

# **Academic Library as Place: Users and Uses**

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# Academic Research Library Use Trends

- On-site use indicators are down (in North America)
  - Library collections
  - Library mediated services such as reference
- Remote use indicators are up
  - Information resource access & delivery
  - Service delivery
- Library entrance counts remain stable

# 5 Questions on Use of Academic Library Facilities

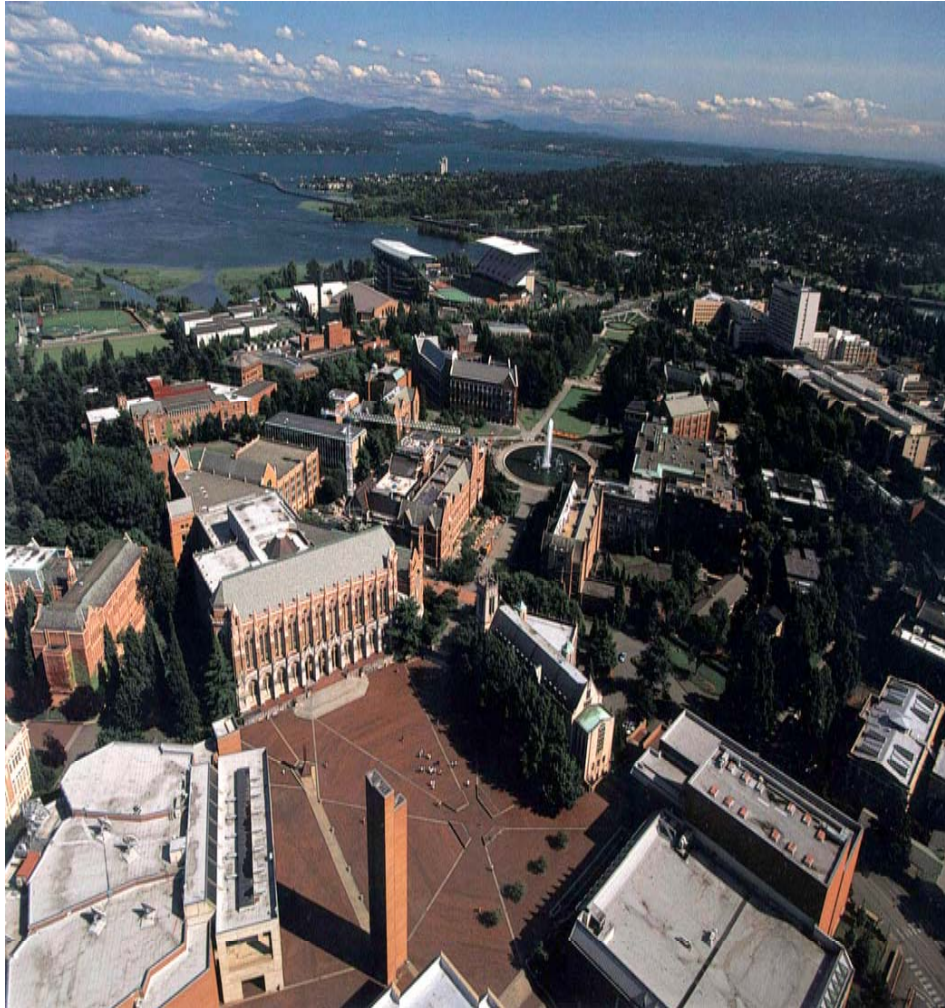
- Who is coming to the physical library
- What are they doing there?
- How has use changed?
- What is important to users?
- What role do local conditions and academic programs play?

# Potential Data Sources on Library as Place

- **Surveys and statistics**
  - Entrance/gate counts
  - General user surveys
  - **In-Library use survey**
  - Reference/instruction stats
  - Collections use stats
  - Photocopies/prints stats
  - Facility data (seats, carpet, noise levels, lighting)
- **Qualitative information**
  - Focus groups
  - Interviews
  - Usability/wayfinding
  - Observation
  - User centered design
  - Comments/complaints

# University of Washington

## Seattle, Washington USA



### **Research university**

- 27,000 undergraduate students
- 12,000 graduate and professional students (80 doctoral programs)
- 4,000 research & teaching faculty
- Strong in science & health sciences
- Ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

### **Large library system**

- \$40 million annual budget (2008)
- 15 libraries (as of 2008)
  - 3 large and 12 smaller libraries
- 4.3 million visits (2008)

# University of Haifa

## Haifa, Israel



### **Research university**

- 10,000 undergraduate students
- 6,500 graduate students (24 doctoral programs)
- 25% of students are native Arabic speakers
- 1,200 research & teaching faculty
- Strong in humanities & social sciences

### **One central library**

- \$4.7 million budget (2008)
- High quality user services are priority
- Large English language collection
- Participant in ARL ESP service in April 2008



# Library Assessment at Universities of Washington and Haifa

## Washington (1991-)

- Large scale user surveys every 3 years since 1992
- In-Library Use surveys every 3 years beginning 2002
- Focus groups/interviews
- Observation (guided and non-obtrusive)
- Usability/wayfinding
- Usage statistics/data mining
- Balanced scorecard (2009-)

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/assessment>

## Haifa (2006-)

- LibQUAL+® (2009-)
- Focus groups/interviews
- In-Library Use survey (2008-)
- Focus groups/interviews
- Usability/Wayfinding
- Usage statistics/data mining
- Reference feedback mini-survey

# Reasons for Running In-Library Use Survey

- Direct information on activities in the library during a specific visit for all library users
- Relatively inexpensive to administer
- Correlate w/user demographics
- Corroborate other data
- Use trends over time/baseline information
- Importance and satisfaction with services
- New or improved services wanted by users
- Identify problems
- You talk! We listen! We act!



# In-Library Use Survey

- One page survey handed out to users as they enter library during a specified two hour time block. Users complete and return survey as they exit library.
- 2008 Survey questions
  - What did you do in this library today
  - How often do you use this library
  - How important are these services to you
  - How would you rate the library on services/environment
  - Demographics (group, academic program)
  - Specific locations visited within the library (large libraries)

# Survey Distribution

## Washington

- 3 two-hour sampling slots during a 4 week period in May 2008 at all 15 libraries
- Additional 2 sampling sessions at 12 smaller libraries
- 57% response rate
- Survey forms, results, and charts available at:

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/assessment/>

## Haifa

- 10 twohour sampling slots during a 2 week period in July 2008
- 62% response rate
- Survey form, results and charts available in Hebrew on Library Assessment site at:
- <http://lib.haifa.ac.il/assessment/>

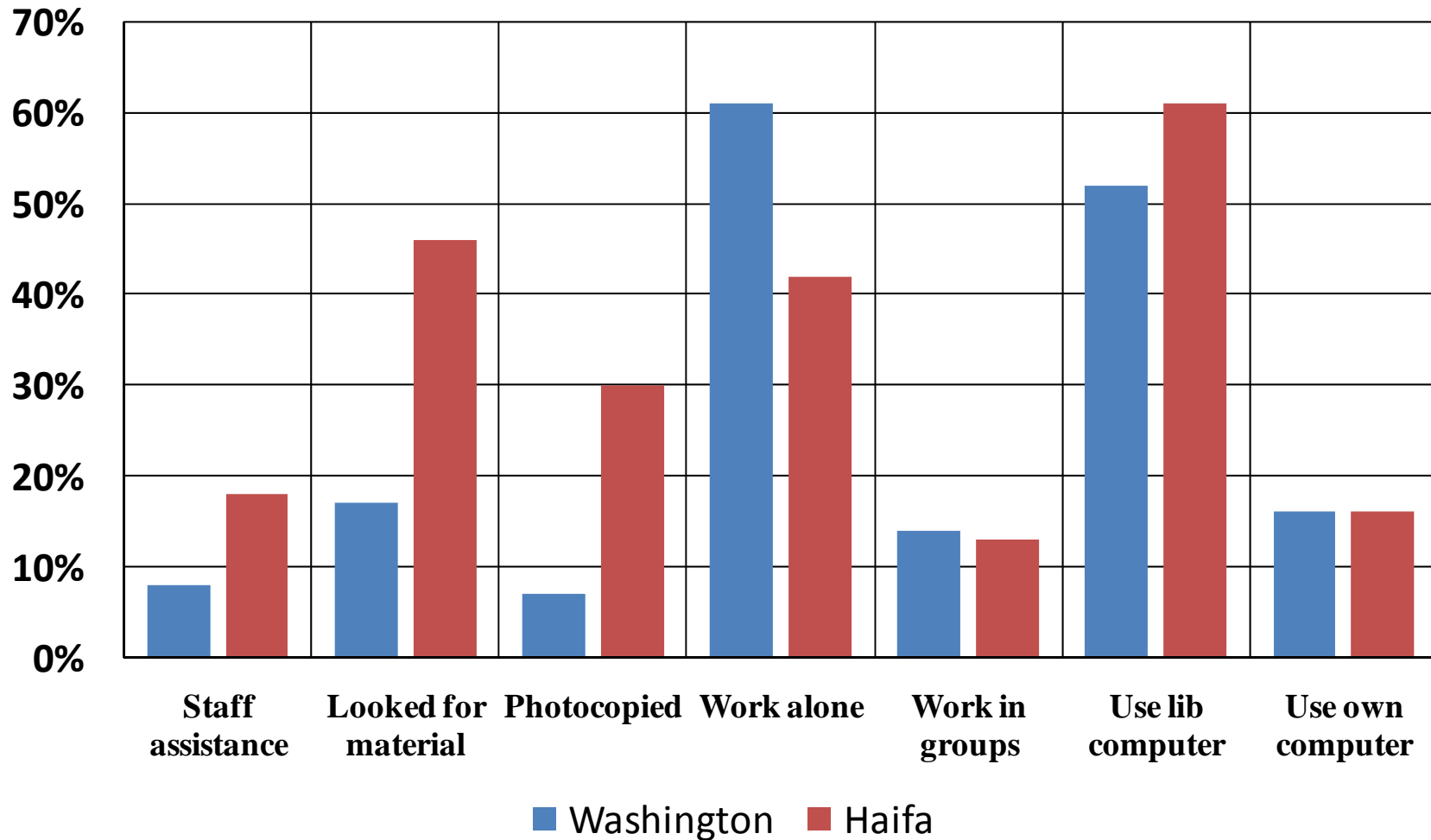
# Number of Respondents and Group Composition

	Washington (3 sessions in common)		Haifa	
<b>Undergraduates</b>	<b>2210</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Graduate students</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Faculty – Staff</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Non-affiliated</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Did not state/other</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total # respondents</b>	<b>3196</b>		<b>622</b>	

# Student Respondents by Academic Program Areas

	Undergraduates		Graduate students	
	Washington n=2210	Haifa n=418	Washington n=640	Haifa n=139
<b>Arts-Humanities</b>	14%	36%	21% Over-represented	34%
<b>Social Sciences</b>	26%	32%	19%	32%
<b>Science-Engineering</b>	27%	2%	14% Underrepresented	0%
<b>Health Sciences</b>	5%	11%	26%	4%
<b>Interdisciplinary/other/ none given</b>	28%	19%	20%	30%

# What Did You Do In the Library Today?



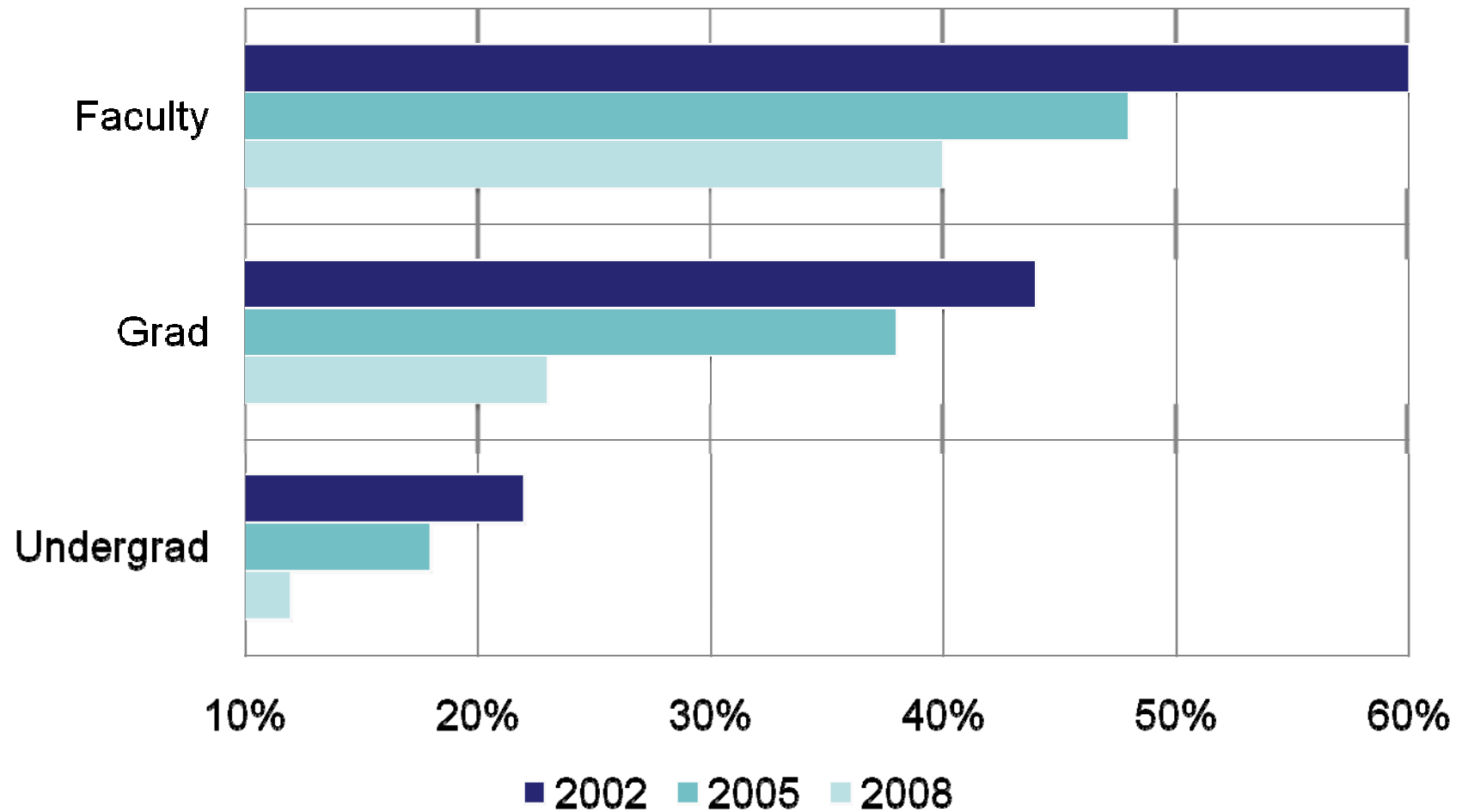
# Does Use Vary by Academic Program?

	Washington Undergraduates			Haifa Undergraduates	
	Humanities	Social Sciences	Sciences	Humanities	Social Sciences
Ask for assistance	8%	7%	6%	21%	18%
Look for material	17%	15%	10%	54%	35%
Use library computer	62%	62%	60%	63%	60%
Work alone	69%	68%	72%	48%	44%
Work in groups	5%	10%	17%	9%	20%

# Compare Groups Over Time

## UW Look for Material 2002-08

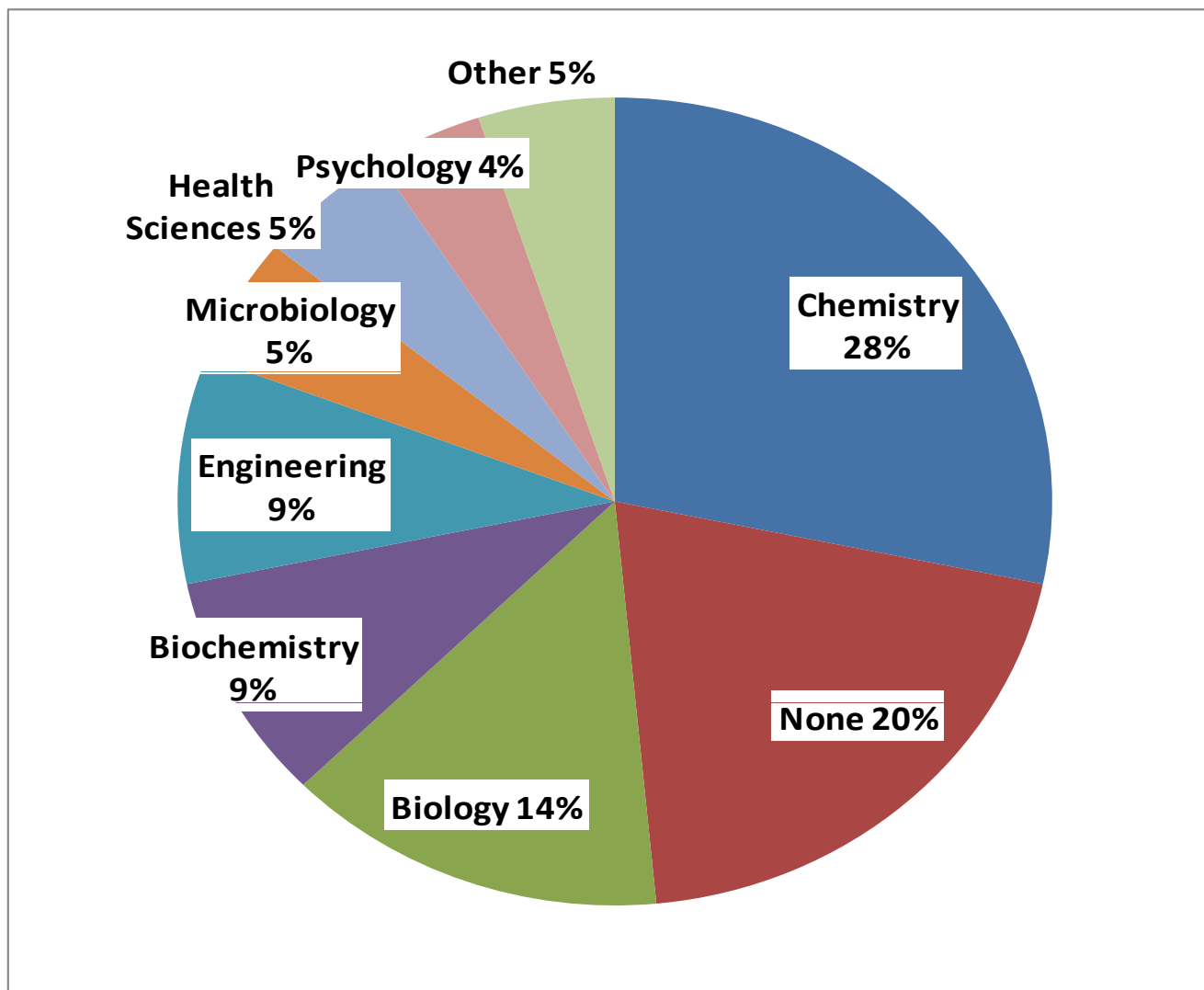
### Percentage of Each Group





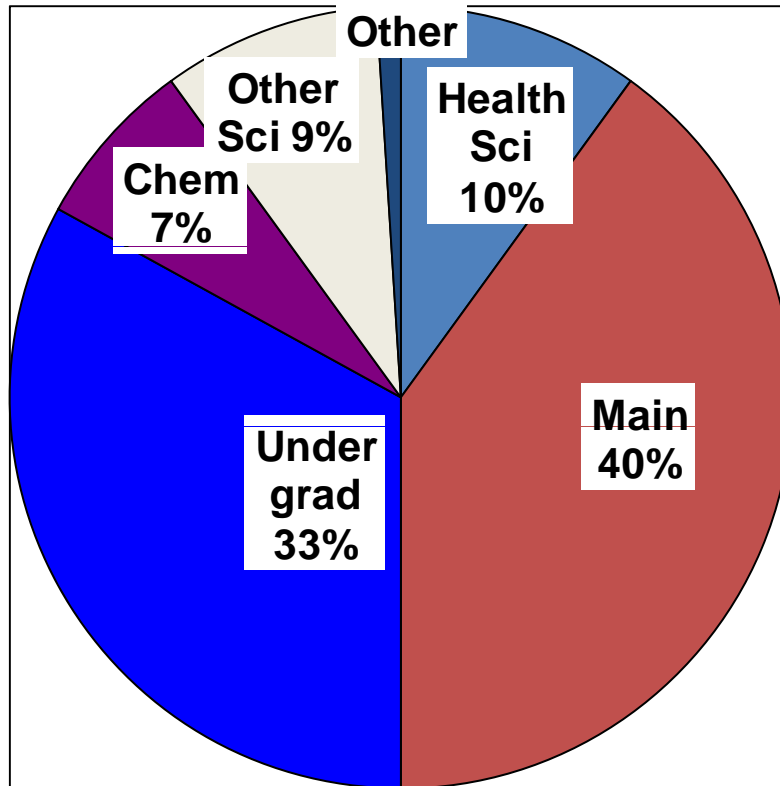
# Drilling Down by Library: UW Chemistry Library

## Undergraduate Users by Major (n=79)

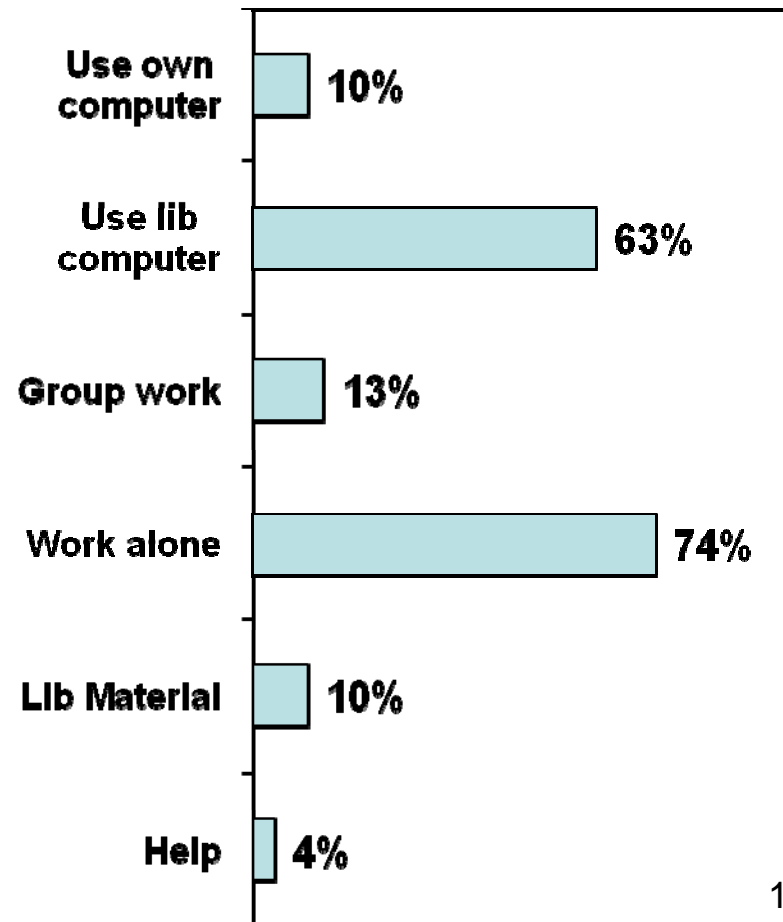


# Drilling Down by Discipline: UW Biology Undergrads

**Libraries Used by  
Biology Undergrads** (n=122)

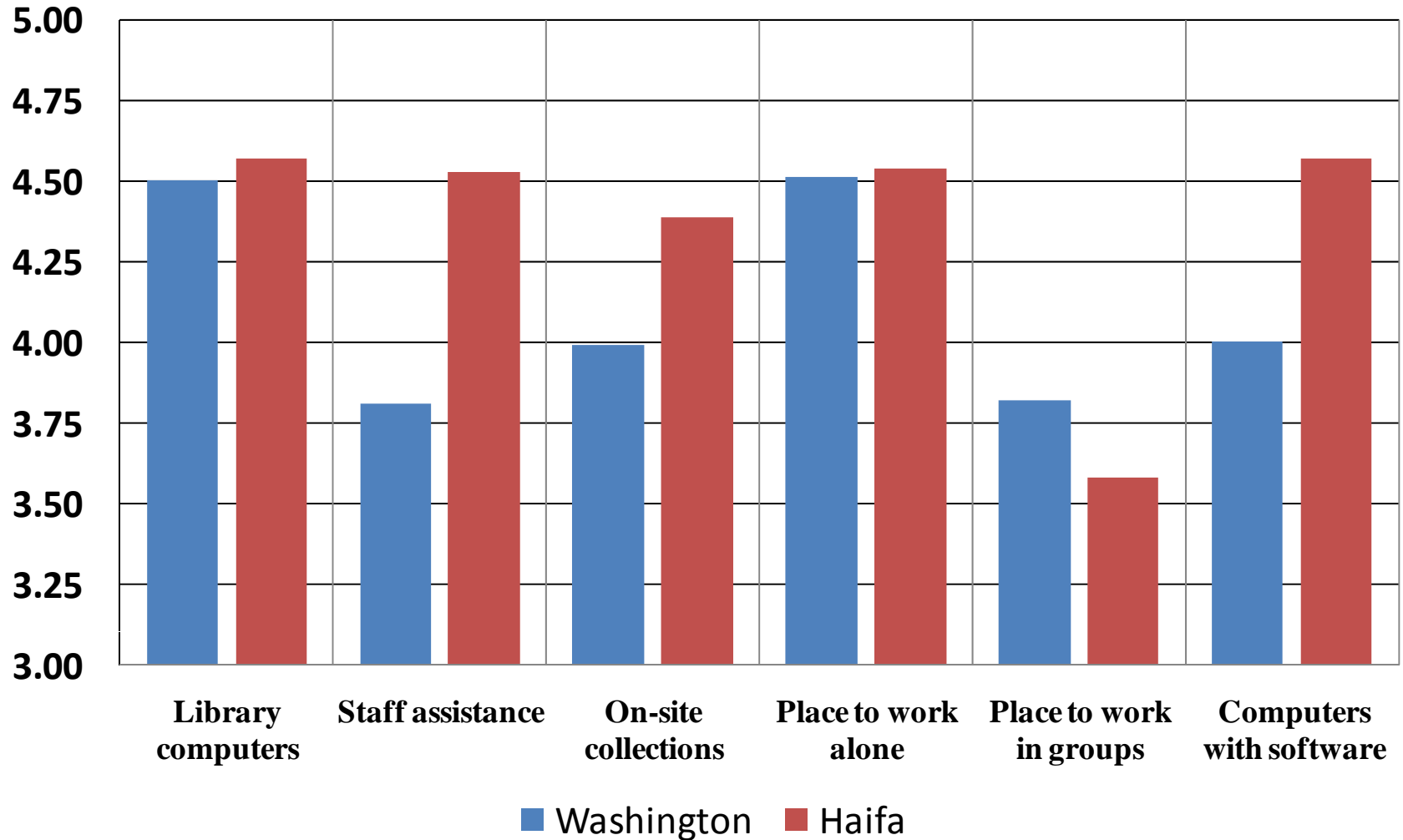


**What Biology Undergrads Did  
in the Library**

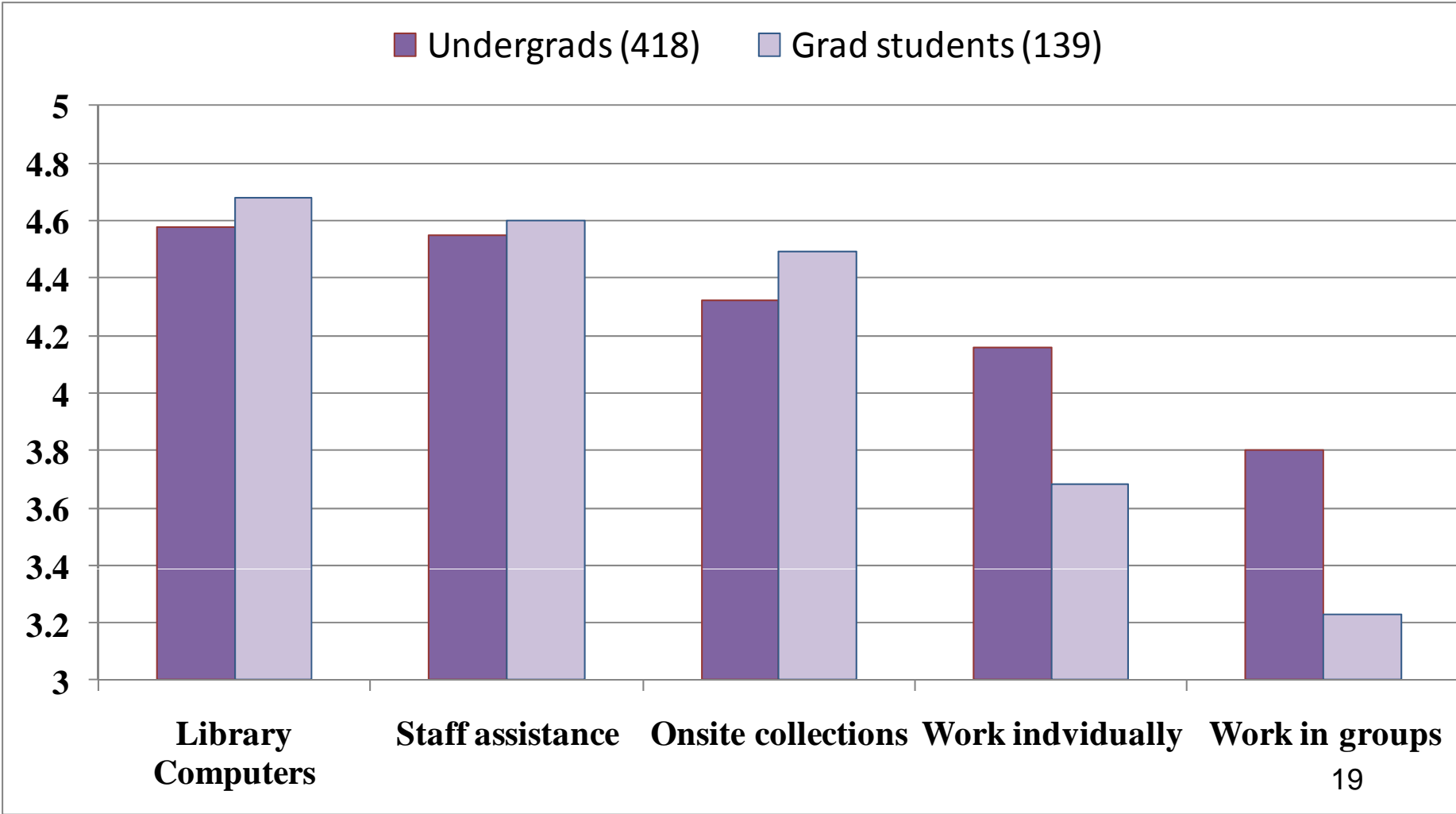


# How Important Are The Following Services?

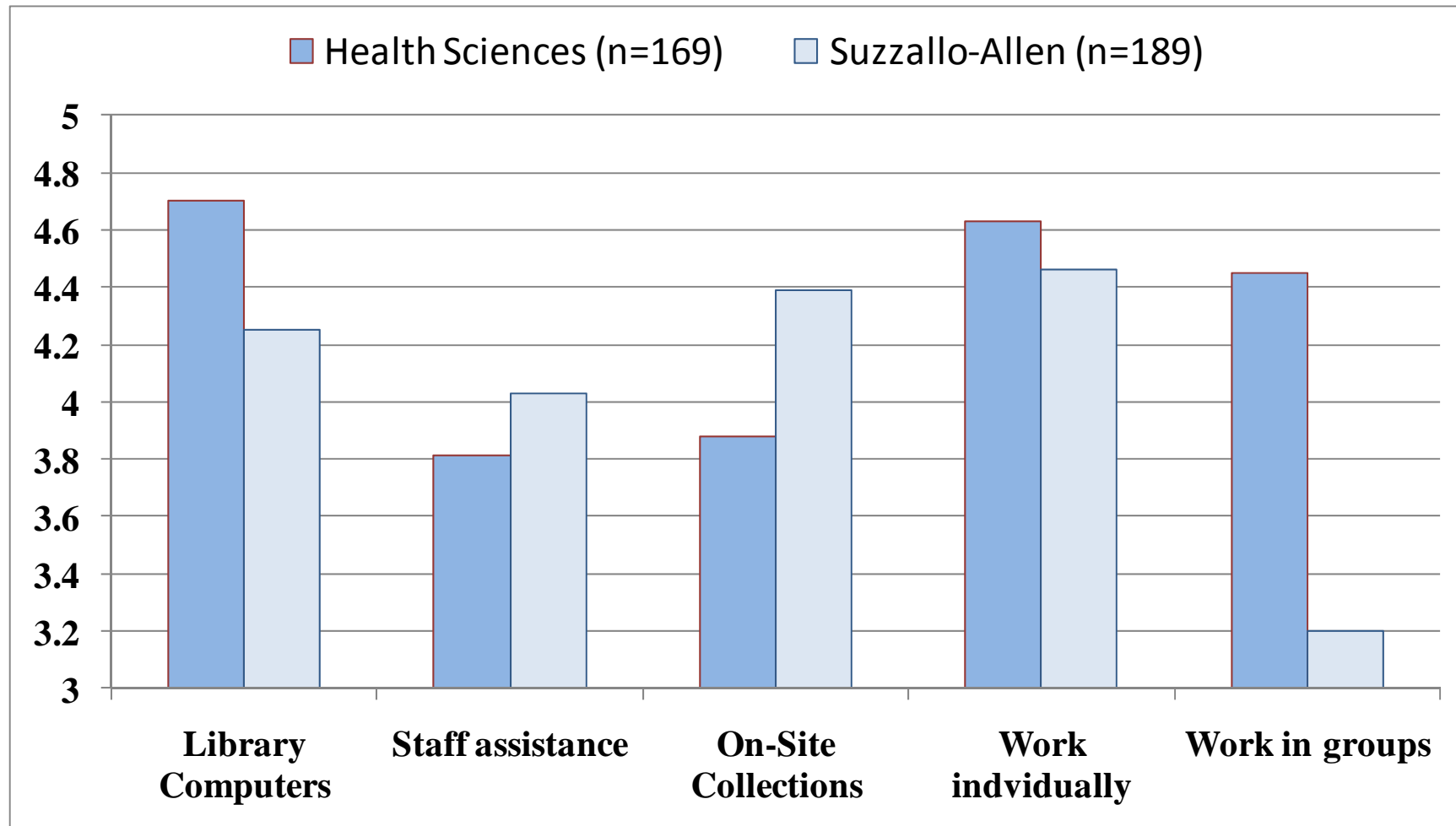
Scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important)



# Compare Groups: Importance of On-Site Services for Haifa Undergraduates and Grad Students

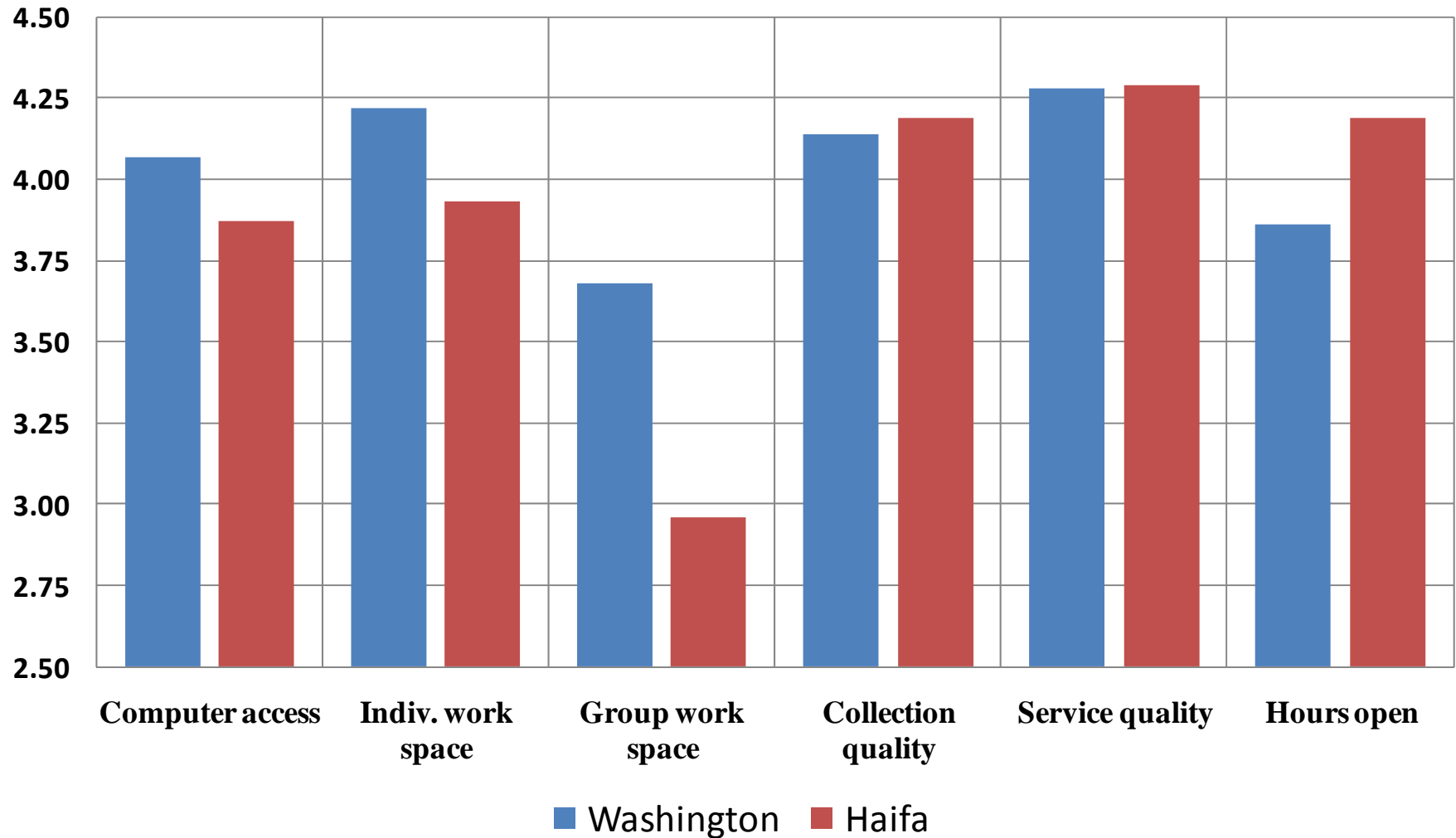


# Compare Libraries: Importance of On-Site Services for Grad Students in Two Large UW Libraries



# How Would You Rate This Library on the Following ?

Scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)



# Comments Provide Context

## Washington

What is so great about Suzzallo is that it is **so much quieter and less busy** than Undergrad. **I use the library mainly for studying** and I almost **always use online resources** because I'm **not sure where to find books** here. I'm sure staff here would help me, but I often rather use a **crappy article that "kinda works" from online** than go to the **hassle of finding a book in the library**.

*Psychology undergraduate*

## Haifa

- My experience in the library is usually very good. The staff are very professional and always willing to help. The collection is excellent and so is the ILL service

*English Language and Literature graduate*

- Sometimes if I can't find material on my subject I give up

*Arabic and French Literature undergraduate*



# Comments by Category

<b>Comment Type</b>	<b>Washington</b> 50% of surveys with comments	<b>Haifa</b> 40% of surveys with comments
Facilities-related	43%	42%
Computer-related	23%	20%
Hours of opening	17%	7%
Collections (print & online)	5%	5%
Circulation/shelving	3%	10%
Services (reference)	2%	4%
Other equipment	2%	
Signage	2%	8%
Staff	3%	4%

# What Respondents Told Us

## Both Universities

- ✓ Library viewed positively
- ✓ Workplace environment is crucial; differential workspaces important
- ✓ Library computers are heavily used and important
- ✓ More electrical outlets needed
- ✓ Comments identified specific issues and concerns that are actionable

## Haifa

- ✓ Confirmed the “library as place” for students to work, seek assistance, use on-site holdings

## Washington

- ✓ Confirmed long-term decline in use of print collections and mediated services with libraries now used primarily as an undergraduate place

## Selected UW Actions

- ✓ Continue replacement and upgrade of library computers
- ✓ Close and consolidate smaller libraries and service points  
(based on use of on-site collections and mediated services)
- ✓ Provide more services online
- ✓ Install better directional signage
- ✓ Send more items to storage
- Submit plans for library renovation and refurbishment in high use libraries, especially undergraduate and health sciences

## Selected Haifa Actions

- ✓ Provide space for group work,
- ✓ Reduce noise levels from equipment, staff and other workers
- ✓ Add or relocate computers within the library to where they're needed
- ✓ Upgrade library computers
- ✓ Use results to aid the ongoing library renovation and refurbishment
- Improve signage for computers and electrical outlets
- Improve assistance for users in the stacks through phones and student employees identified as library staff

# Conclusions

- The In-Library Use survey can capture information about physical library use and provide actionable data at reasonable cost and effort
- Local conditions and academic disciplines of affect what they do in the library
- Use of multiple assessment methods provides best picture of library use, user needs, and importance of different library services and resources