessible and supportive for users with disabilities. Our research and findings will likely be of particular relevance to libraries seeking to make their spaces and services more inclusive and accessible, and this paper aims to broaden the understanding of library workers learning about and serving this underrepresented community.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Duke University Libraries formed a cross-departmental research team of library staff to explore two primary questions: To what extent are the libraries supportive of disabled users, caregivers, and allies? How might library staff make library spaces, web interfaces, collections, and services more supportive for these users? To answer these questions, the research team designed a multi-faceted study that included a literature review and environmental scan, informational interviews, a user survey, and follow-up user interviews. In order to make this research more participative and restorative, the team partnered with members of Duke's disability community and engaged with these stakeholders at multiple points during the project.

This effort is part of a multi-year, mixed-methods approach to understand the needs of underrepresented users more fully. Previous studies focused on the needs of first-generation students¹ and Black students,² and a study of international students was planned for 2021 but delayed to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The present user study was prompted by several accessibility-related comments made in a student satisfaction survey³ about the library, as well as library staff's concerns with accessibility issues.

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This paper summarizes the research team's approach to learning more about issues facing Duke's disability community. We will briefly describe our methodology and strategies for collaboratively analyzing data. We will detail themes and findings from our study and then describe recommendations we have implemented or plan to implement in partnership with library and campus stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

The research team used multiple methodologies in order to triangulate results and increase confidence in our conclusions. First, library staff conducted a literature review and environmental scan to learn more about accessibility in academic libraries. We spoke with campus stakeholders to learn about services and support for people with disabilities and previous assessment work done by other campus units. We then distributed a user survey to our target population and conducted four follow-up interviews. The research team analyzed interview transcripts using affinity mapping and developed themes based on our analysis. Working from the findings, the team developed recommendations for improving library spaces, services, collections, and web interfaces. Finally, team members shared initial findings and recommendations with stakeholders in Duke's disability community and incorporated their reactions into a final set of recommendations.

Environmental Scan and Informational Interviews

This project began with a literature review⁴ of existing work on accessibility in academic libraries and more broadly in higher education. The literature reflected feedback we received through Duke student surveys, including complaints about inaccessible physical spaces and a lack of useful information readily available online. We then conducted an environmental scan⁵ of library websites for both the information presented on accessibility services and for staffing models related to accessibility. The scan led to an informational interview with an accessibility liaison to learn more about possible staffing models. We made some immediate improvements based on what we learned from this initial phase of the project—for instance, we improved the information presented on the library's webpage outlining services for patrons with disabilities.⁶

We knew additional assessment would be necessary before we made more substantial changes to library services or spaces. The project team contacted leaders of campus disability groups, including the Student Disability Access Office,⁷ the Duke Disability Alliance,⁸ and the Disability and Access Initiative.⁹ We learned that the Duke Disability Alliance conducted an accessibility survey in 2018. While the survey data provided context for general accessibility issues at Duke, respondents rarely mentioned the library, making it evident that a library-focused accessibility assessment was needed.

Survey

By surveying Duke's disability community, the project team aimed to answer multiple research questions:

- How well do our current spaces and services (physical and online) serve the needs of users with disabilities?
- Are users aware of the accessibility services offered by the libraries?
- Are there different needs for people who identify as having disabilities, compared with allies and caregivers? For different disabilities?

The survey included questions covering the following topics: Library usage (which libraries, how often); barriers to visiting libraries; satisfaction with physical space; and satisfaction with remote or online services. We also collected demographics (student/faculty/staff, disability identification) and provided space for additional comments.

The team shared an initial draft with members of Duke's disability community for feedback. The final survey was distributed through the Duke Disability Alliance, library staff, and social media and was live for about three weeks. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were offered the opportunity to enter a drawing for a \$50 Amazon Gift Card and asked if they would like to be part of follow-up discussion groups. These final questions were disconnected from participants' responses due to the sensitive nature of this study.

To analyze the 90 survey responses we received, we performed descriptive statistics for quantitative questions and manually coded approximately 60 comments submitted in response to six free-text questions. We synthesized the survey data into initial themes that formed the basis of our script for follow-up discussion groups.

Interviews

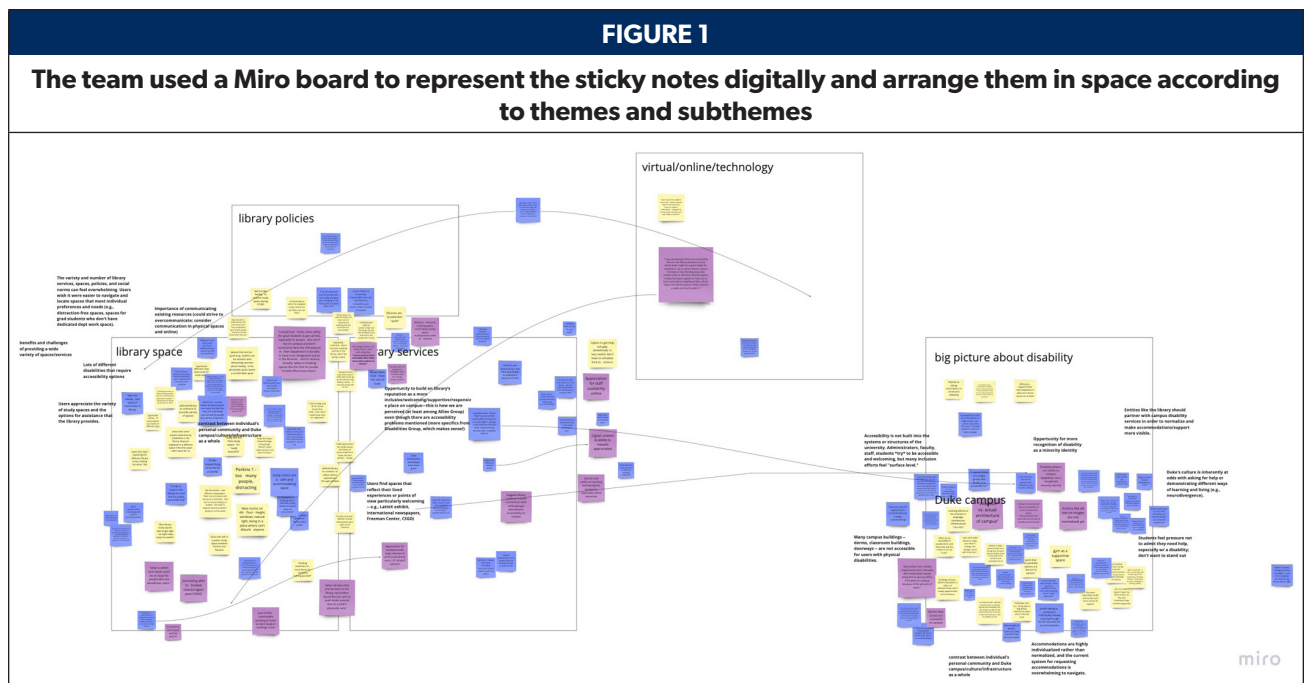
The following research questions were identified as priorities for discussion groups, which ended up being one-on-one interviews due to scheduling constraints:

- What spaces or groups at Duke are especially welcoming to people with disabilities? What makes them welcoming?
- How accessible are library spaces and materials?
- How easy is it to find help in the library?
- What information should we have on our website?

We wanted to talk with members of multiple identity groups, including individuals who identify as caregivers, allies, or as having a disability. In order to recruit a diverse group of participants, we distributed a screener survey to the 37 survey respondents who volunteered to be contacted for follow-up discussion sessions. We received 20 responses to the screener, including participants who identified as having a disability, as a caregiver, as having a close family member with a disability, or as an ally. After additional attrition during the scheduling process, we were able to complete a total of four one-on-one interviews, including one participant who identifies as a caregiver, one who identifies as an ally, and two who identify as having a disability. Each interview lasted 30-60 minutes, and interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded. Participants received a \$15 Amazon Gift Card.

The transition from discussion sessions to interviews turned out to work in our favor. Individual interviews may be a more effective approach than group discussions, because users might feel more comfortable sharing sensitive information in a one-on-one session. We also avoided the risk that a particularly vocal participant would dominate the discussion.

To analyze interview findings, we first manually cleaned the transcript automatically generated through Zoom. We then used a lightweight affinity mapping approach, where team members read each transcript and jotted down themes, concepts, or key quotes on individual sticky notes. After sticky notes were deduplicated, team members individually reviewed all notes and brainstormed four to seven high-level themes.



The full team came together virtually to discuss and ultimately identify six overarching themes: the “big picture” about disability, Duke campus, library space, library services, library policies, and library online resources/technology. We used a Miro¹⁰ board to organize notes into these six themes (figure 1).

Gathering Feedback from the Disability Community

The themes were subcategorized and used to generate preliminary findings and recommendations. In late January 2023 we shared these preliminary results at a Duke Disability Alliance executive team meeting to ask the students about their thoughts and feedback on our work so far.

We used the following questions to guide the discussion:

1. What resonates most from what we’ve presented, or what is your biggest takeaway from what we’ve presented?
2. Are there any parts of the findings and recommendations that need to be fleshed out, refined, or clarified?
3. Are there any observations or experiences you’ve had with the Duke Libraries that are not reflected in these findings?
4. What do you view as the most crucial recommendations or possible next steps?
5. What will have the greatest impact?

Additional feedback from the DDA Executive Group members reinforced our preliminary findings and has been incorporated into the full discussion below.

FINDINGS

Findings from across our mixed-methods approach are divided into two broad sections: general campus accessibility/inclusion findings and library-specific findings.

Campus Findings

The campus findings are drawn largely from our individual interviews. We had participants discuss their experiences with Duke’s overall campus before discussing specifics about the libraries. This gives more context for interviewees’ experiences, as the libraries do not exist in a vacuum but are part of a complex web of campus departments, buildings, and people.

Duke’s elite campus culture is generally not inclusive

“There’s an overarching culture that permeates a lot of areas of the university that is an attitude of elite quality... Duke is very clearly upwardly mobile, focused on trying to be an Ivy and in a sort of exclusionary way that excludes a lot of other life experiences...”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

Duke’s elite campus culture was cited by interviewees as a barrier to inclusion. Students described their experiences with this culture, noting the pressure-filled, competitive environment that goes along with Duke’s elite academic aspirations. This academic pressure is compounded by the social and extracurricular expectations that abound at the university. Students explained the dissonance that comes with being disabled at an institution where the phrase “effortless perfection” is often used to describe student culture. An interviewee described this culture as “really not feasible for a lot of neurodivergent people,” saying “it makes you feel like not wanting to share if you’re struggling with something.” Although disability visibility on campus has made some strides in recent years, most notably with the opening of a disability cultural center in 2021, interviewees described a campus where disability (including neurodivergence) is stigmatized, and where the disability community is marginalized and not visible in many areas of campus. One interviewee mentioned that they felt most welcomed and supported in spaces that

“lack the markers of the elitism that happens at Duke.” Campus spaces that focus on aspects of identity, such as the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, were highlighted as being welcoming and inclusive.

The built environment of campus is not accessible for people with physical disabilities

“My brother has mobility impairments and I honestly don’t know how I would bring him to see my office if he were on campus because of the amount of stairs.”—Interviewee who identifies as a caregiver

Interviewees and survey respondents asserted that the built environment of Duke’s campus is not accessible in many places for people with physical disabilities. These physical barriers to access occur in a number of areas. The lack of accessible parking convenient to buildings was a major issue discussed. One interviewee detailed how graduate student parking was a ten-minute walk away from their building, and that this made things very difficult for students with mobility issues. An undergraduate interviewee said of campus, “there’s staircases everywhere, and if you needed to not use the staircases you would have to take these really weird paths that would double your time.” Duke is often celebrated for its wooded and scenic campus, but the circuitous paths with frequent stairs through this landscape are not particularly accessible. Interviewees also noted that many older buildings on campus have elevators far from the entrance, and signage is either absent or ineffective to point people towards an elevator location. One caregiver interviewee talked about intention versus the actual architecture of campus, discussing how in spite of Duke’s rhetoric and increased focus on access, the built environment remained full of barriers.

University systems and policies are difficult to navigate for people with disabilities

“Accessibility is not built into the structure of the university. It has to happen in a one-off, case-by-case basis, which feels pretty frustrating and inaccessible...”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

Interviewees described their difficulties with the university’s systems and policies. A major issue was the individualized nature of accommodations, which puts the onus on the individual student to get the accommodations they need. One interviewee described the frustration around this individualized approach saying “each person has to hope that they get taken seriously enough or are seen as disabled enough to require an exception...” The campus stigma around disability was also a concern for students in the classroom, with one interviewee saying they hadn’t registered for accommodations with the student disability access office because of their fear of being stigmatized and treated differently by professors. University policies on missing class for sickness were also criticized as being inaccessible for students who are chronically ill or have mental health issues. One interviewee described their frustration, saying “I think having a limit on how often you can be sick is just such a ridiculous thing...it’s kind of like you’re allowed to have mental health issues... as long as you confine it to three times a semester.”

Library Findings

The following library findings are drawn from both individual interviews and survey data.

The libraries are generally seen as being more inclusive than the broader campus

“I definitely feel like the library works hard to meet as many people’s needs as they can.”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

“I don’t think [the library] is inherently inaccessible, but I do not think it is accessible. I think it’s kind of neutral. And that it’s there, and a lot of disabled people choose not to use it, because it’s not additionally accessible.”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

Compared to the broader Duke campus, interviewees generally characterized the libraries as being more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities. The libraries and library staff were perceived as more active and intentional in seeking out feedback on accessibility issues than other departments on campus. In addition to the survey work, the student library advisory boards were highlighted by an interviewee as evidence of the libraries’ desire to improve spaces and services.

Another interviewee who identifies as disabled offered an alternative view, saying “I do not think it is accessible. I think it’s kind of neutral.” The interviewee talked about the lack of visibly disabled people in the libraries and how although the libraries may meet ADA standards they are not “additionally accessible” and offered suggestions for improving the library as an accessible and inclusive space.

The libraries’ online services and resources were also mentioned by multiple interviewees as inclusive and helpful. One interviewee characterized library staff as “really responsive by email and helpful and accommodating.” Others highlighted the library’s chat service as useful, noting it was very helpful to use when they were too busy to make a trip across campus to the library. The libraries’ streaming video collection was also highlighted as being a useful teaching tool during the pandemic. In our survey data, 6.7% of respondents with disabilities said that help from library staff via chat and virtual research consultation did not meet their needs. This may be an area to assess further as many research consultations are still occurring virtually.

“Parking [being] inconvenient or unavailable” was the top barrier to visiting the libraries for survey respondents with a disability (chosen by 1/3 of respondents). Interviewees also discussed the lack of accessible parking around the libraries, and improving parking was the first thing mentioned by two participants when asked what they would change about the libraries if they had a magic button. One interviewee recounted their difficulties returning a seven-volume set of large, heavy books to the library and how more accessible parking would have made this much easier. Parking is an issue across Duke’s campus that extends beyond the libraries, but we should explore options to improve parking for users with disabilities.

Space needs vary widely from person to person, so having a broad variety of findable spaces is key

“[The] emphasis on quiet on every level makes it extremely hard for me to study while having tics without a study room, which is often already booked. I am afraid of being asked to be quiet or being stared at by other students.”—Comment from survey respondent

The disability community at Duke encompasses a broad range of experiences, and as such have an array of individual needs and preferences for study spaces. Offering a wide variety of study spaces at the libraries is key, as people use the libraries for many different purposes, and the purpose of their visit may change each time, necessitating a different space. Interviewees appreciated the range of spaces the libraries offer and gave feedback on what works for them. One interviewee mentioned liking study spaces with bright light, while another interviewee said the first floor of the library was too bright due to their sensory processing issues, and that they sought out softer lighting on other floors. A survey respondent requested more height-adjustable chairs at the library to help prevent back pain.

We also received a range of feedback and preferences on noise in the libraries. One issue that came up in both the survey and with multiple interviewees was the stressful nature of the libraries’ very quiet spaces. One interviewee noted that these spaces can be distracting and difficult to get comfortable in because you have to worry about being absolutely quiet. Another asked for a study space where group work and conversation weren’t allowed, but ambient noise was acceptable. A caregiver interviewee discussed their difficulty consulting with students in open library spaces because of the space design and other patrons’ insistence on quiet. Ten percent

(10%) of survey respondents with a disability said that they cannot always find a space with a noise norm that matches their needs, which indicates this is an area for further consideration and outreach.

Communicating available spaces, policies, and services is important but challenging

“It’s like a maze in the library... it’s cool but it’s a little overwhelming.”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

Research libraries are complex, and the Duke Libraries are no exception. With multiple large libraries spread across campus, a vast physical and digital collection, and a range of policies for spaces and services, many patrons can feel overwhelmed, especially when they are new to the institution. Respondents noted that communication and outreach is key to help demystify the libraries. Some patrons with disabilities are more likely to consult the library website before visiting, while others may seek out information upon entering the physical library, so it’s important to have both robust space and policy webpages as well as physical signage that helps users navigate the libraries. Users expressed appreciation for online floor maps of libraries and also offered suggestions of accessibility information to include to improve the library spaces webpage.

One policy area that had conflicting opinions was detailed noise rules for study spaces. One interviewee who identifies as an ally said they liked that noise guidelines were “very established” and “written down” so “everyone should know what they are.” Another interviewee who identifies as disabled said the different social rules and noise norms for library spaces can feel overwhelming. The issue of noise policies (which are set by the libraries) and social norms (which are also influenced by the patrons who frequent a space) is very complex and would benefit from further assessment and exploration on how to improve communication, coherence, and inclusivity of noise rules across library spaces.

Explicit efforts to be welcoming to people with diverse needs are appreciated

“I definitely appreciate how much the library seems to ask for feedback.”—Interviewee who identifies as disabled

Respondents appreciated that Duke Libraries staff made an effort to get feedback on accessibility issues and needs. Interviewees also highlighted a number of diverse initiatives and collections that fostered a sense of inclusion at the libraries. Multiple interviewees praised the libraries’ exhibits for showcasing diverse races, identities, and backgrounds in both the Duke and Durham communities. One interviewee encouraged the libraries to continue to reflect the diversity of the Duke community through exhibits. An interviewee also commended the international newspaper section of the library for promoting global thinking and different perspectives.

Interviewees and survey respondents offered numerous suggestions of ways the Duke Libraries could be more welcoming to patrons with disabilities, many of which are reflected in our list of recommendations. These ranged from creating more sensory friendly library spaces for those with sensitivity issues to making signage more inclusive for people with visual impairments to offering more audiobooks and online resources with text-to-speech capabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Here is a list of preliminary recommendations based on the overall findings. While some work has been completed already, most recommendations require additional planning and collaboration.

Update library webpage describing services for users with disabilities

We decided our webpage on services for users with disabilities needed an upgrade to make it more readable and

user-centered. We added more details on access to buildings and collections, how to access online resources and get help virtually, and we also added a specific email contact (libraryADA@duke.edu) for users with questions.

Improve access to study spaces for users' diverse needs

The libraries have a vast range of study spaces, but we have to make it easier for users to find spaces that meet their needs. We can improve access and discoverability of these spaces by improving our physical signage and web content. Survey respondents suggested more large-print signage around the libraries for users with visual impairments. We can also improve accessibility information and metadata on the library spaces website. Example user suggestions include indications about the accessibility of furniture in the space and sensory details for the space.

Create alternatives to “oppressive quiet” spaces for solo study

We heard from multiple interviewees and survey respondents that the libraries' very quiet study spaces could be stressful. We should create and cultivate solo study spaces where the expectation is that ambient noise is okay, and that students shouldn't have to worry about making too much noise unzipping a backpack or typing on their laptop.

Provide sensory-friendly spaces and resources

The libraries should use the feedback collected through the survey and interviews to explore ways to make the libraries more inclusive for users with sensory sensitivities. This could include adjusting lighting to be less bright in certain areas, ensuring temperatures are not too warm, providing sound masking technology, and increasing sensory data about spaces on the library website and signage. The libraries should also explore lending low-tech inclusive resources like fidget spinners, stress balls, and visual timers.

Expand inventory of accessible online resources such as eReader compatible eBooks, text-to-speech compatible online resources, and audiobooks

Multiple survey respondents asked for more accessible online resources that would work with e-readers and text-to-speech software. The library already has items in the collection that fall into these categories, but not all of our online resources meet these accessibility standards. The libraries' Collections Services division could prioritize vendors who have accessible content and advocate for increased accessibility from vendors whose offerings are not fully accessible. The library could also offer inclusive training on accessible resources for selectors.

Explore options to improve accessible parking for the libraries

The lack of accessible parking was the largest barrier to using the physical libraries for users with disabilities. Parking is a complex issue at Duke and is not under the libraries' control. The libraries should explore ways to improve parking and transit for users with disabilities, whether that be advocating to university administration, providing accessible parking passes, or increasing information on the patrons with disabilities webpage about book drop-off locations that have easier parking options.

Increase outreach to users who might benefit from services and spaces

To truly make a difference we also need to improve our outreach to users with disabilities. This will involve a multi-faceted approach, encompassing targeted outreach to specific campus groups as well as incorporating accessibility information into broader outreach campaigns, partnering with campus departments like the Student Disability Access Office, and in-library signage and pop-up events that alert users to spaces and services.

Continue to share findings with and solicit feedback from the disability community

We plan to intentionally share our findings, recommendations, and plans for change with the disability community at Duke. We want to be sure that any changes we make are viewed as improvements to those who shared their experiences with us.

We took the first step in that process in January 2023 when we presented our findings and preliminary recommendations at a Duke Disability Alliance executive team meeting. We shared a list of discussion prompts after the presentation to get a sense of students' thoughts, impressions, and questions about our work. The reaction to our recommendations was overwhelmingly positive. Students mentioned the need for sensory friendly environments on campus and commented that the libraries were big enough to offer a range of spaces for people with different needs. Students also emphasized the need for accessibility information on library study space webpages, including group study room reservation pages. Concerns raised included problems with physical accessibility in Lilly Library, an older library built in 1927 that has accessibility issues in the bookstacks and other parts of the building. Lilly is slated to be renovated, and we ensured students that accessibility will be integral to the design process. Students also raised the issue of eBook compatibility with screen readers. Finally, students emphasized the need for outreach to make sure students and the community know about services, collections, and spaces.

We plan to have more engagement with the disability community at Duke about our accessibility work. Next steps for this project include charging a team of library staff to consider the findings and recommendations and guide the move into the implementation process, in partnership with the campus disability community. Communicating outcomes to library and campus stakeholders is crucial at every step along the way.

CONCLUSION

We learned a great deal over the course of this study. First and foremost, a project of this scale must have a champion and a project manager to keep the various activities moving forward. We also learned that collaborating with Duke's disability community is crucial at every phase of the project—from literature review and information gathering to survey refinement to recruitment to analysis and follow-up. We discovered that interviews are likely more appropriate than discussion groups for putting users at ease to discuss potentially sensitive topics like their experiences with disability. Had we decided to conduct interviews from the start, we might have been able to schedule more than four interviews. Additionally, Zoom proved to be a convenient and familiar platform for conducting one-on-one sessions, and the auto-generated transcripts saved the team time and effort during analysis. Our affinity diagramming approach likewise evolved to take advantage of Zoom, but we learned that hybrid meetings may be less desirable than fully virtual meetings because of the extra time it takes to create digital versions of in-person artifacts.

The research team is eager to build on our partnerships with Duke's disability community as we continue developing and implementing recommendations for improvement or changes to library spaces and services. We will assess the effectiveness of these improvements and make adjustments where needed. As we have done following past in-depth user studies, we will share our work with higher education communities interested in learning about and providing support for underrepresented user groups, as well as potential donors interested in funding relevant library services.

This mixed-methods study serves as a model for other libraries seeking to conduct participatory research to learn more about users from marginalized groups. The methods we used are relatively easy, low cost, and convenient to implement virtually or in person. This study highlights the importance and benefit of partnering with campus stakeholders and library staff, even if those individuals do not have formal assessment responsibilities or training. We hope this study will lead to further research or exploration of issues that affect users with apparent and non-apparent disabilities at other campuses and libraries.

APPENDIX I: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

We're interested in learning how people with visible and non-visible disabilities experience library spaces and online services. Survey participants will be entered in a drawing for a **\$50 Amazon gift card**. This survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete.

This survey requires participants to authenticate their identity as a Duke affiliate using Shibboleth, Duke's SSO-authentication service. However, this survey is anonymous: no personally identifying information is stored by the authentication process.

Your responses will help us make our spaces, materials, and services more inclusive. Thank you for your time and valuable input!

Q1. (Required) What is your current status at Duke?

1. Undergraduate Student
2. Graduate Student
3. Faculty
4. Staff
5. Other (please specify) _____

Q2. (Required) Which of the following best describe you? (Check all that apply)

1. I have a disability
2. I am an ally to individuals with disabilities
3. I am a caregiver to someone with a disability
4. Other (please specify) _____

Q3. (Required) Please identify **your** disabilities or other circumstances that affect how you interact with your environment, if any. (Check all that apply)

1. None of these apply to me (Exclusive)
2. Asthma
3. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
4. Autism Spectrum Disorder
5. Blind or low vision
6. Chronic migraines
7. d/Deaf or hard of hearing
8. Depression and/or anxiety
9. Dietary restrictions (whether by choice or allergy)
10. Dyslexia
11. Environmental sensitivity
12. Epilepsy
13. Fatigue or chronic pain condition
14. Mobility disability
15. Speech disability
16. Temporary injury
17. Trauma
18. Other _____
19. I prefer not to disclose (Exclusive)

Q4. (Optional) What assistive technology, if any, do you use for learning/research purposes on a regular basis? Do any campus units or organizations help with access to this technology?

Q5. (Required) Which library do you visit **most frequently**?

1. Perkins & Bostock Libraries
2. Lilly Library
3. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library (Special Collections)
4. Music Library
5. Divinity Library
6. Ford Library at Duke's Fuqua School of Business
7. Goodson Law Library
8. Medical Center Library & Archives
9. Pearse Memorial Library at the Duke Marine Lab
10. I don't physically visit a library

Q6. Which other libraries do you visit **at least twice a semester**? (Check all that apply, or skip if you do not visit other libraries at least twice a semester)

(This question will only appear if "I don't physically visit a library" is not selected)

1. Perkins & Bostock Libraries
2. Lilly Library
3. David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library (Special Collections)
4. Music Library
5. Divinity Library
6. Ford Library at Duke's Fuqua School of Business
7. Goodson Law Library
8. Medical Center Library & Archives
9. Pearse Memorial Library at the Duke Marine Lab
10. I don't physically visit a library

Q7. (Required) How frequently do you visit the Duke Libraries?

(This question will only appear if "I don't physically visit a library" is not selected)

1. Daily
2. More than once a week
3. Once a week
4. 1-2 times a month
5. 1-2 times a semester

Q8. To what extent do the following limit your (in person) visits to the libraries?

(Not at all, Somewhat, A great deal, No opinion)

1. I am not coming to campus regularly during the pandemic
2. I access all the library resources I need online
3. I don't have time
4. The library isn't open when I need it
5. It's too difficult for me to get to the library
6. I can't find a space to work or study in the library
7. Parking is inconvenient or unavailable
8. My coursework or research doesn't require library materials or services
9. In the past, I didn't find what I needed
10. I have not received good service at the library
11. I don't live near Duke University
12. I mostly use non-library resources
13. Other (please specify)

Q9. (Optional) Any additional comments about what influences your decision to visit the libraries?

Q10. Please rate how well the Duke Libraries' **physical spaces** meet your needs in the following categories: (scale: Completely meets my needs, somewhat meets my needs, does not meet my needs, I didn't know the library provided this, no opinion)

(This question will only appear if "I don't physically visit a library" is not selected)

1. Chairs in study areas
2. Tables and desks in study areas
3. Spaces with a noise level that matches my study preferences
4. Reservable study rooms
5. Restrooms
6. Public computers
7. Help from library staff while in the library
8. Access to physical library books and other resources
9. Library signage
10. ADA Study Room (formerly the Accessible Technology Room) [only visible for undergrad and grad]
11. Book retrieval by library staff
12. After-hours book drops
13. Other (please specify)

Q11. (Optional) Any additional comments about Duke Libraries' physical spaces?

(This question will only appear if "I don't physically visit a library" is not selected)

Q12. Please rate how well the Duke Libraries' **remote or online services** meet your needs in the following categories: (scale: Completely meets my needs, somewhat meets my needs, does not meet my needs, I didn't know the library provided this, no opinion)

1. Help from library staff via live chat (Ask a Librarian)
2. Help from library staff via email
3. Help from library staff via telephone
4. Help from library staff via virtual research consultations
5. Information on the library website about library spaces, collections, and services
6. Access to online library resources (ex: databases, journals, e-books)
7. Ability to reserve study spaces online
8. Other: (please specify)

Q13. (Optional) Any additional comments about Duke Libraries' remote or online services?

Q14. (Optional) Any additional comments about current library services for users with disabilities?

Q15. (Optional) Are there other library services you'd like to see offered for users with disabilities?

Q16. Would you like to be entered into the raffle for a \$50 Amazon gift card and/or be willing to participate in future discussions about Duke Libraries?

1. Yes (this will take you to a separate survey where you can leave your contact information)
2. No (this will end the survey)

APPENDIX 2: EMAILS TO RECRUIT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Initial Recruitment Text

Subject:

Is the library accessible? Chance for \$50 gift card!

Email text:

We're interested in learning how people with visible and non-visible disabilities experience library spaces and online services. Complete this short survey and you'll be entered in a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card. Your responses are anonymous and will help us make our spaces, materials, and services more inclusive. Thank you for your time and valuable input!

[insert link]

Deadline to complete the survey: Tuesday, March 1

Reminder Text (send one or two reminders)

Subject:

Reminder: Is the library accessible? Chance for \$50 gift card!

Email text:

Reminder: If you haven't already completed this survey, make sure you respond before Tuesday, March 1 for a chance at the \$50 Amazon gift card.

Survey details: We're interested in learning how people with visible and non-visible disabilities experience library spaces and online services. Complete this short survey and you'll be entered in a drawing for a \$50 Amazon gift card. Your responses are anonymous and will help us make our spaces, materials, and services more inclusive. Thank you for your time and valuable input!

[insert link]

Deadline to complete the survey: Tuesday, March 1

APPENDIX 3: SCREENER SURVEY

The Duke University Libraries staff is hosting discussion groups to learn how people with visible and non-visible disabilities experience library spaces and online services. If you are interested in participating in one of the discussion groups, please fill out this screener survey **no later than Friday, March 18**.

We will invite a subset of people who complete this screener survey to participate in the discussion groups. Discussion sessions will be scheduled in the last week of March and the first week of April.

Q1. (Required) Please enter your contact information below.

- Name (first and last)
- Duke email

Q2. (Required) What is your current status at Duke?

- Undergraduate Student
- Graduate Student
- Faculty
- Staff
- Other (please specify)

Q3. (Required) Which of the following best describe you? (Check all that apply)

- I have a disability
- I am an ally to individuals with disabilities
- I am a caregiver to someone with a disability
- Other (please specify)

Q4. (Required) Please identify **your** disabilities or other circumstances that affect how you interact with your environment, if any. (Check all that apply)

This information will help us with scheduling and help make the session a more personalized experience. If you would rather not disclose your disabilities, please select the “I prefer not to disclose” option at the end of the list.

- None of these apply to me
- Asthma
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Blind or low vision
- Chronic migraines
- d/Deaf or hard of hearing
- Depression and/or anxiety
- Dietary restrictions (whether by choice or allergy)
- Dyslexia
- Environmental sensitivity
- Epilepsy
- Fatigue or chronic pain condition
- Mobility disability
- Speech disability
- Temporary injury
- Trauma
- Other
- I prefer not to disclose

Q5. (Required) Do you prefer meeting in person (on-campus) or virtually? (Check all that apply)

- In person (on campus)
- Virtual

Q6. (Required) Do you prefer participating in a group discussion or an individual interview? (Check all that apply)

- Group discussion
- Individual Interview

Q7. (Required) Which library do you visit **most frequently**?

- Perkins & Bostock Libraries
- Lilly Library
- David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library (Special Collections)
- Music Library
- Divinity Library
- Ford Library at Duke's Fuqua School of Business
- Goodson Law Library
- Medical Center Library & Archives
- Pearse Memorial Library at the Duke Marine Lab
- I don't physically visit a library

Q8. (Optional) Is there any additional information you would like to share?

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Introduction and warm-up (3–5 min)

As we get settled in, I'm going to post a short form to the chat.
[paste URL of form in chat]

We'll use the info in this form to purchase Amazon gift cards to thank you for your time today. This information will be used for accounting/tax purposes only. Please take a moment to fill this out before you leave today's session (I'll remind you again at the end).

Welcome, everyone, and thank you for being here. My name is [name], and I work in [library/department]. Library staff want to be sure they are fully meeting the needs of particular groups of library users at Duke. In the past we've talked with first generation college students and Black students, and this year we are focusing on accessibility and the needs and experiences of library users with disabilities.

You were invited to this session because you:

[for allies] identify as an ally to those with disabilities. Some of you also identify as having an apparent or non-apparent disability (for instance, asthma, depression, anxiety, dietary restrictions). During our discussion today, please feel free to respond to questions as an ally and/or as a person with a disability if you identify as such. If it feels important to indicate that your response is specific to a particular aspect of your identity, please feel free to say that, but you certainly don't have to. Are there any questions about this?

[for caregivers] identify as a caregiver or ally to a family member with disabilities. During our discussion today, please feel free to respond to questions as a disability ally and/or as a caregiver of a person with a disability if you identify as such. If it feels important to indicate that your response is specific to a particular aspect of your identity, please feel free to say that, but you certainly don't have to. Are there any questions about this?

[for people who identify as having a disability] identify as having an apparent or non-apparent disability (for instance, ADHD, asthma, depression, anxiety). If it feels important to indicate that your response is specific to a particular aspect of your identity, please feel free to say that, but you certainly don't have to. Are there any questions about this?

Also, as I ask questions, please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers, and you don't have to answer every question. It's also most useful to us if you are candid and frank about your feelings about the library. We want to hear what is NOT working about campus and about the library, because that information helps us make things better for Duke users.

In just a moment, I'll begin recording, and you'll be asked to check that you are aware we are recording this session. We are only recording for notetaking purposes. Nothing you say today will be connected to your name. Are there any questions or concerns about this?

Okay, I'll begin recording now.

Here are a few ground rules that we have found helpful in keeping these discussions productive [review ground rules -post abbreviated version in chat].

1. I have a series of questions for you. As I said, you don't have to answer every question. We'll be moving fairly quickly so we can cover lots of topics and not take too much of your time. If there are additional thoughts you'd like to share later, please feel free to reach out to me.
2. For some questions, I will ask you to think and write down your response before we discuss as a group.

- Go ahead and take a moment to locate a pen and paper, or open a note taking doc on your computer.
3. We're a small group, so it's fine for you to simply unmute and speak, or if you'd prefer to post your responses in the chat, that's fine, too. You may also use "raise hand" if you like.

For the chat:

1. Fine if you don't have an answer to every question.
2. We'll move quickly, but please follow up after today's session if you'd like to share more.
3. Have a pen and paper or note taking doc available to take a few notes while we talk.
4. You may unmute and speak or post your responses in the chat. Also fine to use the "raise hand" icon, but you don't have to.

Okay, are we ready to begin?

Warm-up (2 min)

Brief intros from participants by way of chat questions (moderator to post their responses and then read these other's responses along with the person's name if appropriate)

- something in your current space that we would see if we were together in person? (maybe a coffee cup or laptop sticker or picture)
- something you're sipping or munching on right now, or something you hope to snack on later today
- something you read or watched or listened to today that was interesting or enjoyable
- now, take a moment to look away from your computer screen and notice (see, smell, hear) something that brings you joy or makes you smile. If you like, post what you see, smell, hear in the chat.

Sense of belonging (15 min)

1. [omitted for caregivers] SCRATCH PAPER: What has helped you feel welcome and supported at Duke? Think about the people, services, or spaces you feel are most supportive and meet your needs at Duke or in Durham. Take a moment to type or write these down. We'll discuss these in a moment.
2. [omitted for caregivers] DISCUSSION: What makes the people, services, or spaces that you wrote down feel particularly helpful and supportive for you?
3. [omitted for caregivers] SCRATCH PAPER: What has made you feel *unwelcome* at Duke? Take a moment to write your thoughts on the blank paper in front of you; then we'll discuss as a group. [Discuss as a group.]
4. [only for allies and caregivers] SCRATCH PAPER: Now, think about your experience as a disability ally and/or caregiver to people with disabilities. Take a moment to write the phrases or words that come to mind when you think about your allyship for those with disabilities.
5. [only for allies and caregivers] DISCUSSION: What does allyship to people with disabilities at Duke mean to you? To what extent does Duke support you as an ally to people with disabilities? Have there been times when you've felt unsupported as an ally?

Campus as inclusive space (5–7 min)

1. Think about your experience as a [person with a disability|disability ally and/or caregiver of a person with a disability] at Duke. From your perspective, to what extent does Duke University feel inclusive of people with disabilities?

Library – experience (20 min)

1. SCRATCH PAPER: What words or feelings come to mind when you think about the libraries at Duke? Take a moment to write these down. PAUSE. Would anyone like to post one or two of their words or

- feelings in the chat? This is completely optional, but feel free to post if you like.
2. Have you used the libraries at Duke? Think about library study spaces, websites, research materials, visits from a librarian to your class, workshops, etc. How have you used these during your time at Duke?
 3. If you have not used the library, what has kept you from using it?
 4. If you have used the library, what about the library works well for you? Again, think about all aspects of library spaces and programs.
 5. What about the library does not work well? Again, think broadly about library spaces and services and the library website/online resources.
 6. Think about your preferred noise levels for studying, collaborating with others, etc. Do the libraries' physical study spaces match your noise preferences? Are there spaces that work particularly well for you? Spaces that don't work well?
 7. There are various ways library users can get help from staff. Think about the last time you asked for help from a librarian or library worker. How did you get help? How did that work for you?
 8. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered many things over the past two years, including how people study and use the libraries. To what extent have your library usage and study habits changed over the last years? What changes, if any, do you foresee in the coming months?
 9. [If it hasn't already come up:] We understand that some library users consider the parking situation to be a barrier to visiting the libraries. If you had a magic button that would make it easier for people to use the library and any of its services, what would your magic button do? Think for a moment, write down your idea if you like, and then we'll discuss. [Discuss as a group.]
 10. [time permitting] Now, think about the Duke Libraries website. [link to DUL homepage in the chat] What information do you look for on the library website? Have there been times when you've looked for information about using the library that you were not able to find? Please describe.

Libraries as inclusive space (10 min)

1. Again, think about your experience as a [person with a disability|disability ally and/or caregiver of a person with a disability]. From your perspective, to what extent does the library feel supportive, inclusive, and welcoming of people with disabilities?
2. Based on your experience, how might the library be more supportive, welcoming, or inclusive of people with disabilities?

Conclusion (1 min)

Those are all the questions I have. I've really enjoyed talking with you this afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I'd be happy to meet with you later if you'd like to share anything else.

If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to complete this short form.

[paste URL of form in chat]

Again, we'll use the info in this form to purchase Amazon gift cards to thank you for your time today. This information will be used for accounting/tax purposes only. We'll email gift cards to the same address we used to schedule today's session unless you'd prefer we use a different email address.

APPENDIX 5: EMAILS TO RECRUIT DISCUSSION GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Invitation to screener survey

Subject:

\$15 gift card! Improve library services for people with disabilities

Email text:

Dear [First Name],

Thank you for completing the Duke Libraries Accessibility Survey. I'm reaching out because you indicated that you might be available to participate in future discussions about Duke Libraries.

To learn more about how the libraries meet the needs of users with disabilities, we're hosting discussions (both in groups and one-on-one) in late March and early April. Participants will each receive a **\$15 Amazon gift card**.

If you'd like to participate in a group discussion or interview to share more about your experiences, please [fill out this short screener survey](survey link) by **Friday, March 18**. The questions on the form will help us tailor sessions to participants' experiences.

[Sign up for a discussion session] (survey link)

Volunteers who are selected will be able to schedule a session convenient for them. We may not be able to accommodate everyone due to a limited number of spots.

Thank you for considering this request and helping Duke Libraries staff improve services to better meet your needs!

Best,
Angela

Your privacy is important to us:

We truly value the many unique perspectives that students bring to Duke, and it is important to the Libraries to understand all students' experiences, backgrounds, and information needs. We hope you will consider joining us. While the Libraries will summarize what we learn from the discussion sessions in a report that will be shared with library staff and publicly on our website, your participation in the discussion sessions will be confidential. Participants' names will not be included in any report, and your name will not be associated with anything you say. However, if you participate in a group session, you will not be anonymous to the other group participants during the discussion. We will ask everyone present to please keep what is said confidential out of respect for each other.

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[Click here to unsubscribe] (unsubscribe link)

Reminder for screener survey

Subject:

Last chance: \$15 gift card! Improve library services for people with disabilities

Email text:

Dear [First Name]

Just a final reminder that today is the last day to sign up for a discussion session or interview (details below). Thanks for your help improving library services!

Best,
Angela

[include the full text of the original invitation]

Invitation to scheduling poll

Subject:

Invitation for library group discussion

Email text:

Dear [First Name],

Thank you so much for filling out the screener survey for our Duke Library accessibility follow-up conversations. I'm happy to invite you to join a **virtual group discussion session**. The discussion session will be scheduled for one hour over Zoom, and participants will each receive a \$15 Amazon gift card. (For note-taking purposes only, we will be recording these sessions.)

Please indicate your available times using the Doodle poll below by **Tuesday, March 29**. We will send a confirmation of the selected time and connection details on Wednesday the 30th.

[Share your availability] (Doodle poll link)

Thanks again for your time! We look forward to speaking with you soon!

Best,
Angela

Invitation to discussion session

Subject:

Library group discussion scheduled for [date and time]

Email text:

Hello everyone,

Based on the responses to our Doodle poll, we have identified [**date and time**] as the best time for your group (Zoom details below).

Please feel free to join, even if you were unable to complete the Doodle poll. We'll start promptly at 12 p.m., and some of the questions will ask you to have a piece of paper or a blank document open to write down your thoughts.

We're sorry if the time doesn't work for you, but thank you so much for your interest and willingness to participate!

Best,

Angela

[Zoom details]

Notice of non-selection

Subject:

Not selected for library discussion session on library accessibility

Email text:

Hello everyone,

Thank you so much for filling out the interest form for our upcoming discussion on library accessibility. We selected a group for the upcoming discussions session based on the overall responses, and because of the need to keep the group small enough to allow full participation, we were not able to include you in the group this time.

Thank you so much for your willingness to share your experiences! Best wishes for the rest of your semester.

Best,

Angela

NOTES

1. "In-Depth User Studies," Assessment & User Experience Strategy Department, Duke University Libraries, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://library.duke.edu/about/depts/assessment-user-experience/user-studies>.
2. "In-Depth User Studies," <https://library.duke.edu/about/depts/assessment-user-experience/user-studies>.
3. "Biennial User Satisfaction Surveys," Assessment & User Experience Strategy Department, Duke University Libraries, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://library.duke.edu/about/depts/assessment-user-experience/biennial-surveys>.

4. Candice Wang, "Literature Review of Accessibility in Academic Libraries and Higher Education." Assessment & User Experience Strategy Department, Duke University Libraries, July 9, 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/10F-5cQi1gci0iBP-P58VyV6xfbp9sjNPQ4Y_QpKfY1yk/edit?usp=sharing.
5. Chadwick Dunefsky and Carrie Wilson, "Library Accessibility Services Environmental Scan," Assessment & User Experience Strategy Department, Duke University Libraries, November 2021, <https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/sBSHbaUBnxAdN2jwgZsN-Q7Gq>.
6. "Services for Patrons with Disabilities," Duke University Libraries, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://library.duke.edu/services/disabilities>.
7. "Students," Duke Disability Management System, accessed February 27, 2022, <https://access.duke.edu/students>.
8. "Duke Disability Alliance," Disability at Duke, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://sites.duke.edu/disabilityatduke/dda/>.
9. "Disability and Access Initiative," Disability at Duke, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://sites.duke.edu/disabilityatduke/disability-access-initiative/>.
10. "The Visual Collaboration Platform for Every Team | Miro," Miro, accessed February 27, 2023, <https://miro.com/>.